

2017-18

Annual Report



Point Blue

Conservation science
for a healthy planet

Science, Partnerships, and Outreach



Preparing for Change

Change is a fundamental part of nature. Yet today, human activities are accelerating this change, threatening the ability of our biosphere to support life as we know it. This past year, California experienced the largest wildfires and warmest ocean temperatures ever recorded, while deadly heat waves, hurricanes, and floods impacted wildlife and human communities around the globe.

Fortunately, Point Blue is also evolving and adapting. Our uniquely effective approach—combining **science, partnerships,** and **outreach**—remains at the core of our success. And in recent years, we have evolved our focus to include climate-smart conservation, building on these fundamental tenets. Thanks to your ongoing support, our work is stronger, more resilient, and more impactful than ever.

In this annual report, you'll read about some of our impressive successes that you've helped make possible as we increase the pace and scale of climate-smart conservation. The stories that follow provide a glimpse into the personal journeys of a few of our 160 scientists. We're proud that together we are making a positive difference, from California's montane meadows and agricultural lands to the California Current, coastal Chile, and as far away as the Ross Sea, Antarctica.

As we prepare for another change—a new CEO starting in 2019 to lead Point Blue's next chapter in our remarkable history—our foundation is stronger than ever. We look to the future with hope and optimism, thanks to you.

Point Blue could not thrive in these changing times without the committed leadership of our Board of Directors. This year, we welcomed new board members Julie Chase Baldocchi and David Myles, PhD. We also offer our deepest gratitude to outgoing board members, Rob Faucett and Ed Sarti, for a decade of outstanding service. We are especially grateful to Ed for his 5 years as Board Chair, and for now serving as our CEO Search and Transition Committee Chair.

Point Blue's applied conservation science is more urgently needed than ever. Thank you for ensuring that our 160 scientists continue to collaboratively develop and catalyze nature-based solutions to secure a healthy, thriving future for us all.



Ellie M. Cohen
President and CEO



Megan Colwell
Chair, Board of Directors

OUR VISION

Because of our collaborative climate-smart conservation actions today, healthy ecosystems will sustain thriving wildlife and human communities well into the future.

Our priority initiatives are:

Catalyzing Climate-Smart Restoration
Conserving Oceans for Wildlife and People
Protecting Our Shorelines

Securing Water and Wildlife on Working Lands
Training the Next Generation
Sustaining Keystone Datasets

Climate-Smart Conservation

Climate-smart conservation sustains and restores vibrant, diverse ecosystems; enhances ecosystem services; improves the ability of nature and humans to adapt to change; sequesters carbon; and reduces greenhouse gas emissions.

Selected Collaborative Accomplishments from the Past 5 Years:

- Helped establish the Ross Sea as the world's largest Marine Protected Area
- Secured \$54 million of conservation investments in 717,917 rangeland acres, working with 1,000 ranchers and farmers
- Catalyzed adaptation planning along 95% of the urbanized coast of California (70+ jurisdictions)
- Protected 400,000 acres of post-fire forest habitat for birds and other wildlife in the Sierra Nevada
- Engaged 15,000 students in hands-on habitat restoration

GROUNDBREAKING SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH

At the core of Point Blue's work is conservation science to understand and protect nature's benefits. Following are just a few examples from the past year of how we've used our science to achieve conservation impact.



Fire Science and Forest Management: An Evolving Approach

Dr. Jay Roberts is a self-described “numbers person.” But his connection to forests is a strong one. “I have deep roots with forest management and that’s one of the reasons why I went into this work,” he says. “My family has owned and managed forests for multiple generations. It was a big part of my childhood.”

Jay is an avian forest ecologist at Point Blue and assesses the impact that wildfires have on forests—and the people and wildlife that depend on them. By collaborating with the US Forest Service and other partners, we help them use the latest science to manage forests before and after fires to benefit birds and biodiversity in general.

“One of the key roles Point Blue plays is to bridge the gap between scientists and forest managers, as well as between scientists and the public,” Jay says. “In some cases, we’re bringing our own original, peer-reviewed research to managers to support better decision making. And in other cases, we help managers interpret the latest science from across the field, elucidating the evolution that’s taken place in our understanding of fire’s complicated role in forest ecology.”

