

MAKING **A DIFFERENCE**

The conservation impact
of the BirdLife Partnership



Together we are BirdLife International A Partnership for nature and people



www.birdlife.org

BirdLife International is the world's largest nature conservation partnership. Through our unique local-to-global approach, we deliver high impact and long-term conservation for the benefit of nature and people

INTRODUCTION

Biodiversity is in decline across the world, with unsustainable development destroying natural habitats and driving species extinct. This is reducing the capacity of our planet to sustain us into the future, and often causes the poorest in society to lose out. BirdLife International is playing a unique and critical role in tackling this crisis.

BirdLife is the world's largest nature conservation Partnership, comprising 120 national nature conservation organisations in 118 countries worldwide. Our unique structure – a democratic partnership of grassroots organisations – and the solid scientific foundation to our conservation programmes helps us to deliver high impact and long-term conservation that benefits both nature and people. Through a wealth of summary statistics and a selection of recent success stories, this report explores the many ways in which BirdLife is making a difference.

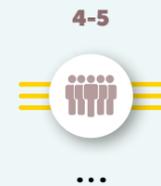
We profile some of the key achievements of the BirdLife Partnership in recent years, and the conservation targets we collectively aspire to achieve by the end of the decade. These address conserving environments from the open ocean to tropical rainforests, tackling threats ranging from invasive alien species to climate change, and employing conservation approaches from species recovery to protecting the most critical sites. The data quantifying these achievements derive from a recent systematic survey completed by all BirdLife Partners.

This review demonstrates that BirdLife is uniquely placed to deliver long-term sustainable solutions that are already providing substantial biodiversity benefits. With the support of donors, governments, businesses and civil society, we can scale up these successes and achieve substantial long-lasting benefits for nature and people.

HIGHLIGHTS

A partnership for nature

The 120 BirdLife Partners have over 3 million members and over 7 million supporters.



Preventing extinctions

483 threatened bird species have directly benefited from action by BirdLife Partners since 2013.



Tackling invasives

During 2013-2015, 30 successful invasive alien species eradications took place.



Safeguarding sites

Over 2,000 of the most important sites for biodiversity directly benefited from action by BirdLife Partners since 2013.



Sustaining forests

BirdLife is contributing to the conservation of nearly 2 million ha of forest.



Combatting climate change

BirdLife has developed community adaptation action plans at 59 of the most important sites for nature.



Saving seabirds

Bycatch of albatrosses has been reduced by over 99% in some fisheries.



Conserving migratory species

BirdLife Partners have taken action against the illegal killing of birds at 292 sites.



Empowering local communities

BirdLife works with more than 4,000 local community conservation groups worldwide.



Whiskered Tern *Chlidonias hybrid*.
Photo Neelsky/Shutterstock

A PARTNERSHIP FOR NATURE

BirdLife International – the world’s largest nature conservation Partnership – is driven by a belief that local communities, working for nature in their own places but connected through a strong global partnership, is the key to sustaining life on this planet

Adopting a unique local-to-global approach

BirdLife is a family of independent, not-for-profit, national organisations who share a common conservation ethos and a dedication to saving the world’s birds and biodiversity. Each Partner organisation is not simply a member of BirdLife: they are BirdLife in their respective country, adopting a strategy and programmatic priorities shared across the Partnership. This unique local-to-global approach delivers high impact and long-term conservation that benefits both nature and people.

Pioneering conservation science

Science underpins all of BirdLife’s work. Science helps to set priorities, inform action on the ground, and shape policy and advocacy. Through our commitment to rigorous data-gathering and analysis, we ensure that scarce resources are targeted effectively. We identify the species at greatest risk of extinction, the most important sites for their conservation, the most urgent threats to address, the policies that we can influence and use for better biodiversity conservation, and the most appropriate and effective responses.

Inspiring young people.
Photo Vivian Fu



Scaly Ground-roller *Geobiastes squamiger*.
Photo Pete Morris

SAFEGUARDING SITES

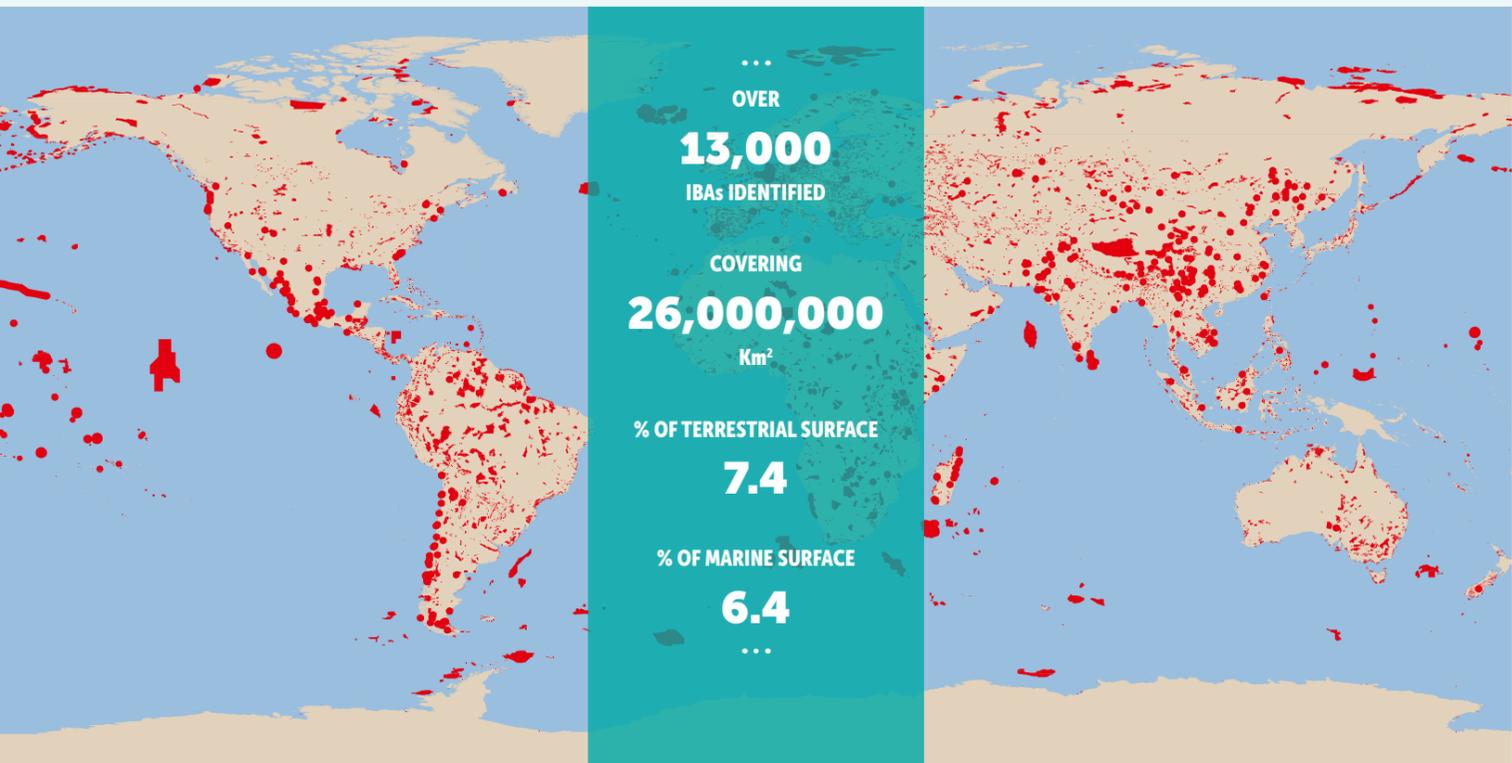
Important Bird and Biodiversity Areas (IBAs) constitute the largest and most comprehensive global network of sites that are significant for the persistence of biodiversity. Over the past four decades, over 13,000 IBAs have been identified across virtually all of the world's countries and territories, both on land and at sea

