

Creating Healthy Habitat for Birds (and other wildlife)



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Introduction and the basics

- Have been a Master Naturalist since 2012 in 3 states, also a Certified Interpretive Guide.
- Have led bird hikes for AZ State Parks and USFS in OR, now here
- Who are Master Naturalists? We are volunteer educators, citizen scientists and stewards of the environment striving to protect and preserve Arkansas' natural beauty
- The program is an interactive 45 minutes, I ask **YOU** questions
- Will have a handout at the end with detailed info



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Who are you?

- Do you feed birds?
- Do you plant native plants?
- Any biologists or scientists in the group?
- Any Nobel Prize winners? Great!
- And of course, thank you for being here



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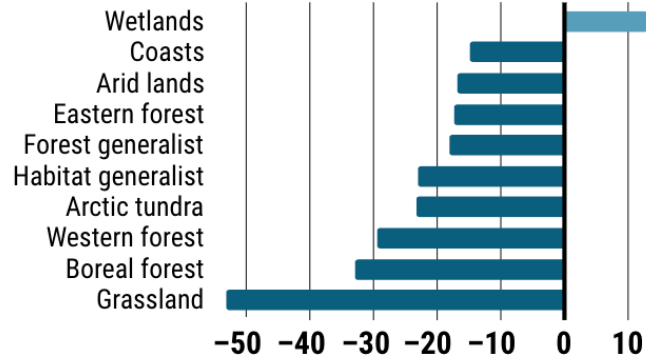
3,000,000,000 – What is THAT?

- ▮ Science Magazine, September 2019 – North America has **3 BILLION** birds less than we had in 1970
- ▮ That's a loss of 30% of birds in 50 years
- ▮ Some species more: Sparrows – 67%, Warblers – 42%
- ▮ How do we know? Radar, various bird counts, aerial surveys
- ▮ This is on par with a mass extinction

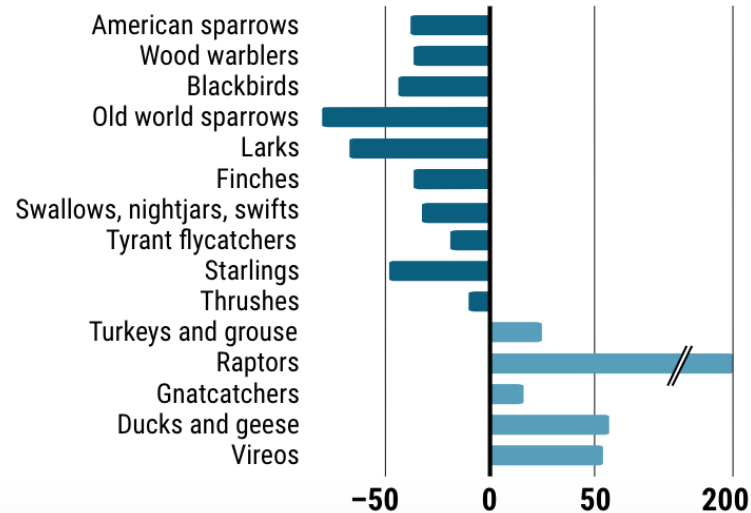


Birds in decline, and some not

Bird decline by habitat (%)



Decline by type (%)



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Why is it happening?

- ▣ Loss of habitat
 - ▣ tremendous growth of suburban areas
 - ▣ NWA population to double in 25 years
 - ▣ fractured habitat



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Why else is this happening?

- Use of pesticides, herbicides and fertilizers is killing bird food

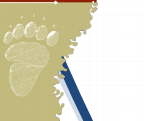


- Add in climate change and housecats



Who cares? They're just birds....

- Why is this important? SO WHAT????
 - Economic impact - 47 million people spend \$9.3 B on bird related activities
 - Most importantly, it's the impact to the ecosystem
 - What important jobs do birds do?
 - pest management
 - seed dispersal
 - pollination
 - Can you imagine a world without birds?



There is hope!



- ▮ This is not meant to scare you but to create awareness, suggest solutions and give people a way to combat the loss
- ▮ Per the study: “when the cause of a decline is removed, the birds come back like gangbusters.”
- ▮ Eagle recovery after ban of DDT in 1972




What makes a healthy habitat?

- Food
- Water
- Cover
- Nest sites



Ta-dah!!!!

The  is native plants



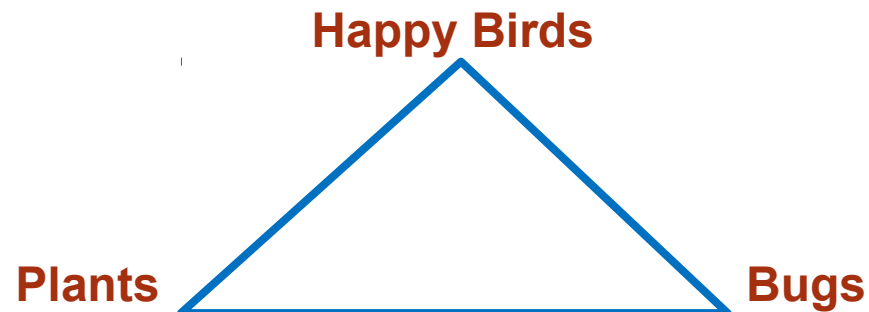
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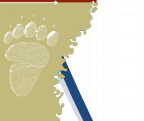
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It's what's for breakfast

