

# BIRDS & CLIMATE CHANGE



## AND WHAT IT MEANS FOR SOUTHEAST ALASKA

The evidence of climate change is everywhere these days, and nowhere more apparent than here in Southeast Alaska. Glaciers are receding dramatically, the rainforest is drying out, and “winter” is nearly non-existent. We can also see the effects of climate change when studying birds.

Climate change affects birds in different ways. We are seeing more and more uncommon or rare species popping up unexpectedly, and we are also noticing a trend in fewer numbers of certain species showing up year after year. Along those lines, we have seen a change in the timing of migration, where certain birds are showing up earlier or leaving later than previously recorded.

Birds can also feel the effects of climate change more directly, for instance, through changes in the weather. Consistent weather abnormalities can lead to critical changes in habitat, which can lead to other problems, like loss of food sources, predators, or disease. Worst of all, climate change can bring on a combination of several of these detrimental factors that will affect birds, making the impact even worse.

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*“Once upon a time, when women were birds, there was the simple understanding that to sing at dawn and to sing at dusk was to heal the world through joy. The birds still remember what we have forgotten, that the world is meant to be celebrated.”*

*— Terry Tempest Williams,  
When Women Were Birds*

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Photo courtesy of Amanda Pilley



European Starlings on a wharf in Juneau, Alaska. Courtesy of Bob Armstrong. ([www.naturebob.com](http://www.naturebob.com))

## How climate change is affecting birds

- **Migration times are shifting**  
In combination with warming spring temperatures, many species of birds are arriving to their summer homes earlier than in past recordings
- **Egg laying is occurring earlier**  
Earlier migration arrival times mean earlier nesting!
- **Distributions are changing**  
The National Audubon Society recently published [The Climate Report](#), illustrating predicted distributions of North American birds ([www.climate.audubon.org](http://www.climate.audubon.org))
- **Ecological communities are disrupted**  
Earlier migrations may mean more competition for food, lack of nesting material, or new predators.
- **Extinction risks are on the rise**  
If a particular species is restricted in its range, it will find it harder to adapt to a changing climate.

## Conclusions

- **Climate change affects bird behavior, range, and population.**
- **Some birds are already experiencing negative impacts**
- **In the future, climate change will put more birds at risk of decline or extinction.**

# Local Birds Affected By Climate Change

The following are just a few of the birds common to Southeast Alaska that are feeling the effects of climate change. All statistics are current, as reported by the National Audubon Society in the 2016 [Audubon Birds & Climate Report](#). Have you spotted any of these birds lately?

For more detailed information, & to read the full report, go to: [www.audubon.org](http://www.audubon.org)

All photos on the following page are courtesy of Bob Armstrong. See more of Bob's work at: [www.naturebob.com](http://www.naturebob.com)



### RUFOUS HUMMINGBIRD

A feisty hummingbird with an impressive migration range; one of the signals of summer.

**By the year 2080:**

Summer Range Lost: **59%**  
Winter Range Lost: **100%**



### BOHEMIAN WAXWING

Waxwings are some of the most exotic looking birds that live in Alaska

**By the year 2080:**

Summer Range Lost: **100%**  
Winter Range Lost: **52%**



### AMERICAN DIPPER

One of 4 species of Water Ouzel, and the only one found in North America.

**By the year 2080:**

Summer Range Lost: **88%**  
Winter Range Lost: **58%**



### VARIED THRUSH

Every Alaskan awaits the tell-tale call of the Varied Thrush announcing summer is here.

**By the year 2080:**

Summer Range Lost: **82%**  
Winter Range Lost: **44%**



### WILSONS WARBLER

An unmistakable and much loved summer visitor.

**By the year 2080:**

Summer Range Lost: **76%**  
Winter Range Lost: **84%**



### AMERICAN BALD EAGLE

The classic icon of Alaska, and the nation's official bird.