The evolution Jay describes dates back to the early 1900s, when all forms of wildfire were routinely extinguished. Massive fire events such as the 1871 Peshtigo, Wisconsin, fire—which killed as many as 2,500 people and scorched more than 1,875 square miles—influenced the popular opinion that fire was universally destructive and bad, beginning a policy of suppression that continues today.

As humans have reduced the influence of fire across ecosystems, fuels have been steadily building up. And as the climate warms, the weather conditions that promote fire ignition and growth become more commonplace. This year, for instance, the Sonoma, Lake, and Napa County summer fire season—set each year by the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection and based on weather conditions and greater potential for fire activity—began a full 29 days earlier than it did in 2000. Some California counties have even been moved to year-round “summer” fire preparedness status. Now, when fires do burn, they often grow out of control and threaten human communities. Recent fire seasons are no exception, such as the fall 2017 fires that burned thousands of homes in Sonoma County, and the 2018 season,

which has already seen the largest fire in California history.

Scientists and managers are working together to decrease the risk of devastating fires and develop a more balanced approach to fire management that benefits both wildlife and people. Practices like controlled burns and unsuppressed natural fires (such as those started by lightning) can help maintain the health of wildlands and even enhance public safety. And we’re always learning more about the various ways in which fire can create valuable wildlife habitat and promote biodiversity in forest ecosystems.

This year, new research from Point Blue scientists showed how bird species respond differently to varying levels of fire severity in the same forest. Scientists found that some species responded positively to low severity fire—with populations surging in those areas after the fire—while other species flourished in areas that were burned at a much higher intensity.

“Our findings illustrate how dynamic the avian community is after these fires, with many of the species peaking in density during a narrow window of time after the

Facing page: Central Sierra Program Leader Alissa Fogg records post-fire data. Photo: Jane Braxton.

burn,” said Ryan Burnett, Point Blue’s Sierra Nevada director. “We hope this research helps land managers, like the Forest Service, make informed decisions about managing these dynamic post-fire bird habitats.”

Our work with the Forest Service includes active, ongoing participation in developing their forest management plans by helping ensure that post-fire management is guided by the latest science. “One of the biggest ways we support the Forest Service and other forest managers is by using our decades of monitoring and research to make recommendations on what should or shouldn’t be salvaged after a fire,” says Ryan. “We’ve built up a lot of trust with multiple partners in the region. When we use our data to make the case that leaving some burned areas alone will be better for birds and other wildlife, they take our recommendations seriously.” Over the past five years, Point Blue recommendations have informed the management of over 400,000 acres of post-fire forests.

For example, working with the Forest Service in Lassen National Forest—where they considered taking out a large number of standing dead trees, or snags—our studies showed a significant population

of Black-backed Woodpeckers depended on these trees. Based in part on our data, the district ranger decided not to pursue the project. And in order to help guide future decisions, we developed a custom tool for them to help identify where these woodpeckers might nest in the future.

In another example of Point Blue’s participation in forest and fire management, we joined a diverse group of government agencies, non-profit organizations, and others to produce *Living in a Fire Adapted Landscape - Priorities for Resilience*. This report was produced after the devastating fires in Sonoma County in 2017 and compiled recommendations to secure the long-term resilience of Sonoma County’s watersheds.

Looking ahead, Jay sees a strong need to consider what the future might look like. “We need to get ahead of the curve on climate change,” he says. “We need to have a good grasp on likely future climate scenarios. We can then bring recommendations to our agency partners to ensure that forest management plans and policies promote resilience to the changes we are already experiencing. At the core, we need to continue our work of climate-smart planning for wildlife and people.”



From Dusty Ditch to Vibrant Stream: Habitat Restoration Works!

A Blue Grosbeak flashes azure through a streamside thicket, while river otters dart along the banks. Putah Creek, near Davis, CA, is very different than two decades ago, when years of drought and water diversion reduced the stream to a dusty channel.

Initiated after a lawsuit spearheaded by community stakeholders, restoration returned year-round water flow. But was it effectively providing multiple benefits for wildlife and people? Point Blue Senior Research Ecologist Dr. Kristen Dybala—at the time a postdoctoral scholar at UC Davis—wanted to find out. She analyzed 14 years of bird data collected along 23 miles of the creek. Published in March, the study revealed bird populations had nearly tripled. “The biggest surprise was that this effort had such a huge payoff in a relatively short amount of time,” says Kristy.