- ▢ 97% of terrestrial birds feed their young insects
- ▢ There is an inextricable relationship between plants, insects and birds



- ▢ Native plants support insects which feed birds
 - ▢ What is a native plant and why is it better?
 - ▢ Better adapted to climate, rainfall

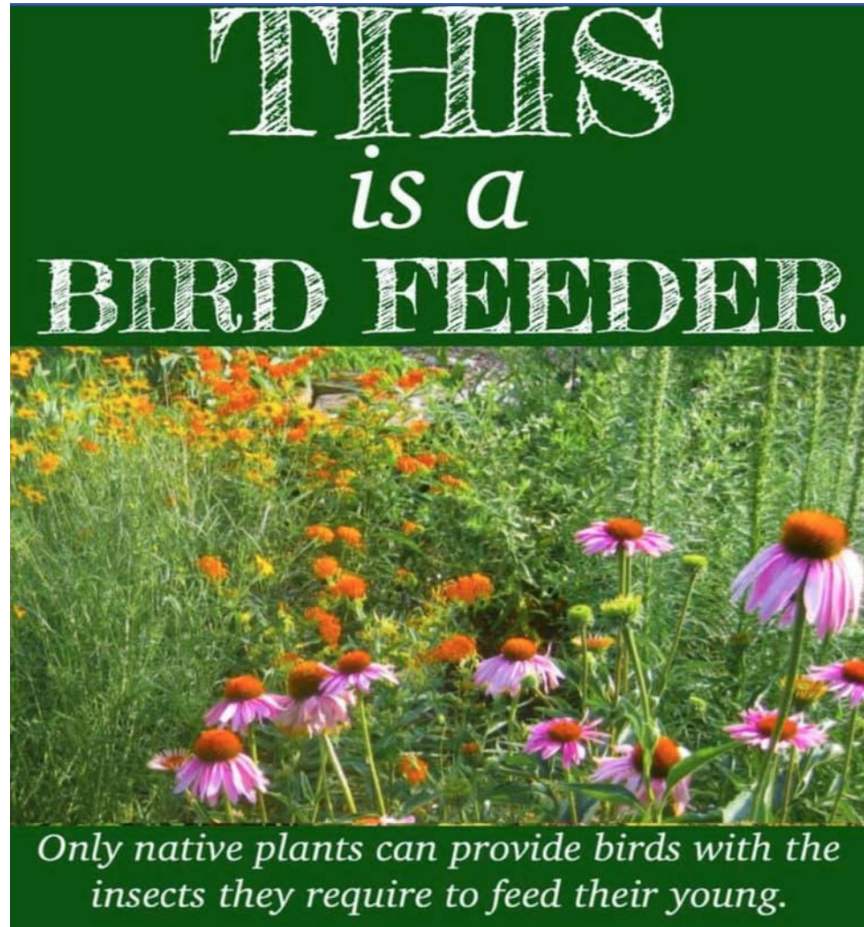


The mighty Oak and other natives

- White oaks can support over 500 species of caterpillar
- Fruit and nut bearing trees provide food, shelter and nest sites
- Canopy and understory allow specialists a place to live
- Plant redundancy – more than 1 species for the same task
- Planting in clusters provides shelter from predators
- Flowering plants provide nectar April to October



This is a bird feeder



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But, to supplement off season

- ▮ Clean feeders regularly: seed every two weeks or more with hot water and soap, nectar feeders every 3 to 5 days with hot water, NO soap, more often in hot weather.
- ▮ Clean up seed underneath...why?
- ▮ Crucial in the winter



Cover

- ▮ Shrubs within a few feet of water and feeders help birds escape predators
- ▮ Provides protection from wind and storms
- ▮ Use fences, hedges or brush piles
- ▮ In fall, leave the leaves



Water



- If you provide it, they will come
- Provide misters for hummers, nectar isn't water
- Clean with 9 parts water to 1 part vinegar, NO soap



Nesting 101



- ▮ I don't need to tell any of you how crucial this is!
- ▮ The season runs from April to August
- ▮ Clean between broods
- ▮ Leave snags 10 – 15' high for woodpeckers, etc.



Other tips

- ❑ Eliminate pesticides, herbicides and fertilizers
- ❑ Minimize turf – Is there any food or shelter in a lawn?
- ❑ Don't forget bees (bee houses, waterers, bee lawns) butterflies, bats and amphibians need help also
- ❑ Benton Cooperative Extension Office is a good resource for drawing up a plan
- ❑ Start small with natives and replace as plants age out
- ❑ Involve grandkids, nature is right out your door
- ❑ Gift someone a bird book, bird house or seed
- ❑ Talk to friends and neighbors, educate them about native plants
- ❑ **Speak up, speak out, take action!**

Summary

- Understand the relationship between plants, insects and birds
- Provide food, water, cover and nest sites
- Grow a multidimensional, redundant yard
- Use organic products to fertilize, kill weeds
- Embrace your bugs
- Keep cats indoors
- Minimize turf, maximize natives
- **Remember the number 3,000,000,000 and what that means to all of us**



Thank you! Questions?



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