

Cornell and Land Trust Alliance partner to protect birds on private land

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Bobolink on a Mississippi Valley Conservancy sign. Credit: Cornell University

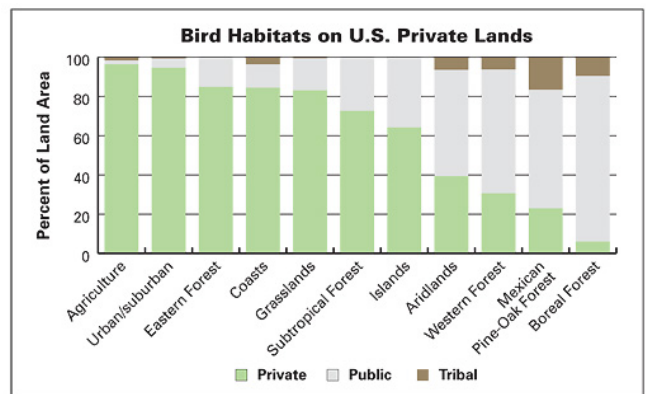
The Cornell Lab of Ornithology and the Land Trust Alliance are partnering to help protect birds on private lands. The goal of the new Land Trust Bird Conservation Initiative and [associated website](#) is to improve conservation for declining species by pairing the bird conservation community with land trusts, which collectively protect more than 24 million acres of private land nationwide.

"It's a natural fit," said Ron Rohrbaugh, the Cornell Lab's Assistant Director of Conservation Science. "Thousands of local and regional land trusts are already protecting private land for all sorts of reasons. This initiative enhances that work by adding specific strategies for [bird conservation](#) and by providing land trusts with new tools and science support to help them make even better decisions about which lands are worth their resources."

"Land trusts across the United States make critical contributions to conserving birds and, in return, birds benefit land trusts by helping them grow support and increase their capacity to conserve land," said Erin Heskett, the Alliance's director of national and regional services. "Our ongoing, cooperative work with the Cornell Lab highlights the role land trusts can play in sustainably

increasing the pace and effectiveness of bird conservation."

A recent survey conducted by the Cornell Lab found that birds and bird habitat are a priority for two-thirds of land trusts. Many land trusts are already contributing to bird conservation in a variety of ways, such as putting land under easement and managing their lands to enhance habitat for birds. At the same time, a high percentage of land trusts expressed a desire for new resources, tools, and technical support to amplify and sharpen the focus of their bird conservation efforts.



Credit: The State of the Birds 2013, Report on Private Lands. Download high resolution graph.

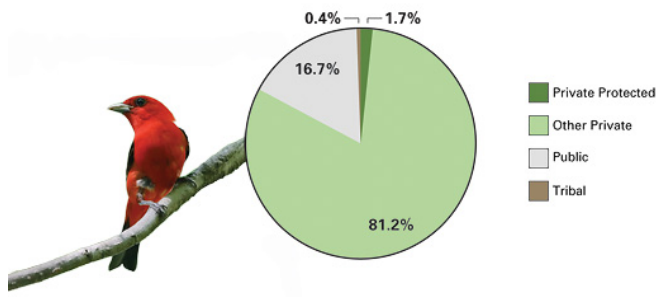
With that in mind, the Alliance and Cornell Lab partnered to create the Land Trust Bird Conservation Initiative and website. The Resources Directory of [birdtrust.org](#) is chock-full of technical information and funding resources that were gleaned from conservation partners across the United States, and are intended to aid land trusts in strategic bird conservation.

The Cornell Lab is also working to connect land

trusts that share oversight of one or more bird species of concern in a region. The Lab holds workshops and provides technical support to help these collaborative groups strengthen bird conservation in their region.

"The first thing any land trust should do is to look for birding or bird conservation organizations in your area with whom you can partner," said Conservancy Director Abbie Church. "It's true for nearly every land trust: we have limited staff capacity and funding. You identify organizations that can help you so you're not reinventing the wheel."

Funding for the Land Trust Bird Conservation Initiative and birdtrust.org was provided by the Sarah K. de Coizart Foundation, the Land Trust Alliance's New York State Conservation Partnership Program, and Wings Over Western Waters via resources from the Intermountain West Joint Venture and Pacific Birds Habitat Joint Venture.



More than 80 percent of the land used by eastern forest species, such as Scarlet Tanager, are privately owned. Source: The State of the Birds 2013, Report on Private Lands. Scarlet Tanager image by Kelly Colgan Azar.

Provided by Cornell University

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