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# News Release



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## Secretary Norton Announces Grants in 16 States, 21 Latin American and Caribbean Countries to Conserve Migratory Birds

California Projects: <http://birdhabitat.fws.gov/NMBCA/images/2004/CA.pdf>  
On the Web [http://birdhabitat.fws.gov/NMBCA/images/2004/CA\\_AK.pdf](http://birdhabitat.fws.gov/NMBCA/images/2004/CA_AK.pdf)

Interior Secretary Gale Norton today announced 40 grants to conservation organizations working in 16 U.S. states, 21 Latin American and Caribbean countries, and Puerto Rico to support neotropical migratory bird conservation. The grants total \$3.8 million in grants and will be matched by \$16 million in contributions by partnering organizations.

Two of the grants are for projects that will be carried out in part in California. They are:

- \$143,280 in funding for the Bird Use of Restored Riparian Habitat in the Overwintering Period Project, located in California's Shasta, Glenn, Tehama, Sacramento, and San Joaquin counties. Project partners also will be carrying out activities in Mexico to complement and further advance the conservation goals of this binational project. Much effort has been invested in riparian habitat restoration in California's Central Valley, yet little is known about migratory birds' response to it.
- \$250,000 for the Protecting Neotropical Migrants from Invasive Species on North American Islands Project off the coasts of Alaska and California. Project partners will also be carrying out activities off the coasts of Canada and Mexico. The presence of introduced species such as rats, cats, foxes, goats and pigs on the islands have had devastating effects on some endemic and migratory bird populations.

There are 341 species of nearctic-neotropical migrants, birds that breed in the United States and Canada, and winter in Latin America. Examples of these birds include species of plovers, terns, hawks, cranes, warblers, and sparrows.

“The conservation of neotropical migratory birds extends beyond our borders and depends on partnerships with other nations as well as states, tribes, conservation organizations and many others here at home,” Secretary Norton said at a meeting of the Migratory Bird Conservation Commission. “Through these grants, the Interior Department is supporting cooperative conservation projects from Maine to Argentina.”

The Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Act of 2000 establishes a matching grants program to fund projects that promote the conservation of neotropical migratory birds in the United States, Latin America and the Caribbean. The money can be used to protect, research, monitor and manage these birds' populations and habitats, as well as to conduct law enforcement and community outreach and education. By law, 75 percent of the money goes to projects in Latin America and Caribbean countries while 25 percent goes to projects in the United States.

“Neotropical migratory birds are important for our ecosystems,” Norton said. “They work as nature’s pest controllers and pollinators and provide many hours of enjoyment for birdwatchers and outdoor enthusiasts.”

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is the principal Federal agency responsible for conserving, protecting and enhancing fish, wildlife and plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. The Service manages the 95-million-acre National Wildlife Refuge System which encompasses 544 national wildlife refuges, thousands of small wetlands and other special management areas. It also operates 69 national fish hatcheries, 63 fishery resource offices and 81 ecological services field stations. The agency enforces Federal wildlife laws, administers the Endangered Species Act, manages migratory bird populations, restores nationally significant fisheries, conserves and restores wildlife habitat such as wetlands, and helps foreign governments with their conservation efforts. It also oversees the Federal Aid program that distributes hundreds of millions of dollars in excise taxes on fishing and hunting equipment to State fish and wildlife agencies.

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