Informing protected-area networks

Around the world, the publication of national IBA inventories has enabled Governments to improve and expand their protected-area networks. In Europe, the designation of Special Protection Areas as part of the Natura 2000 network was strongly influenced by BirdLife's IBA inventories. Currently, more than half a million km², or two-third of the area, of IBAs in the EU are covered by SPAs. IBAs have similarly been used to identify 'shadow lists' of potential Ramsar sites (wetlands of international importance) in many parts of the world.

Protecting Madagascar's wetlands

In the late 1990s, BirdLife undertook a two-year programme of IBA surveys in Madagascar. This pioneering work identified the importance of the country's wetlands. In 2003, BirdLife, and a fledgling NGO, Asity Madagascar (now the BirdLife Partner), began a project to save the Mahavavy-Kinkony Wetland Complex, and later too, the Mangoky-Ihotry Wetland Complex and Tsitongambarika Forest. On the 21 April 2015, after years of tireless campaigning, all three sites were decreed protected areas by the Government of Madagascar.



IBAs MONITORED BY BIRDLIFE PARTNERS



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IBAs DIRECTLY BENEFITED FROM BIRDLIFE ACTION



...

IBAs FORMALLY PROTECTED THROUGH BIRDLIFE ADVOCACY



Tagged Wandering Albatross *Diomedea exulans*. Photo Jon Ashburner

SAVING SEABIRDS

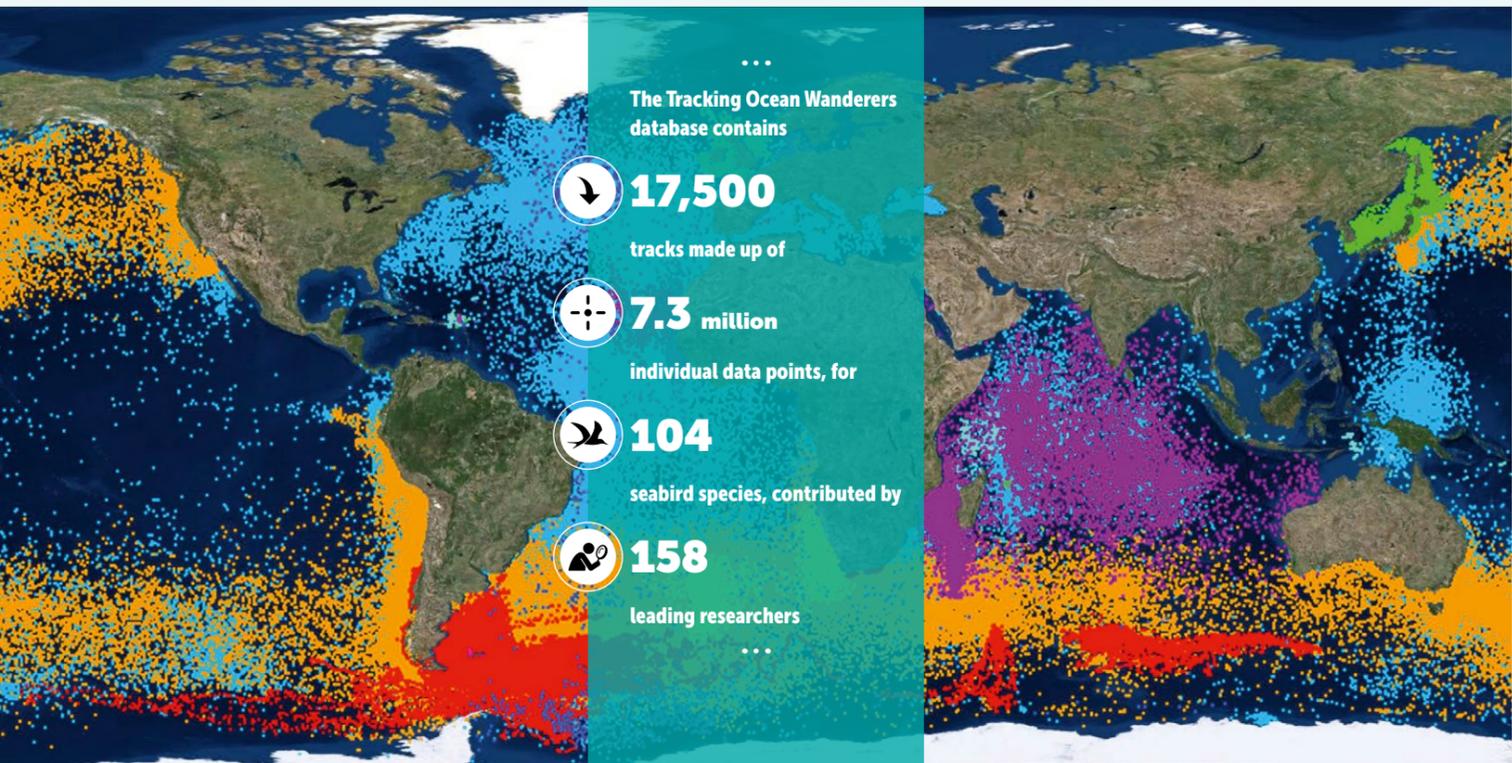
Seabirds are one of the world's most threatened bird groups. They are also vital indicators of global ocean health. BirdLife has developed innovative solutions to safeguard seabirds and the wider marine environment

