

2023 – 2032

# Save Birds. Save Life.

## Bird Conservation Strategy

BirdLife Australia's plan to stop the extinction crisis and put native birds on a path to recovery.



Birds enrich all life on the planet.

Birds are our connection to the natural world, which we all depend on for life.

By tracking the health of birds, we track the pulse of our natural environment.

Rapid change brought about by humans is reducing nature's capacity to sustain birds and life for the future.

In the face of nature's changes, threatened bird species need our help to survive.

We need to set ambitious goals, collaborate at scale, and work together with local communities to save birds.

Rigorous science combined with practical on the ground action is essential to save Australia's birds and habitats.

Together we can recover threatened birds, restore nature and stop extinctions.



BirdLife Australia acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the Country on which we live and work, and we pay our respects to their Elders past and present. We gratefully recognise the immense contribution of Indigenous people to the knowledge and conservation of Australia's birds.

Cover: Sacred Kingfisher. Photo: Emma Parker | Above: Swift Parrot Photo: Jayden Gunn

## BirdLife has a proud history of protecting Australia's birds.

Working with scientists, partners, and a strong community of people passionate about birds and their habitats, we combine the best of conservation practice and sound science to achieve critical wins for Australia's most threatened birds.

Our strong foundations in science and partnership, and membership of BirdLife International, the world's largest nature conservation partnership, equip us for the challenge of stopping extinctions and saving birds. And this challenge has never been greater.

75% of the world's land surface has been significantly altered and 85% of wetlands globally have been lost. Unsustainable agriculture, forestry and fisheries drive habitat destruction and degradation worldwide; climate change, pollution, and invasive species present massive challenges; and it is crystal clear that the crises of biodiversity loss, climate change and health are linked.

Birds are our 'early warning' system for threats to nature and to the ecology that supports our forests, farms, and fisheries. And there is no doubt that birds are more vulnerable than ever. They urgently need our help to survive.

Australia's extinction crisis should alarm us all. It must serve as a catalyst for an ambitious, comprehensive, and evidenced plan for change, and that's what BirdLife will deliver through this Bird Conservation Strategy.

This bold strategy is a rally cry for us all to step up and do more to recover bird species and restore fragile ecosystems for future generations. Join us as we rise to meet the challenge of creating and sustaining a healthy planet for the benefit of all.

**Save Birds. Save Life.**

*Paul Sullivan*

Paul Sullivan, CEO



Beautiful Firetail. Photo: Matt Wright



Our incredible bird life

Australia is an avian wonderland, from the birds that are truly one of a kind, like the bizarre Plains-wanderer, to the array of colourful parrots and cockatoos that light up our skies, the soaring albatrosses and terns of our oceans and the tough little finches of our deserts.

Australia is home to 1,200 different birds, 45% of which are found nowhere else in the world.

Many of our birds perform vital roles within our ecosystems: they keep other animals, plants, and insects in balance, spread seeds and pollen to create new life, and maintain healthy habitats.

Birds respond quickly to changes in the environment and are early-warning messengers for the health of the planet. Their disappearance is an alarm bell signalling that something is wrong, and their presence a joyful clarion when things are in balance.

But birds are not just barometers of ecosystem health, they are also ambassadors for a healthier planet. Looking after birds means looking after everything in nature—and that includes us.


A fight for survival

We understand the enormity of the challenges we face in our mission to restore birds and their habitats. Rapid change is reducing nature's capacity to sustain every bird species and they urgently need our help to survive. Both in Australia and globally, we are living in an environmental and extinction crisis.


Unsustainable agriculture, forestry, and fisheries cause habitat destruction and degradation and, combined with climate change, pollution, and invasive species, put incredible pressure on our native birds, to the point that one in six Australian bird species is now threatened.

These changes are reducing nature's capacity to sustain birds and life for the future, they are also putting our own health and survival as a species on the line.


Research by the Intergovernmental Science Policy Panel on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services shows that




75% of the world's land surface has been significantly altered.




85% of wetlands have been lost.



66% of ocean area is experiencing increasing cumulative impacts.

