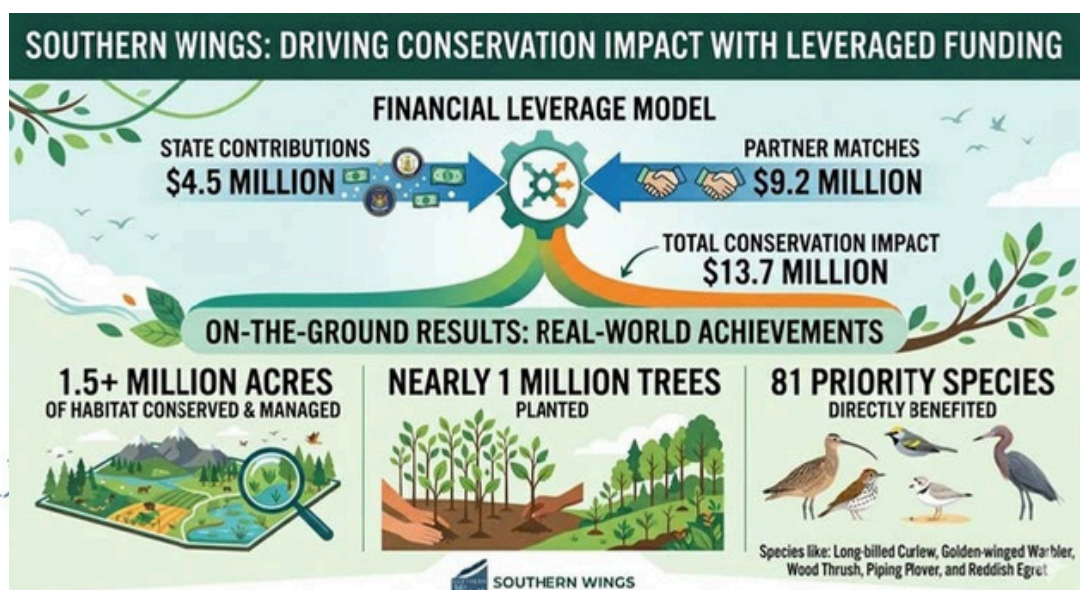




cerulean warbler

# 2026-2027 INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITIES

**CONSERVING KEY SITES FOR MIGRATORY BIRDS:** Over 153 shared migratory birds have been identified in the Izabal region of Guatemala including stopover sites for cerulean warblers and nonbreeding sites for golden-winged warblers. Working with FUNDAECO, Izabel Agro-Forest, and American Bird Conservancy, Southern Wings helped conserve over 12,000 acres of priority habitats and leveraged an additional 33,000 acres for forest conservation. \$97,000 is needed for restoration and agroforestry. States with strong biological connections (primarily for landbirds) include AL, NH, NJ, NY, MD, MN, MO, OH, PA, TN, VA, WV, and WI in particular but almost all of the SEAFWA and NEAFWA states have biological connections.



**WOOD THRUSH AND GOLDEN-WINGED WARBLER CONSERVATION:** Beyond the two focal species at least 18 other shared migrants winter in the project area. The long-term goal is to reduce the rate of forest habitat loss in multiple locations in Honduras to sustain, and eventually increase, the populations of priority migrants. To date, Southern Wings partners have facilitated habitat restoration, including the improvement of 335 acres of cacao and coffee plantations by planting 10,617 native trees, 38,530 coffee and cacao plants, and 777 fruit trees. Additionally, 17 ranchers planted 2,000 native trees and are working on grazing management to promote forest regeneration. Primary actions involve reforestation and implementation of best management practices for cattle. Approximately \$83,000 is needed. States with strong biological connections include CT, GA, IN, KY, ME, MD, MA, MI, MN, MO, MS, NH, NJ, NY, OH, PA, TN, TX, VT, VA, WV, and WI.