Putting seabirds on the map

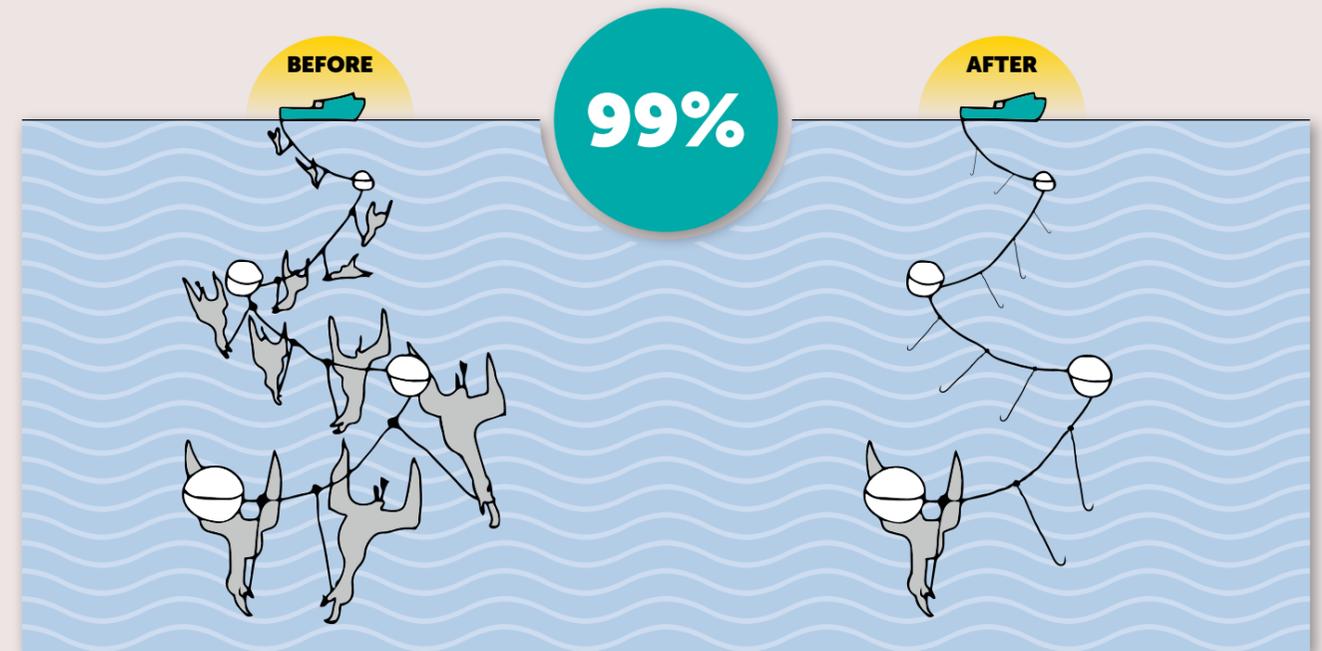
Working with marine experts around the globe, BirdLife has created the largest global seabird tracking database in the world. Analysing seabird movements has enabled us to identify over 3,500 critical sites (IBAs) across all five oceans. This work is also pinpointing where at-sea threats have the greatest negative impact and is thus guiding where protection measures are most urgently needed. By using seabirds as indicators, we can identify where some of the greatest conservation gains in the marine environment can be made.

