

National Bird Conservation Social Science Coordinator

BUILDING CAPACITY TO UNDERSTAND AND ADDRESS HUMAN DIMENSIONS OF BIRD CONSERVATION

POSITION BACKGROUND

Human engagement with nature influences both the status of wildlife populations and the feasibility and success of conservation efforts. In 2017, the North American Bird Conservation Initiative (NABCI) created the National Bird Conservation Social Science Coordinator position in order to build capacity to understand, address and investigate the cultural, behavioral, political, economic, and social contexts of conservation – or its human dimensions – through social science.

The Coordinator 1) connects bird conservation professionals with social science resources and expertise to address the human dimensions of bird conservation challenges; 2) conducts and translates social science that is relevant to bird conservation; and 3) supports the bird community in taking a collaborative approach to integrating birds needs into the broader social/ecological context of conservation.

The Coordinator also serves as the Co-Chair of the NABCI Human Dimensions Subcommittee and liaises with the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies, Bird Plans, JVs, NAWMP science teams, and individual federal and state agencies to reduce redundancy across social science efforts and identify social needs of greatest national importance. Since 2022, the Coordinator also works with the Road to Recovery Initiative supporting bird species working groups to integrate social needs into recovery strategies.



Since 2017, products of the Social Science Coordinator position have included:

- **Planning and integration of social science** into Road to Recovery Workshops, engagement sessions and guidance documents and providing **support** for bird species working groups
- **Guidance documents** on integrating human dimensions into bird conservation work for practitioners and Migratory Bird Joint Ventures and a **factsheet** to emphasize the value of social science for bird conservation
- **Webinars** on topics including an overview of human dimensions and their integration in conservation planning and delivery; the role of human values in bird conservation; ethno-racial diversity in wildlife viewing and conservation, motivations and barriers to participation in conservation programs by historically underserved groups, and more.
- **A compilation of stories** from across North America that showcase social science integration in bird conservation
- **Social science research** on topics such as private lands conservation, equitable and inclusive conservation programs, partnerships and collaboration, and more

See the NABCI HD webpage for links and more details:
<https://nabci-us.org/how-we-work/human-dimensions/>



SUPPORTING SOCIAL SCIENCE CAPACITY IN THE FUTURE

Support is needed for this position to continue fostering the integration of social science into bird conservation planning and delivery.

Key initiatives for 2024–2025 include:

- **Integrating social science expertise** and insights into efforts to Bring Back 3 Billion Birds by contributing to related workshops, guiding documents, and projects as well as serving as the Road to Recovery social scientist
- Supporting **equitable and inclusive social approaches** for bird conservation by supporting and representing the bird conservation community in social working groups aimed at addressing this topic
- Guiding the **incorporation of human dimensions** in conservation planning at multiple scales, including by Joint Venture and in State Wildlife Action Plans
- **Providing NABCI partners with strategies** for how to identify, communicate about, and leverage the broad relevance of conservation to other human goals by curating examples of innovative partnerships that benefit people and birds and **representing NABCI** in groups focused on these goals

The National Bird Conservation Social Science Coordinator position is currently housed at Virginia Tech.

For more information on how your agency or organization can contribute to the future of this important position, please contact: Ashley Dayer (dayer@vt.edu), or Tammy VerCauteren (tammy.vercauteren@birdconservancy.org)