golden-winged warbler



wood thrush

**IMPROVING MIGRATORY BIRD HABITAT FOR WARBLERS, YELLOW-BILLED CUCKOOS, AND OLIVE-SIDED**

**FLYCATCHERS:** The country of Colombia is an integral part of the lifecycle of more than 170 migratory birds. The Colombian Andes have some of the highest rates of deforestation in Latin America. In Colombia, it is estimated that 87% of neotropical migratory birds occur in agroecosystems and more than 70 species have been found in coffee systems. This project targets conservation action on the eastern and western side of the central Andes. Southern Wings has supported work in the Andes for many years including helping create a conservation corridor by planting more than 500,000 saplings on 2,835 acres. In recent years, Southern Wings has supported the planting of over 250,500 trees and installed fencing to conserve over 2,700 acres. The project actions include restoration, outreach, and education. Approximately \$79,000 is needed. Most states east of the Mississippi River and AR, IA, LA, MN, MO, NE, ND, OK, SD, and TX have a strong biological connection to species supported by this project.



thick-billed parrot

**CONSERVATION IN WESTERN MEXICO:** More than 300 bird species, 45% being neotropical migratory birds, including the thick-billed parrot depend on the Sierra Madre Occidental mountains in Mexico for breeding, nonbreeding, or stopover habitat. The projects aims to conserve, restore, and manage mixed coniferous forests and monitor neotropical migratory birds.

The multi-year strategy supports the conservation of shared migratory birds that have biological connections to AZ, CA, CO, NM, TX, UT, and WA. Actions include implementing habitat conservation measures to conserve, restore and manage mixed coniferous forests and monitoring. Contributions of \$5,000 to \$20,000 will significantly advance implementation of conservation actions that total almost \$90,000.

**GRASSLANDS CONSERVATION:** Pronatura Noreste is leading partners to successfully protect and restore native grasslands in Mexico's El Tokio Grassland Priority Conservation Area (GPCA). Southern Wings has been a partner in this project since 2009 and has helped with the protection of over 150,000 acres of grassland habitat. The goal is to improve over 285,000 acres of grasslands through improved grassland management and erosion control. Actions include installing infrastructure to support grassland conservation and beneficial ranching practices, and environmental education.

To support these actions, approximately \$66,000 is needed. States with a strong biological connection to this project include CO, IA, KS, MT, NE, OK, SD, and WY.



El Tokio Grassland Priority Conservation Area (GPCA)



Sprague's Pipit



**VISION** - Healthy and sustainable populations of migratory birds throughout the Western Hemisphere that are enjoyed for generations to come.

**MISSION** - Encourage and facilitate state fish and wildlife agency participation in conservation projects for shared priority birds in Mexico, Central America, South America and the Caribbean.

## GRASSLAND CONSERVATION IN THE VALLES CENTRALES GPCA WITH THE BIRD CONSERVANCY OF THE ROCKIES AND THEIR PARTNERS:

### Successes include:

- Working with landowners whose land covers almost 700,000 acres;
- Impacting over 545,000 acres of grasslands; and
- Increasing the number of Sprague's Pipits by 15% annually across ranches.

Actions will continue to focus on landowner engagement, range management, and grasslands restoration. Approximately \$85,000 is needed for these action. Contributions of \$5,000 to \$20,000 can support specific conservation actions.



## CHIHUAHUAN DESERT



Baird's sparrow



Chestnut-collared longspur



Sprague's pipit



Savannah sparrow



Horned lark



Grasshopper sparrow



Ferruginous hawk



Golden eagle

Seven to 28 Species of Greatest Conservation Need (SGCN) in each WAFWA state have a biological connection to the species that winter in the **Chihuahuan Desert**.

MAP. States that belong to the Western Association of Fish & Wildlife Agencies (WAFWA).



## WHY SOUTHERN WINGS?

- Offers an easy, transparent, and flexible process for states to effectively conserve migratory bird SGCNs when they are not in the U.S.;
- Is a critical complement to in-state investment on migratory bird stop over and breeding habitats;
- Leverages limited state funds;
- Can provide non-federal match for SWG and PR funds;
- Identifies strategic, biologically relevant projects with high quality partners that provide the most bang for your conservation buck; and
- Helps keep species off the Endangered Species Act by addressing full annual cycle conservation needs.