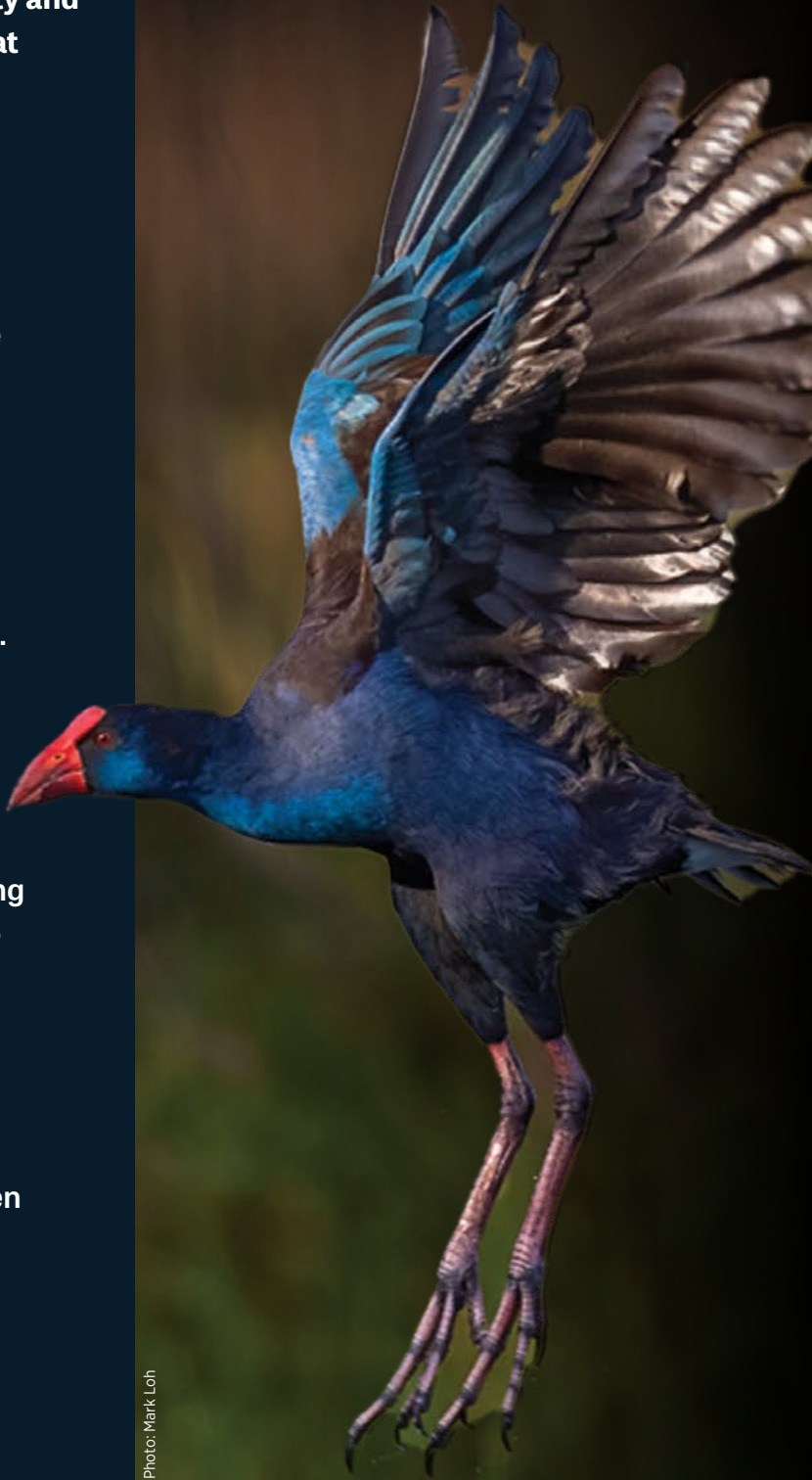


680 vertebrate species have been driven to extinction.



1 million species are estimated to be threatened with extinction.

Purple Swamphen. Photo: Mark Loh





## BirdLife Australia

BirdLife Australia is the national bird conservation charity that’s fighting to save birds and the natural life systems on which they depend.

Complex global challenges demand intelligent global responses and, by setting ambitious goals, collaborating at scale, and bringing together the best of conservation practice and sound science, BirdLife Australia plays a critical role in stopping extinctions and saving birds.

To drive transformational change, we must build power and influence. Together with scientists, nature and bird lovers, and partner organisations, we are urgently working to recover the most threatened species and restore local environments.

First Nations people, local communities, and our dedicated network are all critical to our work, and we equip people who are passionate about bird and habitat conservation with the skills and resources to do so.

It is through these partnerships, and the creation of evidence-led solutions, that we achieve fundamental change. This change not only conserves Australian birds but benefits birds globally through BirdLife International and collective efforts to achieve the UN goals for global biodiversity.

We know what needs to be done and that conservation works when it’s properly resourced. BirdLife Australia is proof that, when we join forces, we can achieve extraordinary outcomes.

### Vision

By 2050, birds and nature are valued, conserved, and restored, sustaining a healthy planet for the benefit of all people.

### Mission

By 2032, to put birds and nature on a path to recovery by informing and leading action to halt biodiversity loss and restore ecosystems.

### Goals

- 1 Stop human-driven extinction of threatened birds by 2032.
- 2 Improve the status of at least 30% of threatened birds by 2032.
- 3 Halt overall bird species population declines by 2050.