Putah Creek is now a model for riparian restoration throughout the state. In addition to providing habitat for wildlife and recreation opportunities for the community, creek restorations help sequester carbon, recharge groundwater, and control erosion and flooding. As Kristy says, “It’s a great example of a restoration providing multiple benefits for nature and people.”

Facing page, top: Blue Grosbeak. Photo: Brian E. Kushner.

Facing page, middle: Graduate student Carina Fish conducts research at sea with Point Blue scientists and partners. Photo: Julie Chase Baldocchi.

Facing page, bottom: Collecting data at our Palomarin bird banding lab. Photo: Annie Schmidt/Point Blue.



Birds Back From the Brink Require More Fish

A wide range of marine wildlife, from seabirds to salmon, compete for small “forage species,” such as Pacific sardine, northern anchovy, juvenile rockfish, and market squid. Increasingly, humans are also competing for these smaller species that are so critical to healthy marine food webs.

To help promote ecosystem-based fishery management—considering the needs of multiple species—Point Blue Senior Marine Ecologist Pete Warzybok and colleagues set out to better understand how much forage fish seabirds eat to survive and reproduce. They discovered that seabirds along the California coast from Bodega Bay to Año Nuevo eat up to 60,000 metric tons of forage species during the breeding season each year—five times more than estimates from the 1980s! Why the increase? Some birds are bouncing back from past events that depleted their numbers, including oil spills, poor food years, and gill net fishing. And more birds need more fish.

Since forage fishery quotas for important forage species such as northern anchovy haven’t been updated since 1995, this new study provides valuable information to help managers factor in the needs of both wildlife and people when updating harvest guidelines.



Leveraging Our Keystone Datasets

Point Blue’s Keystone Datasets are ongoing collections of observations and other scientific information, some dating back more than 50 years. Taking the long view of conservation helps us track change over time and better understand the drivers of threats to our planet’s health.

In one example, Point Blue scientists used keystone data from our Palomarin Field Station to contribute to the Environmental Protection Agency’s report *Indicators of Climate Change in California*. Scientists examined whether birds were changing the timing of migration by examining arrival dates from over 36 years of study data. Of the seven species studied, three were arriving earlier, one showed later arrivals, and the others showed no pattern. To the extent that migrating birds species are adapted to arrive at the optimum time of year—thus maximizing the availability of resources—shifts in migration timing can be expected to be disadvantageous.

Elsewhere, Point Blue’s Dr. Annie Schmidt used keystone data from our Farallon Islands field station to show that seabird populations may be resilient to more frequent El Niño conditions (the warm and cool phases of a recurring climate pattern across the tropical Pacific). This is potentially good news, as some climate models project more variation between below-normal and above-normal sea surface temperatures and dry and wet conditions into the future.

ROCK-SOLID PARTNERSHIPS

Point Blue advances conservation through extensive collaborations with government agencies, non-governmental organizations, private landowners, and other wildlife and habitat managers. The stories that follow show how we bring our strengths to the table to help solve the most challenging environmental problems of our time.

Hope for California's Whales

Sometimes, the research confirms a scientist's worst suspicions. That was the case when the final results came back from Cotton Rockwood's analysis of potential whale deaths from ship strikes in California's waters. Collisions push endangered blue whales toward extinction and threaten the recovery of species like humpback whales. As Senior Marine Ecologist at Point Blue, Cotton had long known that the number of whales killed exceeded the number that washed ashore. The question was always, "By how much?"

Cotton was aware of rough estimates that suggested the actual number of whale deaths could be 10 to 20 times higher than the number of whales that wash up, but rough estimates weren't strong enough to act on. We knew that our close partners at the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) National Marine

Sanctuaries wanted more rigorous science to help them reduce whale deaths.

To calculate the estimated number of collisions, Cotton used a unique model that took into account the likelihood of a whale being in a given location (based on individual species behavior) as well as ship speeds, routes, and sizes. The datasets were far too large to be processed by regular computers, so we used the powerful computing resources made available by Google Compute Engine, a service designed for running massive calculations like these. When the results came in, it turned out the number of whales being killed each year by large ships far exceeded the legal guidelines.

"Arriving at a more accurate number of the ship strike deaths was a key first step to solving this tragic problem," says Cotton. "We're now able to provide strong science

to support potential regulatory solutions so that managers can take action to decrease the number of collisions and save whales."