**By the year 2080:**

Summer Range Lost: **74%**  
Winter Range Lost: **58%**



### COMMON LOON

Loons have an unmistakable call and rarely come to shore.

**By the year 2080:**

Summer Range Lost: **56%**  
Winter Range Lost: **75%**



### HAIRY WOODPECKER

Often seen scrambling up tree trunks in search of insects.

**By the year 2080:**

Summer Range Lost: **78%**  
Winter Range Lost: **30%**



### PINE SISKIN

Lively flocks are often found at feeders in the summer.

**By the year 2080:**

Summer Range Lost: **60%**  
Winter Range Lost: **42%**

# WHAT YOU CAN DO NOW TO HELP PROTECT BIRDS

## Create a Bird-Friendly Yard

Yards are micro-habitats that can be optimized for birds! Help birds stay healthy by using fewer pesticides and by gardening with native landscaping, which will provide vital food, shelter, and cover for birds. Learn more at: [athome.audubon.org](http://athome.audubon.org).

## Provide Clean Bird-feeding Stations

It is crucial to keep your feeders clean! By doing this you will mitigate bird diseases while helping birds keep up their energy when they need it most.

## Make Windows Bird-Safe to Prevent Collisions

You can help prevent bird-strikes! Some ways you can do this are by re-locating feeders, covering the outside glass with screen or netting, or by covering the glass with a one-way transparent film that permits people on the inside to see out, but makes the window appear opaque on the outside.

## Purchase a Federal Duck Stamp

Funds from Duck Stamps help protect vital habitat, such as wetlands, for birds and other wildlife.

## Keep Cats Indoors

It's good for birds and cats!

## Get Involved With Your Local Important Bird Area

Did you know that the Mendenhall Wetlands State Game Refuge is a globally recognized IBA? You can help with cleanup, citizen science, and field trips. To get started, ask someone from the Juneau Audubon Society!

## Talk To Your Neighbors About Birds

Really. Begin a conversation in your community with your neighbors, colleagues, and local leaders about why it's important to protect your local birds, and share what YOU are doing on behalf of birds.

## Support Local Bird and Environmental Groups

Consider joining the Juneau Audubon Society or the National Audubon Society, or any of the dozens of environmental groups in your hometown that have the best interest of birds in mind. Start with us! Go to our website at: [www.Juneau-Audubon-Society.org](http://www.Juneau-Audubon-Society.org) today!

## DIGITAL RESOURCES

### Alaska Audubon

[www.AK.Audubon.org](http://www.AK.Audubon.org)

### All About Birds

[www.AllAboutBirds.org](http://www.AllAboutBirds.org)

### American Birding Association

[www.ABA.org](http://www.ABA.org)

### American Bird Conservancy

[www.ABCBirds.org](http://www.ABCBirds.org)

### Birdlife.org

[www.BirdLife.org](http://www.BirdLife.org)

### Bob Armstrong's Nature Alaska

[www.NatureBob.com](http://www.NatureBob.com)

### eBird

[www.eBird.org](http://www.eBird.org)

### The Great Backyard Bird Count

[www.GBBC.birdcount.org](http://www.GBBC.birdcount.org)

### Juneau Audubon Society

[www.Juneau-Audubon-Society.org](http://www.Juneau-Audubon-Society.org)

### Migratory Bird Joint Ventures

[www.MBJV.org](http://www.MBJV.org)

### National Audubon Society

[www.Audubon.org](http://www.Audubon.org)

### Partners in Flight

[www.PartnersInFlight.org](http://www.PartnersInFlight.org)

### Smithsonian Migratory Bird Center

[www.nationalzoo.si.edu](http://www.nationalzoo.si.edu)

### Wild Birds

[www.WildBirds.com](http://www.WildBirds.com)

## Contact Us

Send us an email or go to our website for more information about birds, environmental education, & environmental conservation in Southeast Alaska.

[info@juneau-audubon-society.org](mailto:info@juneau-audubon-society.org)

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