Focus

We drive change through four connected and evidence-led areas of focus

Species

We have achieved remarkable wins for some of Australia's most endangered birds, but we must do more to reverse the decline of our native species and put birds on a path to recovery.

As the national experts on bird conservation, we drive innovative, collaborative solutions that safeguard the long-term future of all Australian native birds.

Sites

We save birds by protecting where they live. Working with partners, we identify, conserve and restore a network of sites, including Key Biodiversity Areas (KBAs), that make a significant contribution to global biodiversity, and are connected and integrated into wider land and seascapes.

Systems

The systemic drivers perpetuating native bird and habitat decline can only be addressed through stronger legislation and policy, changed industry practices and an end to harmful subsidies.

Through evidence and advocacy, we influence policies, practices, incentives and decision-making processes that support bird and habitat conservation.

Society

We can't do this alone. By inspiring and equipping a constituency of people dedicated to safeguarding the future of birds, we amplify our message and act as the voice for Australia's birds.

We deliver sustainable change by collaborating with local communities, mobilising the Australian public, and both working with, and influencing, decision makers in public and private sectors.



White-winged Fairy-wren. Photo: Marie-Louise Myburgh



Approach

Partner

To successfully achieve our ambitious strategy and drive transformational change we must multiply our impact by strengthening our existing partnerships, establishing new ones and collaborating with local communities to lead change. Partnerships are instrumental in our work to:

- 1. **Ensure climate solutions are genuinely nature positive** such as carbon market mechanisms and financing for habitat restoration.
- 2. **Conduct research and obtain data** needed to identify and recover birds at risk of extinction.
- 3. **Deliver threatened species recovery actions** including establishing insurance populations for the most threatened species, conserving critical habitat and increasing areas in the reserve network.
- 4. **Influence policy and legislation** including advocating for the removal of harmful government incentives for clearing critical habitat (such as subsidising the logging of Swift Parrot habitat), increasing resources available for the recovery of threatened species, and influencing the design and implementation of stronger nature laws.
- 5. **Inform nature-positive business practices** by influencing consumer demand and market choices and by promoting solutions that balance profitability and biodiversity outcomes.

Step Up

Complex global challenges demand intelligent global responses. The global BirdLife partnership is committed to a set of imperatives to address the systemic drivers of species and habitat loss.

- Climate – advancing natural solutions to the climate and biodiversity crises
- Agriculture – supporting agricultural reforms including nature-friendly farming
- Marine – pioneering marine and coastal conservation and sustainable fisheries
- Connectivity – championing flyways and transboundary conservation worldwide
- Mainstream – integrating nature into government, corporate and financial decision-making
- Mobilise – engaging local, youth and urban communities in nature conservation
- Health - positively integrating biodiversity, environmental and human health

Scale up

We are increasing the scale of our Bird Conservation Programs and capacity to deliver our Conservation Action Plans, for example:

- 1. **Influencing policy** by championing stronger nature laws, especially to safeguard critical habitats; reversing the impacts of broadscale land-clearing and unsustainable forestry and mining; advocating for better water management and promoting appropriate fire regimes.
- 2. **Influencing business practices** such as working with urban planners to integrate biodiversity into the design of our cities and promoting practices that protect birds on farms and restore woodland bird habitat.
- 3. **Identifying and managing Key Biodiversity Areas** including advocating internationally, particularly across the East Asian-Australasian Flyway, marine KBAs, and other areas of high integrity.
- 4. **Leading threatened species recovery actions**, implementing emergency interventions for birds on the brink and coordinating with experts to develop and mobilise resources for the implementation of strong recovery plans.



Eastern Curlew. Photo: Duade Paton





Photo: Alex Bradbury

## Nature-based Solutions

BirdLife works with corporates, landowners and carbon project lead partners to co-design best practice restoration projects in priority landscapes for threatened species. These solutions deliver both carbon and biodiversity outcomes for declining bird species as well as benefits to local communities.



Spotted Pardalote. Photo: Dennis Wöhner

## Birds on Farms

Our Birds on Farms program supports landholders to restore bird populations and habitats on private rural properties. Through training workshops, site visits, tailored habitat plans and support accessing incentives, we work with landholders to create landscapes that are both agriculturally productive and profitable and which help to restore woodland bird habitats.



Tracking Regent Honeyeaters. Photo: Max Breckenridge





Birds enrich all life on the planet, and we are determined to keep Australian birds thriving.

Great aspirations won't save nature, reverse climate change, or stop an extinction crisis – only bold action will.

Join us in putting birds and nature on a path to recovery.

United, we will create a world where birds and nature are valued, conserved, and restored, sustaining a healthy planet for the benefit of all.

## Save Birds. Save Life.

Black-necked Stork. Photo: Kirsty Richardson





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