Ending seabird bycatch

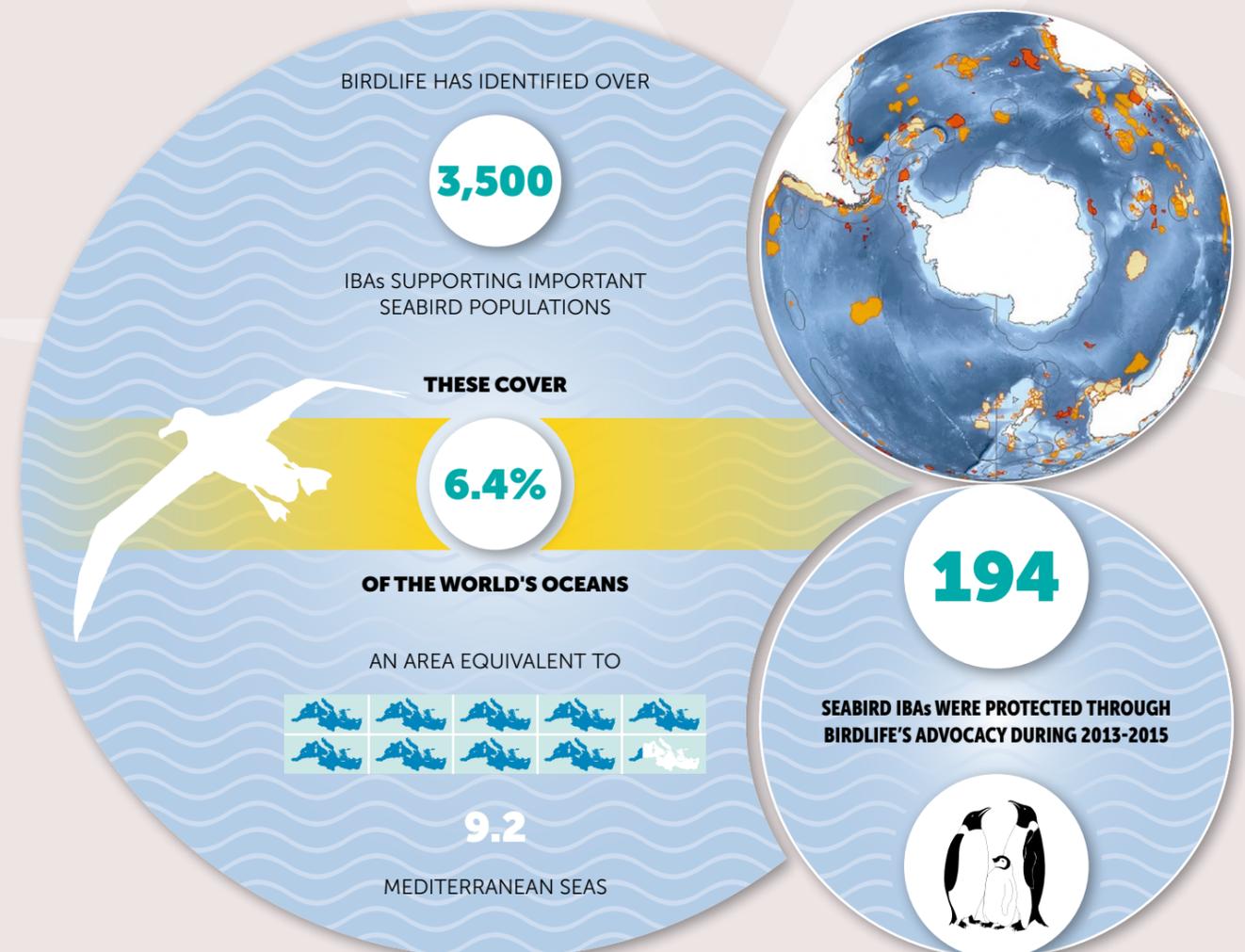
Hundreds of thousands of seabirds per year are caught and drowned on baited longline hooks and nets or killed by collisions with trawl cables. Solving the seabird bycatch crisis requires working directly with the fishing industry. BirdLife's Albatross Task Force is an international team of seabird bycatch mitigation instructors working directly with fisherman. In the South African hake trawl fishery, the team have achieved a spectacular reduction in albatross bycatch of 99% over six years. Efforts are now well underway to replicate this success elsewhere.



Over six years, albatross bycatch in South Africa was reduced by



BY 2020 BIRDLIFE AIMS TO HAVE REDUCED SEABIRD BYCATCH IN ALL ITS PRIORITY FISHERIES BY 80%





← Seychelles Warbler *Acrocephalus sechellensis*. Photo rsund5/Imgur

PREVENTING EXTINCTIONS

BirdLife's science shows that one in eight of the world's 10,000 bird species are threatened with extinction, with over 200 Critically Endangered species at imminent risk. We have identified the actions needed and have already begun to turn the tide

Saving a Seychelles songbird

In 1968, the International Council of Bird Preservation (the forerunner to BirdLife) purchased Cousin Island in the Seychelles in a last ditch effort to save one of the world's rarest birds. In 2015, BirdLife officially declared Seychelles Warbler *Acrocephalus sechellensis* to be no longer threatened. More than four decades of pioneering conservation work had both saved the species and transformed Cousin from a near-lifeless coconut plantation to an island paradise rich in biodiversity. The Seychelles Warbler is regarded as a model in effective species recovery.

Ending India's falcon massacre

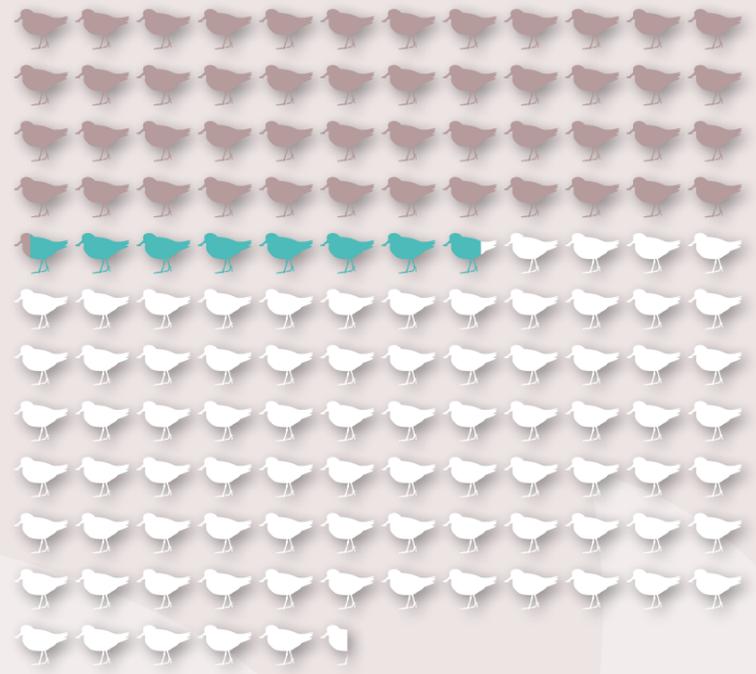
In 2013, the conservation world was left stunned when news emerged of the annual massacre of tens of thousands of Amur Falcons *Falco amurensis* in Nagaland, India. BirdLife immediately launched an international appeal to support the Bombay Natural History Society (BirdLife in India) in tackling the problem. Their response, implemented in collaboration with the Nagaland Government, and local NGOs, has succeeded in halting this practice, safeguarding the future for this spectacular species.