**CERULEAN WARBLER CONSERVATION:** Ecuador has been identified as a priority focal area for cerulean warblers. Missouri Department of Conservation helped to implement bird-friendly best-practices across coffee farms surrounding the Tapichalaca Reserve. They also contributed to planting 1,600 native trees on coffee plantations in the buffer zone and 7,500 trees within the Reserve. In the last 5 years, they have restored over 1,020 acres. These conservation actions in the Ecuadorian Chocó rainforest impact migratory birds including the olive-sided flycatcher, cerulean warbler, Acadian Flycatcher, and more. This year partners will conduct reforestation, workshops and engage new farms in conservation in northwestern Ecuador. Approximately \$43,000 is needed.

**NEOTROPICAL FLYWAY PROJECT:** For migratory birds to successfully migrate, they typically depend on a series of stopover sites, which provide critical resources but most of the sites have yet to be identified. The project aims to (1) rapidly discover and map stopover sites; (2) determine habitat quality and stopover behavior at these sites; (3) develop conservation strategies at key stopover sites; and (4) train and build capacity among in-country biologists and managers to conserve sites and continue long-term monitoring. Missouri, Wisconsin, Minnesota, and Alaska have contributed to this work and the discovery of important stopover habitats for cerulean warblers and yellow-billed cuckoos along with the creation of a 200-acre reserve. This critical work needs \$150,000. Smaller amounts can be used to implement actions in specific areas and countries. All states in the eastern U.S. have a significant biological connection.

**RESTORATION OF WETLAND HYDROLOGY IN THE MARISMAS NACIONALES OF NAYARIT, MEXICO TO BENEFIT MIGRATORY WATERFOWL AND SHOREBIRDS:** Marismas Nacionales is a complex of wetlands that form a mixture of marine waters and 11 powerful rivers, creating a varied mosaic of ecosystems such as meanders, river deltas, marshes, freshwater lagoons, estuaries, coastal lagoons, intertidal wetlands and coastal dunes. OVIS and its partners with support from the Pacific Flyway Council will focus on restoring hydrological flows for the recovery and conservation of mangrove ecosystems, which provide foraging sites and energy resupply for thousands of waterfowl and shorebirds that migrate along the Pacific Flyway, and conduct seasonal bird monitoring, outreach, and education. Priority species include northern pintail, northern shoveler, mallard, American avocet, western sandpiper, red knot, and more. Total need from Southern Wings is \$16,000. State with strong connections to this project include WAFWA states.



**IDENTIFYING THREATS AND CONSERVATION HOTSPOTS FOR SHOREBIRDS IN THE PACIFIC FLYWAY:** A network of coastal and interior wetlands stretching from southern Alaska to Chile host significant aggregations of shorebirds and are critical for their survival. The Pacific Flyway Shorebird Survey and the Migratory Shorebird Project are filling gaps in species population status and trends to assess threats and identify priority sites for conservation. The primary species include western sandpiper, dunlin, marbled godwit, willet, black-bellied and snowplover, sanderling, greater yellowlegs, black-necked stilt, and American avocet and other migratory waterbirds including black brant.

Actions this year include conducting non-breeding and breeding bird surveys, improving the conservation and management of key areas, and conducting education, outreach, and training. The total budget is about \$66,000 with an unmet need of \$25,000 but \$5,000 to \$10,000 will significantly advance implementation of these actions for shorebird/ waterbirds/ waterfowl that have a biological connection to most Pacific Flyway states.



**MIGRATORY BIRD WINTERING GROUNDS CONSERVATION IN NICARAGUA:** Nicaragua is home to a total of 706 bird species, of which 190 are migratory. The highland cloud-forest ecosystems and lowland rainforests of Nicaragua provide important wintering areas for several species of migratory birds, including the golden-winged warbler, and stopover areas for many species like bay-breasted and Canada warbler. Nearly all the Golden-winged Warbler Focal Areas identified for Nicaragua are in this region. The work contributes to the strategies of the Conservation Investment Strategy for the Mid-Elevation Forests of Central and South America: strengthening small-scale sustainable agriculture, restoration, and influencing local people's behaviors. To date, the conservation actions have impacted over 3,000 acres. The budget is \$81,000. Focal species include golden-winged warbler, wood thrush, golden-cheeked warbler, and more. State agencies with SGCN connections include most states east of the Mississippi River and AR, IA, LA, MN, MO, NE, ND, OK, SD, and TX.



