

Global Warming

and Montana's Birds

Montana's climate is changing. Left unabated, global warming poses the greatest threat to birds and other wildlife in recorded history. What's at stake for our birds, their habitats, and us?

Unless we slow the pace of global climate change, our wildlife faces increasing threats, including food scarcity, and habitat degradation, with populations of many species projected to decline to dangerously low levels. Birds and other wildlife will face habitat loss from causes such as more frequent or severe wildfires, and droughts, invasive species, and loss of snow. The timing of birds' migration, breeding, nesting, and hatching are all highly adapted to match specific local conditions. Climate change will affect different species differently, and bird behavior may no longer be in sync with their food sources and other habitat needs. Although some amount of change is inevitable, we can still stabilize our climate.

In Montana

We can expect significant range shifts of our resident and breeding birds. A new Audubon Society study demonstrates that North American wintering birds are moving north (*details on back - page 2*).

Breeding and migrant birds that rely on wetlands are particularly vulnerable to a warmer and dryer climate. These wetlands will have a harder time persisting, as climate change is likely to bring more year-to-year variability in rains. More frequent and severe droughts in eastern Montana are likely to cause prairie pothole wetlands to dry up, jeopardizing millions of waterfowl and shorebirds during breeding and migration seasons.



The White-tailed Ptarmigan lives at high elevations. With warming temperatures, trees creep up the mountain—displacing ptarmigan habitat.



The Greater Sage-Grouse is closely tied to our healthy sagebrush-shrubsteppe areas, landscapes that are expected to be severely lost or degraded as temperature warms. Few options remain for a sage grouse without sage.

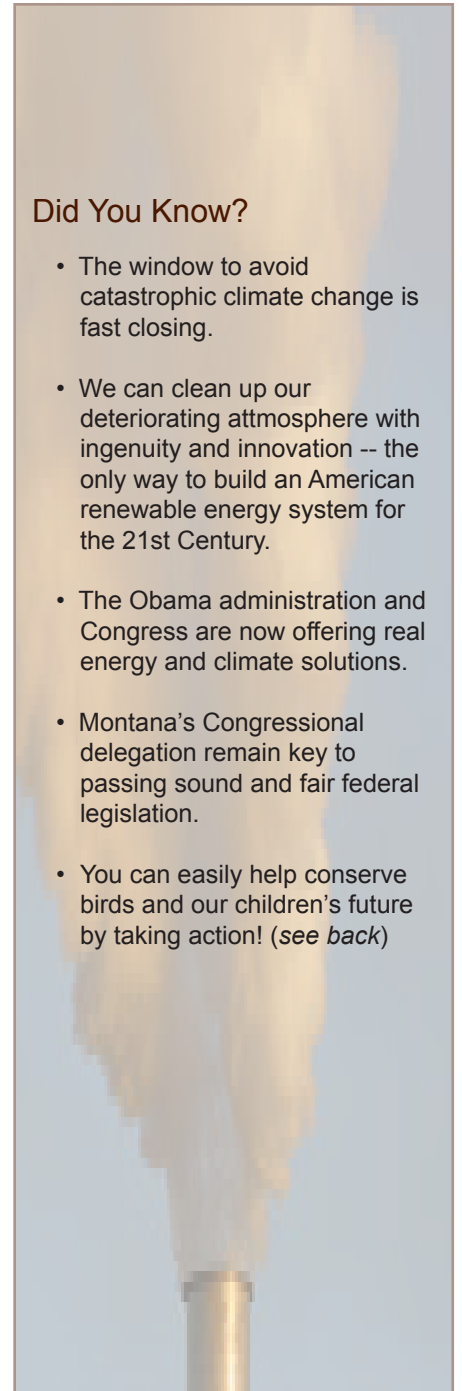
Gray Jays rely on the cold fall weather in the mountains to preserve their food caches—caches that are needed to feed their early spring nestlings. Warmer years have been linked to rotting food caches, failed nests, and even the loss of local populations.



Clark's Nutcrackers preferred white-bark pine food source is threatened by pine beetles. Recent warming trends have allowed the beetles to live higher in the mountains. White-bark pines, already diminishing from a non-native fungus, may not provide the seeds upon which these birds rely.

Did You Know?

- The window to avoid catastrophic climate change is fast closing.
- We can clean up our deteriorating atmosphere with ingenuity and innovation -- the only way to build an American renewable energy system for the 21st Century.
- The Obama administration and Congress are now offering real energy and climate solutions.
- Montana's Congressional delegation remain key to passing sound and fair federal legislation.
- You can easily help conserve birds and our children's future by taking action! (*see back*)