↻ Amur Falcon *Falco amurensis*. Photo Marc Guyt/Agami

483

GLOBALLY THREATENED BIRD SPECIES OUT OF 1,375 BENEFITED FROM BIRDLIFE ACTION DURING 2013-2015



74

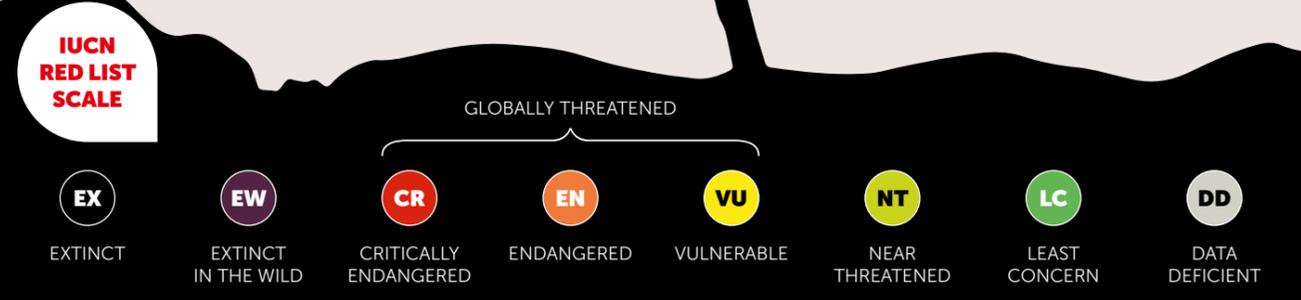
MORE WILL BE TARGETED FOR ACTION BY 2020


10 BIRD SPECIES

BIRDLIFE CLASSIFIES 217 BIRD SPECIES AS CRITICALLY ENDANGERED, MEANING THAT THEY FACE AN EXTREMELY HIGH RISK OF IMMINENT EXTINCTION. BIRDLIFE'S AMBITIOUS TARGET IS TO ENSURE THAT BY 2020 ↘



30
OF THESE ARE DOWN-LISTED TO LOWER CATEGORIES OF THREAT AS A RESULT OF BIRDLIFE'S ACTION



San Rafael Forest.
Photo Guyra Paraguay

SUSTAINING FORESTS

Tropical deforestation is one of the gravest ecological tragedies of our age. Nearly two-thirds of bird species are found in forests and many can live nowhere else. BirdLife is leading the way to save forests, the profusion of life they contain, the vital services they provide and the livelihoods they support

Protecting an important Asian ecosystem

The Western Siem Pang Forest in Cambodia supports an astonishing five Critically Endangered bird species, including 50% of the world's White-shouldered Ibises *Pseudibis davisoni* and 10% of the world's Giant Ibises *Thaumatibis gigantea*. For more than a decade BirdLife has been working to conserve the area – carrying out vital research and lobbying the government for formal protection. These efforts have been remarkably successful. As of 9th May 2016, the Government of Cambodia has declared all 132,321 ha of the forest as a Wildlife Sanctuary.

Innovating solutions for conserving forest

The remaining fragments of Atlantic forest in South America are high priorities for conservation. San Rafael in Paraguay contains more bird species (over 400) than any other site in the country. Since 1999, Guyra Paraguay (BirdLife in Paraguay) has led an international campaign to fundraise for land purchase within San Rafael. Today, they own and manage over 6,500 ha. Their innovative approach is based on strong collaboration with local communities and they recently pioneered a model for land purchase involving joint ownership with indigenous people.

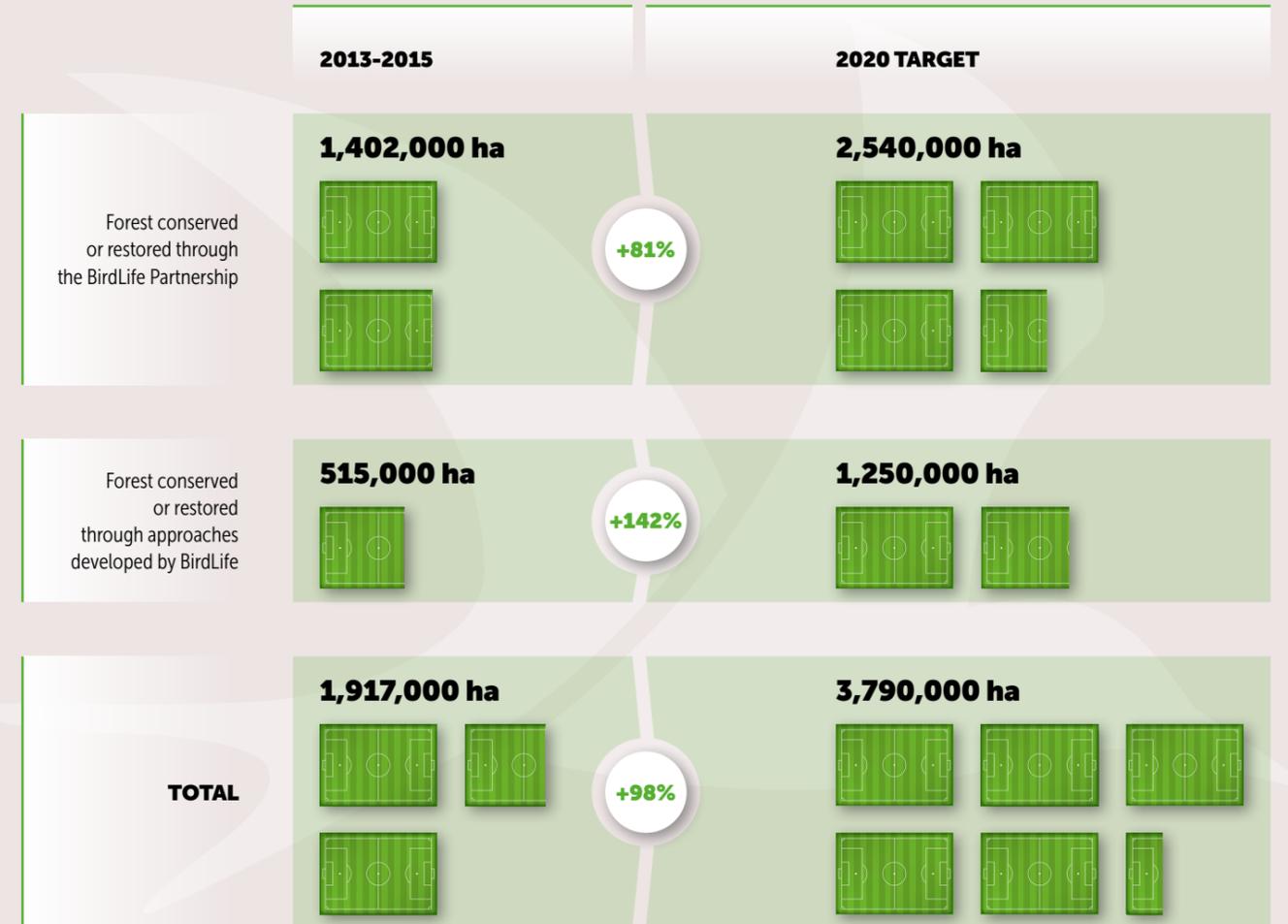
White-shouldered Ibis *Pseudibis davisoni*.
Photo Jonathan C. Eames