#### PROJECT MANAGEMENT

The state fish and wildlife agencies, regional state agency association, flyway councils or U.S.-based non-profit organization transfers funds to the on-the-ground partner, usually a local NGO. The in-country and/or U.S.-based NGO is responsible for overseeing project implementation, administering funds, and providing annual accomplishment reports. The Southern Wings coordinators ensure the project(s) are implemented and that reports are provided, and help address any issues that arise.

**EXPANDING THE MOTUS NETWORK IN NORTHERN CENTRAL AMERICA:** The Motus Wildlife Tracking System (Motus) is an international collaborative research network that allows researchers and managers to collect critical movement data on birds, enhancing our understanding. However, Central America, particularly Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador, and Southwestern Mexico remain underrepresented, with significant gaps in the monitoring network. Expanding the network in these areas will significantly increase our ability to take strategic conservation action in the places that matter the most. The total need is \$15,000 to \$20,000 in each of the three key areas. Most of the migratory species from the Pacific Flyway use western Central America during migration.

**CONSERVATION OF NEOTROPICAL MIGRATORY BIRDS IN THE DRY TROPICAL FORESTS OF EL SALVADOR:** Numerous SGCN's from throughout the Pacific flyway use Central America's Pacific coast during stopover, migration, and overwintering. In the lowlands portion of the dry tropical forest, 364 bird species have been recorded, including 38 SGCNs from across 12 western states. Two priority species in this region are the Southwestern willow flycatcher and yellow-billed cuckoo. Project activities include working with local landowners and the federal environmental department to conserve dry tropical forest, conduct bird monitoring to inform management, and support efforts to build local awareness. The project budget is \$250,000. The Southern Wings request is \$20,000 but contributions of \$5,000 would support implementation of project objectives. State agencies with SGCN connections include AK, AZ, CA, CO, ID, MT, NV, NM, OR, UT, WA, and WY.

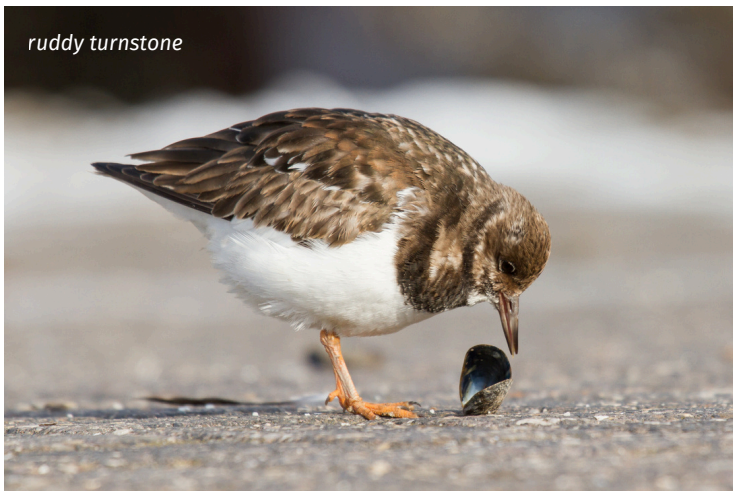


**UPPER PACIFIC COAST CONSERVATION**

**INITIATIVE:** The Upper Pacific Coast of Mexico, which includes wetlands along the coastal states of Nayarit, Sinaloa, Sonora, Baja California and Baja California Sur, contains some of the most important coastal wetlands in Mexico for waterfowl and shorebirds including species such as the Dusky Canada goose, Pacific black brant, whimbrel, long-billed curlew, and western sandpiper. DUMAC and their partners are proposing to restore wetland habitat and conduct environmental education workshops. Alaska, California, Oregon, and Washington have biological connections to this project.