Cotton doesn't spend all of his time running complex computer models, though, and likes to be out in the field (or, in his case, on the water) as much as possible. "My first research cruise with Point Blue was in 2015," he says. "It was my first time being out in this region on a small boat. You're out there in pretty rough conditions, getting tossed around quite a bit. It definitely makes it a challenge to do the research we're there to do, but it's a real bonding experience with everyone on board."

The other scientists on board almost always include NOAA researchers, some of whom we've been working with since 2004. It was then that we launched the ACCESS (Applied California Current Ecosystem Studies) project, a partnership between



Point Blue and Cordell Bank and Greater Farallones National Marine Sanctuaries. This partnership is designed to support marine wildlife conservation and healthy marine ecosystems in northern and central California. Led by Dr. Jaime Jahncke, our California Current Group director, ACCESS conducts 3-4 cruises per year to monitor distribution and abundance of marine wildlife in the context of underlying prey and ocean conditions. We help track climate change impacts such as ocean acidification, and provide recommendations

to improve wildlife conservation, guide ocean zoning, and develop ecosystem indicators.

"Coming into my first cruise, it definitely felt a bit like I was entering a testing ground," says Cotton. "Jaime and the crew from the National Marine Sanctuaries are this amazing, well-oiled machine and I was a bit nervous stepping into it. But it was great after that first cruise to get the thumbs up from everyone to be a part of this fantastic team."

The data from these research cruises provide the foundation for policy changes. Nearly eight years ago, Point Blue guided changes to shipping lanes off the Bay Area, helping to decrease overlap between whale feeding areas and ship traffic. With more data, we are now pursuing additional changes off the Bay Area and expanding our work to Southern California.

"We're excited to scale up this work by bringing our research techniques to new geographies," says Jaime. "Some of

Above: Blue whale with cargo ship in distance. Photo: Sebastiaan Bedaux.

the next steps will be to assess overall mortality, provide guidance to help the critically endangered northern right whales on the East Coast, and explore ways to use our approach to guide shipping practices in the newly opened Arctic routes, as well as other places globally where whales are at increased risk of strikes.”

For Cotton, however, the importance of the work close to home is always there. “Every time I get out to sea and see whales up close, it reminds me why I do this work. When we’re lucky, the whales come right up to the boat. There’s really nothing like that experience to inspire you to work to save California’s whales.”

Partnerships for Healthy Working Lands

In our partnerships with landowners and the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), we regularly walk the land to discuss resource conditions and co-create conservation plans. Every property is unique, and we draft custom recommendations for each partner. Here are a few of our most common recommendations:

Take actions to manage for soil health; healthy soils lead to healthy plants that lead to healthy animals, landscapes, and communities.

Snags, or dead standing trees, are very important to wildlife for a wide variety of reasons. If a tree is dead or dying and doesn’t pose a threat to structures or right of ways, leave it alone and let the wildlife make their home in it.

Bare ground leads to erosion, particularly on slopes. Manage grazing or other activities to increase vegetation and reduce bare ground.

Have a plan and write it down! It may go out the window once the season gets going, but those who have a written plan have much higher rates of success than those who don’t.

And, monitor your activities! Seek help with this or implement simple monitoring strategies such as establishing photo points.

“The work that we do with Point Blue Conservation Science is critical for collecting rigorous ocean data. This information helps us make good management decisions that benefit the wildlife and people that depend on the ocean.”

– DAN HOWARD, SUPERINTENDENT,
NOAA CORDELL BANK NATIONAL MARINE
SANCTUARY



Advancing Conservation on Working Lands

Working lands—lands that produce food and products for human use—comprise nearly half the land area of California. This represents a significant opportunity for Point Blue scientists to advance climate-smart conservation practices on a large scale.

Our partner biologists are scientists who work in a unique cooperative arrangement between Point Blue and the NRCS. They work hand-in-hand with landowners to plan, design, implement, and monitor land management strategies that benefit soil, water, air, plants, wildlife, and people. Partner biologists live and work in the communities they serve, fostering trust with landowners and increasing the likelihood that our science will be used to inform land management. These partnerships are reinforced through our successful “landowner letters” program, a system of presenting our rangeland science to landowners in a personalized, actionable way.

The impact of Point Blue’s working lands conservation continues to grow. As of spring 2018, we’ve engaged 1,000 landowners managing a total of 717,917 acres in conservation planning, implementation, and monitoring activities, and we’ve leveraged roughly \$54 million in Farm Bill and landowner matching funds for conservation.