BirdLife is conserving large areas of forest and has ambitious targets for 2020



1 MILLION FOOTBALL PITCHES
≈714,000 ha



Wader flock. Photo Harvey van Diek/Agami

CONSERVING MIGRATORY SPECIES

The conservation of migratory birds depends on international collaboration and a coordinated response along their migratory routes. With a network of national partners spanning the globe, BirdLife is uniquely placed to provide such a response

Tackling illegal bird-killing

BirdLife has recently completed the first systematic review of the scale of illegal bird-killing in the Mediterranean. The findings make for grim reading – each year an estimated 25 million birds are unlawfully shot or trapped in the region. Our work has identified the species most affected and the locations where the problem is greatest. For instance, 34% of these birds are killed or trapped at just 20 locations. Armed with this vital information, BirdLife Partners around the region are now taking steps to end this illegal slaughter.

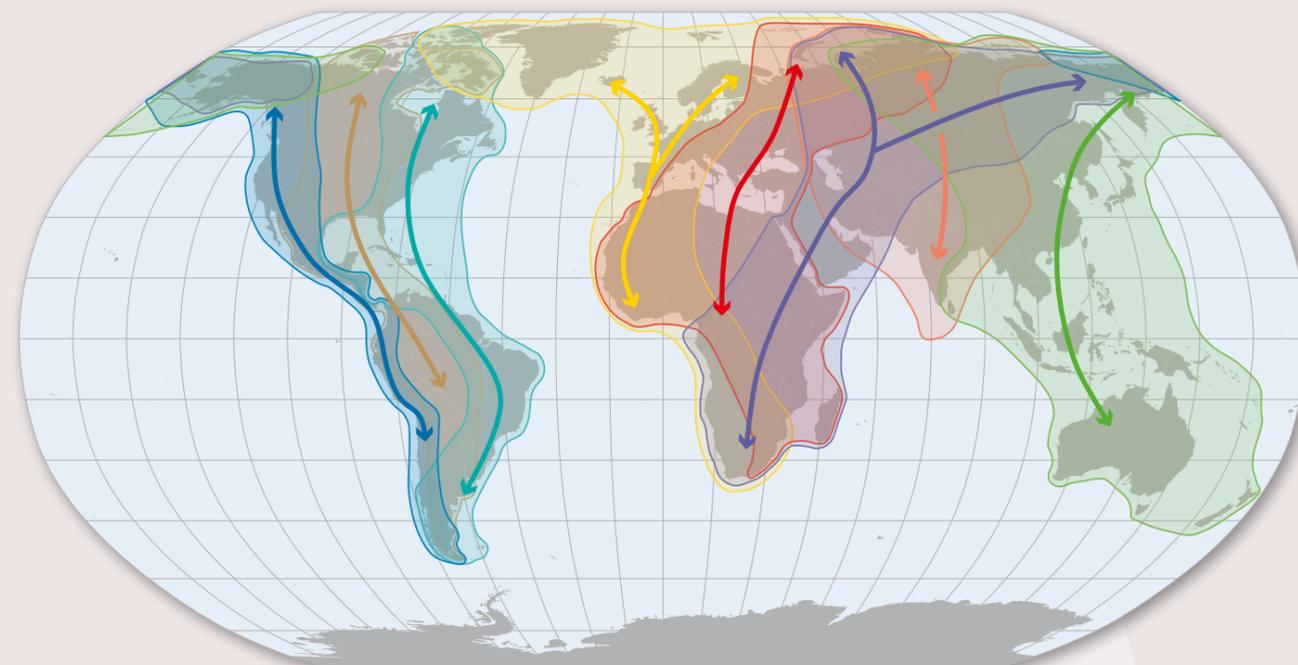
Preventing wader poaching in China

In Guangdong and Guangxi Provinces in southern China, poaching has recently emerged as a major problem for migratory waterbirds. BirdLife is taking action, supporting local bird watching groups and government agencies, to clear thousands of illegal mist nets. These efforts are already working, with a record-breaking number of Critically Endangered Spoon-billed Sandpipers – at least 45 individuals from four locations – subsequently reported from the region.

Illegally trapped Red-backed Shrike *Lanius collurio*. Photo Holger Schulz



Migratory bird flyways



- PACIFIC AMERICAS
- CENTRAL AMERICAS
- ATLANTIC AMERICAS
- EAST ATLANTIC
- BLACK SEA-MEDITERRANEAN
- EAST ASIA-EAST AFRICA
- CENTRAL ASIA
- EAST ASIA-AUSTRALASIA

DURING 2013-2015 BIRDLIFE TOOK ACTION TO BENEFIT MIGRATORY BIRDS AT

892

IBAs WORLDWIDE, INCLUDING ACTION TO END ILLEGAL KILLING AT

292

PRIORITY LOCATIONS. IN ADDITION

81

BIRDLIFE PARTNERS HAVE TAKEN LANDSCAPE-SCALE ACTION TO IMPROVE MIGRATORY BIRD HABITAT

52

INTERNATIONALLY RECOGNISED SPECIES ACTION PLANS FOR MIGRATORY BIRD SPECIES HAVE BEEN CREATED WITH BIRDLIFE'S INVOLVEMENT



↙ Mink attacking a juvenile Northern Gannet *Morus bassanus*. Photo John W Anderson

TACKLING INVASIVES

Invasive alien species were the major driver of bird extinctions in recent centuries and currently impact over 440 threatened bird species, particularly on oceanic islands. Across the globe, BirdLife is addressing the issue through eradication and control

Eradicating invasive species

Beginning in 2006, BirdLife has rid over 30 islands across the Pacific of five invasive vertebrate species. In New Caledonia, Fiji, the Cook Islands, and French Polynesia control is also being sustained at other important sites for these and several other harmful invasive species. As a result, 17 globally threatened birds, such as Polynesian Ground-dove *Alopecoenas erythropterus*, and three threatened reptiles, including the Fiji Crested Iguana *Brachylophus vitiensis*, now have secure populations and other native wildlife is also thriving.

