

Researchers evaluate conservation of island bird species in the context of climate change

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The island scrub-jay is the only island endemic passerine species in the continental United States. Although it is not classified as endangered, the species faces a number of threats to its long-term survival, and climate change is expected to exacerbate those challenges. A new study discusses the conservation management of the island scrub-jay, and highlights how management of this species may set the stage for management planning of many species in a changing world.

"The island scrub-jay poses an interesting problem for conservationists today, because right now, the species doesn't seem to be experiencing a problem" said Scott Morrison, Director of Science for The Nature Conservancy of California. "But, we know that with [climate change](#) there are serious threats on the horizon. So we have an opportunity to act now to prevent problems in the future."

The study, published in the December issue of *Bioscience*, cites the continuing spread of diseases such as [West Nile virus](#), diseases whose spread is enhanced by climate change, as a critical challenge for the conservation of species such as the island scrub-jay. The 20 authors, representing 16 research and management organizations, outline four proactive management options for species like the island scrub-jay: captive propagation, vaccination against diseases such as West Nile virus, implementation of biosecurity measures and the establishment of a second free-living population.

"This paper provides a thorough discussion of the threats facing island

species in light of climate change and habitat loss," said Alan Lieberman, Director of Regional Conservation programs for [San Diego Zoo](#) Global's Institute of Conservation Research. "We hope this work will provide a template for the conservation of the many other island bird species that are facing the same challenges."

Provided by Zoological Society of San Diego

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