Facing page, top: Rangeland soil-sampling crew in Yolo County. Photo: Ryan DiGaudio/Point Blue.

Facing page, bottom: Young citizen scientists observe shorebirds in a Colombian village. Photo: Diana Eusse/Asociación CALIDRIS.



Climate-Smart Conservation Across the Americas

Our 12-nation Migratory Shorebird Project continues to achieve its goal of conserving shorebirds and wetlands through advancing collaborative climate-smart conservation from Alaska to Chile. This effort relies on scores of international partnerships to connect communities, standardize data, and apply conservation science relevant at local- to hemispheric-scales.

In the past year, Point Blue’s Dr. Matt Reiter and partners traveled to Honduras, Nicaragua, and Costa Rica. On their trip, they met with local, regional, and national decision makers, including members of the shrimp and salt industries, to discuss how to integrate the Migratory Shorebird Project’s climate-smart data products into their decision making. Our impact was highlighted in a report led by a key Colombian project partner. Promoted throughout a network of Western Hemisphere reserves, the report illustrated how a coastal Colombian community is engaging in data collection and changed behavior that supports wetland health for people and wildlife. The shorebird surveys described in the report are an integral part of the Migratory Shorebird Project’s unique approach, combining community science with strong partnerships to achieve conservation impact.



Protecting California’s Wetlands through Science, Partnerships, and Policy

California’s wetlands perform essential ecosystem services such as groundwater recharge, water filtration, and flood protection. In addition, they provide critical habitat for migratory birds and other wildlife. Through partnerships like the Migratory Bird Conservation Partnership and the Water for Wetlands Coalition, Point Blue works collaboratively to protect wetlands and secure the water supplies that are critical for sustaining them.

Together with our partners, Point Blue provides science leadership that informs wetland water management policy, for the maximum benefit of wildlife and people. This year, we successfully encouraged the California Water Commission to recognize the value of water supplies on National Wildlife Refuges as a public benefit when determining investments in water storage projects in California. With major efforts ramping up to address groundwater management in California under the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act, we participated in meetings with multiple non-governmental organizations and state agencies to ensure wetland water resources are accounted for in groundwater sustainability planning and implementation. And in response to the federal government’s efforts to weaken wetlands protections under the federal Clean Water Act, we worked with partners to encourage California’s State Water Resources Control Board to adopt a comprehensive wetlands protection policy.

OUTREACH THAT EMPOWERS

At Point Blue, we don't just do the science, we also bring the science to public agency partners, as well as private landowners and other non-profit organizations. Together, we work hand-in-hand with them to improve conservation outcomes—for ecological and economic benefits. These next stories highlight just a few of the diverse groups we work with to get our climate-smart messages and science out to the world.



Securing a More Resilient Future for Our Coasts and Shorelines

“Many conservation issues are framed as a choice between people and wildlife,” says Dr. Sam Veloz, Point Blue’s Climate Adaptation Group director. “What I like about our work to protect our coasts and shorelines is the opportunity to focus on problems with potential solutions that could benefit both people and ecosystems.”

Those problems include rising sea levels and greater storm frequency and intensity that will increase erosion and flooding. Sam and his team are responding with rigorous conservation science, providing locally relevant tools and information that communities, managers, and planners can use in order to understand vulnerabilities and plan for action.

Point Blue is guiding efforts to increase nature’s resilience throughout California, working with partners across the state. This year we contributed to California’s 4th Climate Change Assessment, which forms the scientific foundation for policies, plans, programs, and guidance to ensure a more resilient California as climate change impacts grow. “We worked with The Nature Conservancy (TNC) and Environmental Science Associates (ESA) to provide guidance for implementing natural infrastructure—such as sand dunes and

seagrass beds—along California’s coast,” explains Sam. “This partnership took advantage of the strengths of the three organizations: Point Blue’s ecological conservation science expertise, TNC’s policy expertise and ability to acquire land, and ESA’s engineering expertise and experience designing nature-based solutions to sea level rise. Together we increased the familiarity and desirability of nature-based solutions to state decision makers.”

Another way we’ve helped California prepare for change has been by expanding Our Coast Our Future (OCOF) to Southern California. We developed this online tool in partnership with the US Geological Survey and other stakeholders. The easy-to-use online interface helps communities understand how changes will affect local ecosystems and human infrastructure. Now, more than 70 city, county, regional, state, and federal agencies across 95% of the urbanized coast of California are using OCOF for climate-smart planning. We will be expanding to the rest of the California coast over the year ahead.