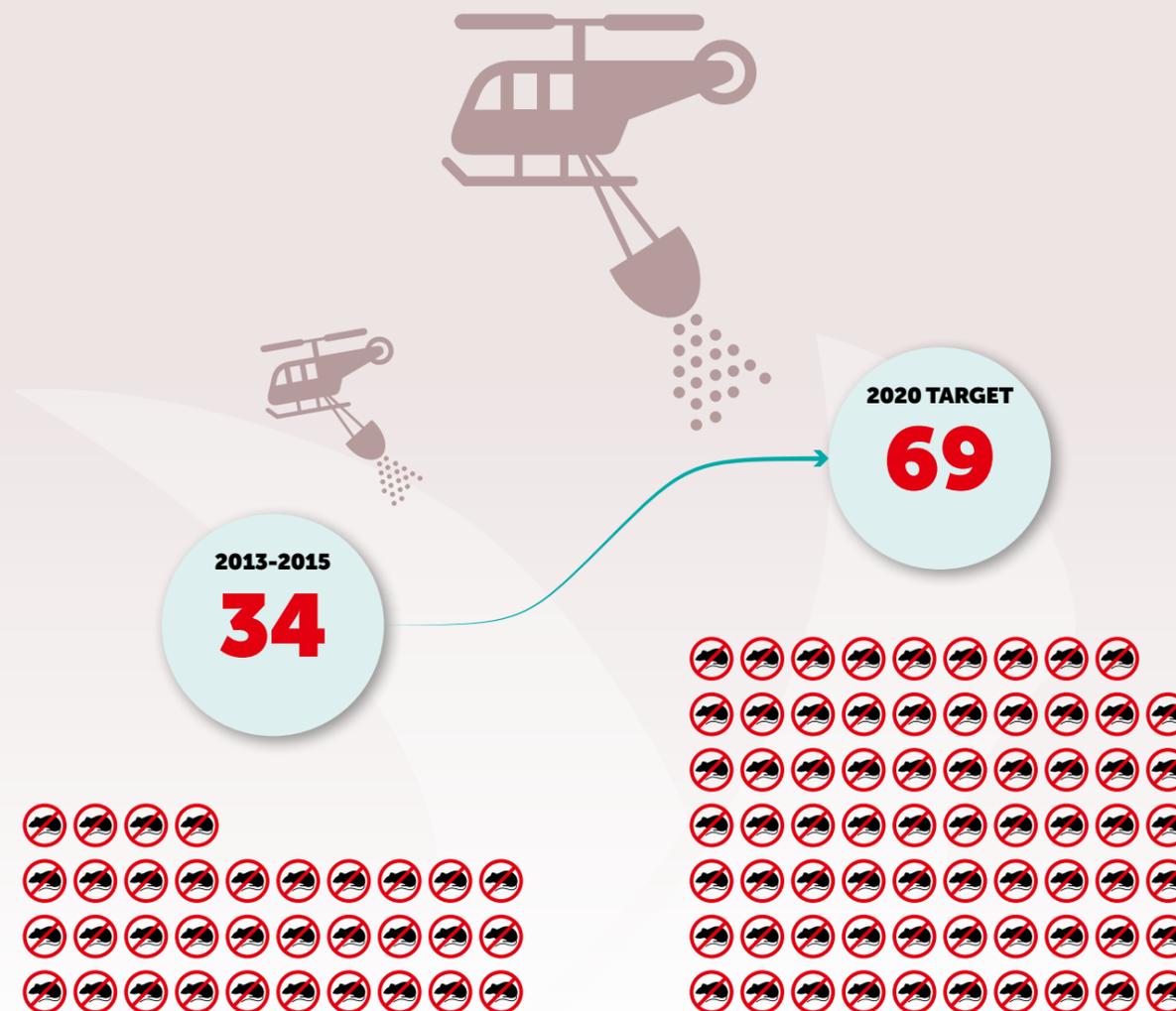
Improving European regulations

There are an estimated 1,200 invasive alien species established in the European Union. As well as threatening the region's native wildlife, it is estimated that they cost Europe more than 12 billion Euros every year. In response, a new EU Regulation has been adopted. BirdLife is developing a list of invasive alien species to inform the application of this regulation, based on a systematic evaluation of the evidence of actual or potential impacts for each species. This will provide a robust foundation for effective invasive alien species control in the European Union.

↙ Polynesian Ground-dove *Alopecoenas erythropterus*. Photo Pete Morris/Agami



Number of successful invasive alien species eradications carried out by BirdLife



BIRDLIFE PARTNERS ARE WORKING WITH NATIONAL GOVERNMENTS IN

49

COUNTRIES TO STRENGTHEN LEGISLATION TO TACKLE INVASIVE SPECIES



DURING 2013-2015, BIRDLIFE TOOK ACTION TO TACKLE INVASIVE ALIEN SPECIES AT

216

IMPORTANT BIRD AND BIODIVERSITY AREAS WORLDWIDE



Seedling nursery, Gola Forest, Sierra Leone. Photo Guy Shorrock/rspb-images.com

COMBATTING CLIMATE CHANGE

BirdLife's action on climate change combines cutting-edge science, policy analysis and practical experience to advocate and deliver appropriate climate change mitigation and adaptation solutions for nature and people