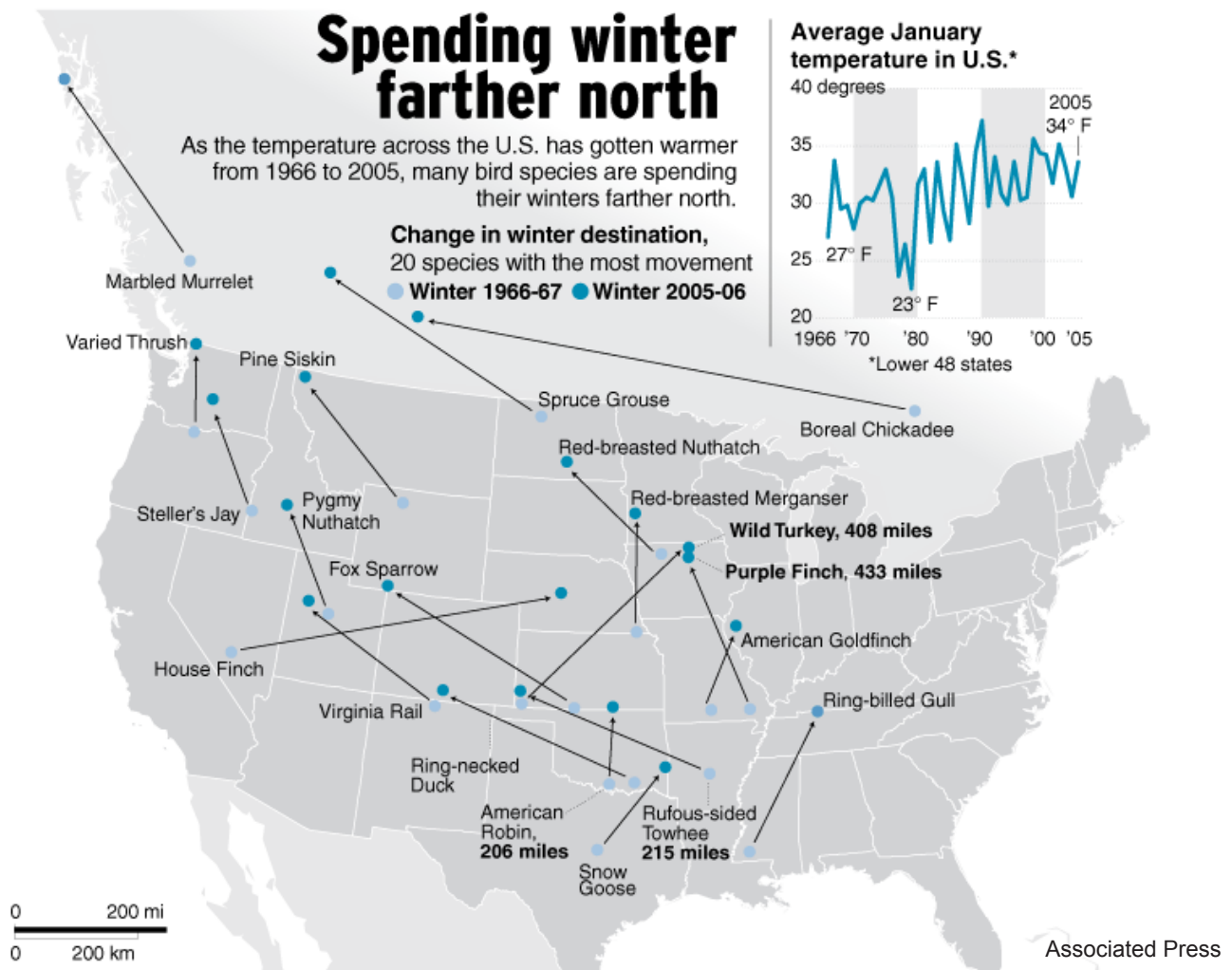
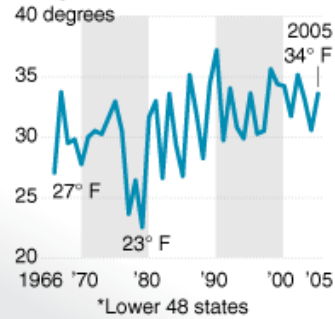


Spending winter farther north

As the temperature across the U.S. has gotten warmer from 1966 to 2005, many bird species are spending their winters farther north.

Change in winter destination, 20 species with the most movement
 ● Winter 1966-67 ● Winter 2005-06

Average January temperature in U.S.*



Ecological Disruption in Motion... *birds on the move.*

Christmas Bird Count observations reveal that birds in North America have moved dramatically northward over the past four decades. Montana birds are part of that trend: Cedar Waxwings, N. Pintails, Spruce Grouse, N. Flickers, and more. This 2009 National Audubon Society analysis found these trends among nearly every type of species; their sheer numbers and variety pointing to a powerful common force contributing to the movements. See mtaudubon.org for the full story.

Take Action!

These times are defined by both increased urgency and new hope. The enormity of our economic situation is being realized at the same time that our energy systems and climate need fixing. We can fix both.

Armchair Activist Program

Please join us in taking action in this new era of environmental engagement and cooperation. It's easy to make your voice heard with our "Armchair Activist" program. Visit mtaudubon.org

For more on what you can do contact

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Repower, Refuel, and Rebuild America

We are calling on President Obama to support 4 goals:

- Move to 100% clean electricity;
- Cut our dependence on oil in half;
- Create 5 million new clean energy jobs; and
- Cut global warming pollution by at least 80%.