Point Blue is also part of a working group supporting the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) to determine the best

Left: Aerial view of the Del Mar, CA coastline. Photo: Fabrizio Siboldi.

ways to integrate tidal marsh ecosystem benefits into the redesign of State Route 37 along the northern San Francisco Bay Estuary. Rather than mitigating climate change impacts after the fact, we're anticipating future restoration opportunities and threats from sea level rise and storm events, promoting alternative designs for greater resilience, including more ecological connectivity throughout the baylands.

On a regional level and over several years, Point Blue science helped redefine appropriate wetland conservation goals for San Francisco Bay in the context of climate change. Thanks to Measure AA, which will secure \$500,000,000 for the restoration of wetlands around the San Francisco Bay over the next 20 years, those goals have a reliable source of funding. We were awarded a \$2.7 million grant from the first year of grantmaking, which will catalyze our climate-smart habitat restorations through programs like Students and Teachers Restoring A Watershed (STRAW). In addition to sequestering carbon, increasing biodiversity, improving water quality, and creating habitat for wildlife to thrive, bayland restorations can help buffer communities from storm surges and rising seas.

Beyond our regional impact, Point Blue is collaboratively addressing coastal resilience on a national scale. In December, we partnered with National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, NOAA, US Army Corps of Engineers, the National Environmental Modeling and Analysis Center, and NatureServe to identify species and habitats vulnerable to sea level rise, and pinpoint priority restoration areas that will provide benefits to both wildlife and people. The project was focused on six coastal watersheds nationwide, including the San Francisco Bay Area, where Point Blue led stakeholder engagement and synthesis of data.

Looking ahead, there is much work to be done to prepare our coasts and shorelines—and our planet—for climate change. But Point Blue's capacity to lead and innovate is helping to secure a more resilient future. Sam and his colleagues are working closely with coastal managers to make sure that the science translates to real world implementation. "Making sure they can easily apply what we produce in their adaptation planning efforts—that can make all the difference," says Sam.

Point Blue has been a true leader in bringing science into coastal resilience decision making. We value our partnership with Point Blue and their ongoing efforts to reduce climate change impacts on the coast's natural systems, wildlife and communities.

— AMY HUTZEL, DEPUTY EXECUTIVE OFFICER, STATE OF CALIFORNIA COASTAL CONSERVANCY



Spreading STRAW: New Endeavors Benefit Students, Teachers, Communities, and Nature

2017 marked a trio of firsts for STRAW as we expanded the program to the Sierra Nevada mountains: it was the first time we mobilized a community outside of the greater San Francisco Bay Area, the first time we engaged students in meadow restoration, and the first time we added chest waders as new essential equipment in the STRAW toolkit. The result: 225 students, teachers, and community members applied their new knowledge of meadow ecology to return 800 willows to the stream channels of Chester Meadows in Plumas County, California.

Closer to home, STRAW has begun work to establish its first high school native plant nursery at Casa Grande High, Sonoma County. Working collaboratively with the City of Petaluma, this partnership will result in students growing the specific plants needed for STRAW's climate-smart stream and wetland restorations, and will become a model for expanding school nurseries.



Joining Global Climate Leaders on the International Stage

In 2017, Point Blue was honored to be recognized by the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) as an Official Observer Organization. For the first time, Point Blue joined governmental delegations and non-governmental organizations from around the world at the annual climate meeting in November, held in Bonn, Germany. At the meeting, President and CEO Ellie Cohen gave a presentation on California's innovative approaches to climate-smart conservation, with a focus on nature-based climate solutions—actions inspired and supported by nature, which increase benefits to both wildlife and communities and help build resilience to change.

Our involvement with the UNFCCC continued into the spring, when we submitted our formal recommendations for how the international body should consider agriculture as a part of the climate solution. Ours was one of only 15 recommendation letters submitted by NGOs globally that will be considered as the UNFCCC evaluates future approaches to the issue.



Bringing Our Innovative Science to Policy Makers

Geoff Geupel, Emerging Programs and Partnerships Group director, and Catherine Hickey, conservation director in the Pacific Coast and Central Valley Group, joined several Migratory Bird Joint Ventures partners at the nation's capitol in March to educate congress about our many conservation successes for wildlife and people. "In these politically divided times in which there are ongoing efforts to greatly weaken environmental protections and government regulations," says Geoff, "it is extremely important for our elected representatives to know that diverse partners voluntarily come together to conserve our natural resources on which all life depends."