*"black" brant**western sandpiper***CONSERVATION AND STEWARDSHIP OF KEY COASTAL BIRD HABITATS IN CHILE'S SOUTH-CENTRAL**

**BIODIVERSITY HOTSPOT:** Chile's south-central coastal wetlands and beaches provide critical stopover and non-breeding habitat for vulnerable migratory shorebirds and waterbirds traveling along the Pacific Americas Flyway. Partnering with the National Audubon Society, the Ministry of Environment, Fundación Cosmos, and regional municipalities, this project focuses on building constituencies for bird conservation and local economic development across three key coastal wetlands—the Rocuant-Andalién IBA, Queule-Monkul wetlands, and Maipo River Wetland Nature Sanctuary. Actions involve reducing human disturbances through community-led coastal stewardship, gathering migration data via standardized surveys and the regional Motus tracking network, and expanding the Central Chile Coastal Birding Trails. Approximately \$148,000 is requested from Southern Wings. Migratory species supported by this project have strong biological connections across multiple flyways, including AK, AL, AR, CA, CT, DE, FL, GA, IL, IN, IA, KS, KY, LA, MA, MD, ME, MI, MN, MS, NC, ND, NH, NJ, NV, NY, OH, OK, PA, RI, SC, SD, TN, VA, VT, WA, and WI.

*ruddy turnstone**lesser yellowlegs*

### BIRD-FRIENDLY PRACTICES FOR MIGRATORY BIRDS IN LOS TUXTLAS, VERACRUZ:

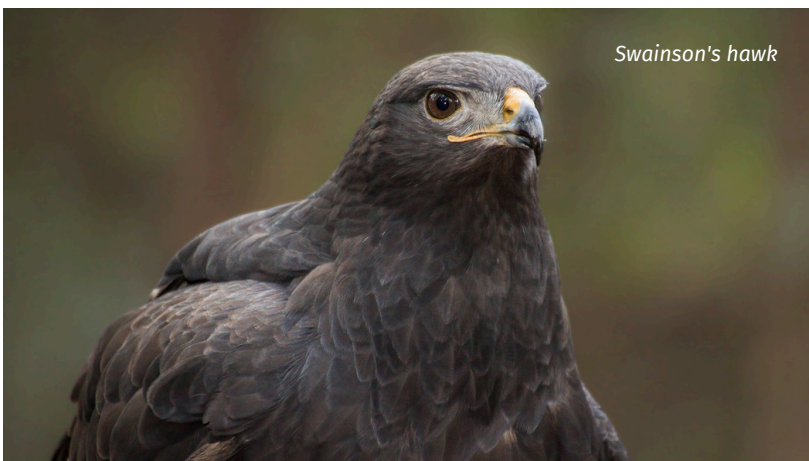
The Los Tuxtlas Biosphere Reserve represents the northernmost extent of tropical evergreen rainforest in the Americas and serves as a vital refuge and stopover site for over 200 migratory bird species. Working with Sendas A.C., the National Audubon Society, and local partners, this pilot project aims to recover forest connectivity and improve habitat quality around the Sontecomapan Lagoon. Actions include promoting regenerative silvopastoral and bird-friendly ranching practices across demonstration farms, planting 10,000 native trees, restoring riparian buffers, training local practitioners in bird monitoring, and conducting community environmental education. Approximately \$124,000 is needed. U.S. states with strong biological and conservation linkages along the Central and Mississippi Flyways include AL, AR, IA, KS, KY, LA, MN, MO, MS, ND, NE, OK, SD, TN, TX, and WI.



Canada warbler

## ANNUAL STATE INVESTMENT GOALS

The \$2 million annual goal for Southern Wings serves as a collective benchmark for broad participation, utilizing a formula modeled after State Wildlife Grants and Fall Flights. However, these figures represent a baseline for engagement rather than a funding ceiling. Given that the biological needs of migratory birds far exceed this \$2 million target, we encourage states to view these goals as a foundation upon which to build. What is your annual state investment goal?



Swainson's hawk



yellow billed cuckoo

#### LEARN MORE:

Scan the QR code to visit the Southern Wings website.



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SOUTHERN *Wings*