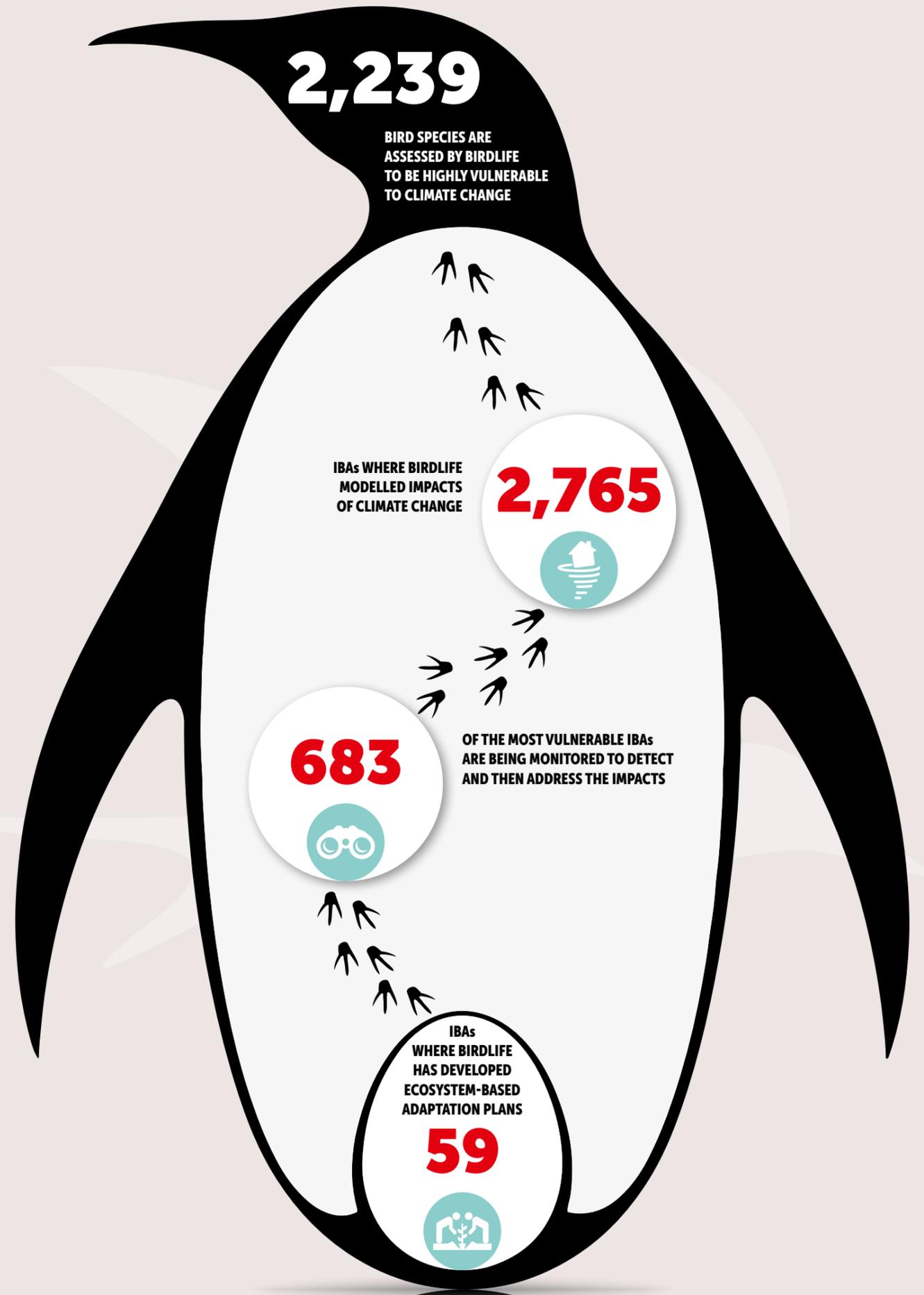
Managing forests for climate change

Protection and restoration of natural ecosystems is an immediate and cost-effective way to mitigate climate change. The Conservation Society of Sierra Leone (BirdLife in Sierra Leone) is working with the RSPB (BirdLife in the UK) to reduce logging and agriculture pressures on the forests of Gola Rainforest National Park. Carbon credits generated by the project will provide sustainable revenue to manage the national park, support a suite of livelihood improvement activities, develop a monitoring programme and build a long-term conservation trust fund.

Influencing global climate change policy

Working collectively, the BirdLife Partnership can bring considerable influence to bear on the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and help ensure that its decisions are effectively implemented nationally. In close collaboration with others, BirdLife has successfully advocated for the uptake of nature-based solutions for mitigation and adaptation, and biodiversity safeguard requirements for the Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD+) mechanism.

Pronatura Sur's Mangrove and Climate Change Corridor Initiative. Photo Jesus Garcia Rodriguez/Ricoh



EMPOWERING LOCAL COMMUNITIES

Conservation action is often best achieved by empowering local people. BirdLife's structure, as a network of grassroots, national and local organisations, means that it is uniquely placed among conservation NGOs to develop and support local-level actions



↻ BirdLife Partners in South America are introducing sustainable beef production to the pampas. Photo A. Parera

Promoting traditionally managed grasslands

In 2005, four BirdLife Partners – Aves Argentinas, Aves Uruguay, SAVE Brazil and Guyra Paraguay – came together to develop an initiative to save the Southern Cone grasslands from Brazil to Argentina – a habitat that depends on traditional cattle ranching. Working with 450 farms across four countries, the Southern Cone Grasslands Alliance has introduced a bird-friendly certification scheme promoting "green beef" that benefits the grassland ecosystem and helps to ensure the continuation of a cherished way of life.

Empowering people in the Middle East

BirdLife International in the Middle East is reviving the *hima* concept – a traditional system under which communities manage natural areas such as woodlands, grasslands and wetlands, and protect them from over-exploitation. Dating back to at least the sixth century AD, the *hima* system provides a management framework that protects biodiversity, but is also flexible and responsive to local needs and priorities. Rooted in traditional practice and Islamic law, this approach is more likely to succeed than centralised protected area systems.



↻ Lebanese farmer. Photo UNDP

BirdLife supports over



4,000

Local Conservation Groups

DURING 2013-2015 BIRDLIFE MOBILISED

2.8

 Million

PEOPLE IN CONSERVATION ACTION

INVOLVED

1.9

 Million

YOUNG PEOPLE IN PARTNER ACTIVITIES

ENGAGED NEARLY

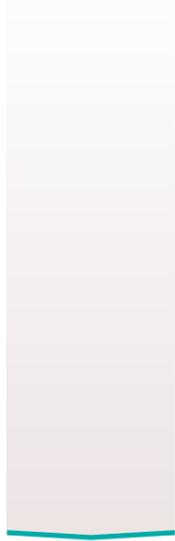
1

 Million

CITIZEN SCIENTISTS



100,000 PEOPLE



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Bee eater *Merops apiaster* © Javier Milla

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- Partnership
- Sites
- Seabirds
- Extinctions
- Forests
- Migratory species
- Invasives
- Climate change
- Local communities

ALL FIGURES REFER TO 2013-2015, EXCEPT THOSE RELATING TO THE PARTNERSHIP