



NFWF



# SPIRIT of Conservation Program 2019 Grant Slate

## NFWF CONTACT

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Whooping crane

## OVERVIEW

In 2019, the ConocoPhillips SPIRIT of Conservation Program is awarding nearly \$1 million in funding. The nine projects recommended for funding address three strategies of the ConocoPhillips SPIRIT of Conservation program: 1) Implement Innovative Bird Data Gathering Techniques or Technologies; 2) Restore Grassland, Sageland, Wetland, and Coastal Habitats for Birds; and 3) Technical Assistance on Working Lands. The ConocoPhillips SPIRIT of Conservation program seeks to award grants to restore bird habitat, gather bird data, and improve bird focused conservation practices on working lands, with an emphasis within focal geographies.

## IMPLEMENT INNOVATIVE BIRD DATA GATHERING TECHNIQUES OR TECHNOLOGIES

The following projects seek to increase the quality and quantity of bird population and habitat data that will be used to inform current and future management decisions. Data will be useful at specific sites and in determining bird use of habitats across breeding, wintering, or stopover ranges.

### Monitoring Reintroduced Whooping Cranes to Establish a Self-Sustaining Population (LA,TX)

Grantee: Louisiana Wildlife and Fisheries Foundation

Grant Amount: . . . . . \$64,410

Matching Funds: . . . . . \$65,000

**Total Amount: . . . . . \$129,410**

Study habitat use across various life stages of a whooping crane population that has been reintroduced into southwest Louisiana since 2011. Project will track and monitor juvenile whooping crane habitat use and home range and create range maps to help federal and state agencies develop management plans and recommendations for whooping cranes.

## ABOUT NFWF

The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) protects and restores our nation's fish and wildlife and their habitats. Created by Congress in 1984, NFWF directs public conservation dollars to the most pressing environmental needs and matches those investments with private funds. Learn more at [www.nfwf.org](http://www.nfwf.org)

## NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS

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(continued)

**Implement a Radio Telemetry Network in the Great Plains and Chihuahuan Desert to Monitor Grassland Birds**

Grantee: Bird Conservancy of the Rockies  
 Grant Amount: . . . . . \$250,000  
 Matching Funds: . . . . . \$104,546  
**Total Amount: . . . . . \$354,546**

Implement a collaborative network of automated radio telemetry stations throughout the Great Plains and Chihuahuan Desert to monitor the annual cycle of grassland birds including Baird’s sparrow, Sprague’s pipit and chestnut-collared longspur. Project will initiate this effort by holding webinars to recruit and train partners and develop a plan to track grassland birds across the region, install telemetry stations to track focal species, and deploy tags on focal species.

**Filling Demographic Information Gaps for the Declining McCown’s Longspur (MT)**

Grantee: Montana State University  
 Grant Amount: . . . . . \$194,065  
 Matching Funds: . . . . . \$198,000  
**Total Amount: . . . . . \$392,065**

Identify population limiting factors for the McCown’s longspur and the actions needed to slow and reverse the population decline. Project will assess high priority information gaps on the breeding and migratory demographics of longspurs using native mixed-grass prairie, fallow fields and planted crop lands in northeastern Montana and restore 1,000 acres of marginal cropland to native grassland cover.

**Developing Tools to Advance Grassland Bird Wintering Habitat Management Practices (OK, TX, NM, CO)**

Grantee: University of Oklahoma  
 Grant Amount: . . . . . \$138,144  
 Matching Funds: . . . . . \$107,049  
**Total Amount: . . . . . \$245,193**

Expand on an existing framework studying the wintering ecology of longspurs and other grassland birds in the Great Plains using species distribution modeling, automated radio telemetry biologging, and weather radar analysis. Project will develop tools to improve field grassland bird surveys to more accurately estimate abundance and habitat usage, and to improve grazing management regimes to best advance bird conservation.

**RESTORE GRASSLAND, SAGELAND, WETLAND AND COASTAL HABITATS FOR BIRDS**

The following projects seek to restore or improve grassland, sagebrush, wetland, and coastal habitats for birds. Projects will benefit birds by expanding or improving habitat patch size, connectivity, and quality; removing encroaching woody vegetation that negatively



Grasslands in New Mexico



Chestnut-collared longspur



Working cattle on grasslands in west Texas

impact grassland-nesting birds; reduce invasive species' impact on bird habitats; and restore important breeding, wintering or stopover sites.

### Enhancing Grassland Conservation for Wildlife Habitat in the Katy Prairie (TX)

Grantee: Katy Prairie Conservancy

Grant Amount: . . . . . \$94,630

Matching Funds: . . . . . \$62,440

**Total Amount: . . . . . \$157,070**

Create and enhance grassland habitat, enhance landscape connectivity for wildlife migration and ensure the health of the landscape by aiding with regional flood control in the Katy Prairie of Waller County, Texas. Project will bring 200 acres under improved management and restore 145 acres of grassland to benefit multiple declining bird species of concern.

### Restoring Riparian Habitat Along the Port of Houston Ship Channel (TX)

Grantee: Houston Wilderness

Grant Amount: . . . . . \$100,000

Matching Funds: . . . . . \$345,000

**Total Amount: . . . . . \$445,000**

Reforest riparian areas by planting 10,000 targeted, native tree species with high air pollution and water absorption capabilities along 25 miles of the Port of Houston Ship Channel. Project will restore and improve management on 180 acres to benefit a multitude of migratory and resident birds.

### Restoring Wetland and Prairie Habitat at the Anahuac National Wildlife Refuge (TX)

Grantee: Texas Rice Industry Coalition for the Environment

Grant Amount: . . . . . \$27,300

Matching Funds: . . . . . \$130,000

**Total Amount: . . . . . \$157,300**

Restore habitat for a wide range of grassland birds, butterflies, other pollinator species and mammals on the Anahuac National Wildlife Refuge in Chambers County, Texas. Project will create and restore 490 acres of year-round freshwater wetland and native prairie habitat.

### TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

The following project seeks to help working land managers/producers develop management plans, implement conservation practices, enroll in Farm Bill programs to improve working lands function and enhance bird habitat.

### Providing Technical Assistance to Landowners Conducting Habitat Restoration for Grassland Birds (TX)

Grantee: Pheasants Forever

Grant Amount: . . . . . \$36,506

Matching Funds: . . . . . \$36,600

**Total Amount: . . . . . \$73,106**

Build off previously successful work in southeast Texas by continuing support for a Range and Wildlife Conservationist to increase technical assistance capacity. Project will help 400 landowners restore 5,000 acres of working grassland bird habitat, bring 2,000 acres under improved management and develop 35 management plans.