Back home, Point Blue hosted a roundtable discussion with Congressman Jared Huffman and 30 agricultural producers to discuss priorities for the new Farm Bill. "The Farm Bill is critically important to our working lands efforts," says Wendell Gilgert, Working Landscapes program director. "It was gratifying that Point Blue was invited to share our wildlife- and water-friendly practices with the Congressman to help inform his actions related to the development of the bill."

Facing page: STRAW students at our first-ever Plumas County meadow restoration. Photo: Melissa Pitkin/Point Blue.

2017-18 Publications

Peer-Reviewed Publications

How overfishing a large piscine mesopredator explains growth in Ross Sea penguin populations: A framework to better understand impacts of a controversial fishery. Ainley, D.G., E.L. Crockett, J. T. Eastman, W.R. Fraser, N. Nur, K. O'Brien, L. A. Salas, and D. B. Siniff. Ecological Modelling.

Spatio-temporal occurrence patterns of cetaceans near Ross Island, Antarctica, 2002-2015: Implications for foodweb dynamics. Ainley, D.G., K. Lindke, G. Ballard, P. O'B Lyver, S. Jennings, V. Toniolo, J. Pennycook, A. Lescroel, M. Massaro, J.A. Santora. Polar Biology.

Ecosystem-based management affecting Brandt's Cormorant resources and population in the central California Current region. Ainley, D.G., J.A. Santora, P.J. Capitolo, J.C. Field, J.N. Beck, R.D. Carle, E. Donnelly-Greenan, G.J. McChesney, M. Elliott, R.W. Bradley, K. Lindquist, P. Nelson, J. Roletto, P. Warzybok, M. Hester, J. Jahncke. Biological Conservation.

Using Regional Bird Density Distribution Models to Evaluate Protected Area Networks and Inform Conservation Planning. Alexander, J., J. Stephens, S. Veloz, L. Salas, J. Rousseau, C.J. Ralph, and D. Sarr. Ecosphere.

Dynamic surface water distributions influence wetland connectivity in a highly modified interior landscape. Barbaree B.A., M.E. Reiter, C.M. Hickey, N.K. Elliot, D. Schaffer-Smith, M.D. Reynold, G.W. Page. Landscape Ecology.

Evaluating Riparian Restoration Success: Long-Term Responses of the Breeding Bird Community in California's Lower Putah Creek Watershed. Dybala K.E., A. Engilis, J.A. Trochet JA, I. Engilis, M. Truan. Ecological Restoration.

Advancing ecological restoration through experimental design on spatial and temporal scales relevant to wildlife. Dybala K.E., M.D. Dettling, T. Gardali, J. D. Grossman, R. Kelsey, N.E. Seavy. PeerJ Preprints.

Diverse and highly recombinant anelloviruses associated with Weddell seals in Antarctica. Fahsbender, E., J.M. Burns, S. Kim, S. Kraberger, G. Frankfurter, A.A. Eilers, M.R. Shero, R. Beltran, A. Kirkham, R. McCorkell, R.K. Berggart, M.F. Male, G. Ballard, D.G. Ainley, M. Breitbart, A. Varsani. Virus Evolution.

Energetic fitness: Field metabolic rates assessed via 3D accelerometry complement conventional fitness metrics. Gremillet, D., A. Lescroel, G. Ballard, K.M. Dugger, M. Massaro, E.L. Porzig, D.G. Ainley. Functional Ecology.

Interannual variation and spatial distribution of decapod larvae in a region of persistent coastal upwelling. Hameed, S.O., M.L. Elliott, S.G. Morgan, J. Jahncke. 2018. Marine Ecology Progress Series.



Inherent limits of light-level geolocation may lead to over-interpretation. Lisovski, S., H. Schmaljohann, E.S. Bridge, S. Bauer, A. Farnsworth, S.A. Gauthreaux, S. Hahn, M.T. Hallworth, C.M. Hewson, J.F. Kelly, and F. Liechti. P.P. Marra, E. Rakhimberdiev, J.D. Ross, N.E. Seavy, M.D. Sumner, C.M. Taylor, D.W. Winkler, and M.B. Wunder. Current Biology.

There goes the neighborhood: White-crowned Sparrow nest site selection and reproductive success as local density declines. Porzig, E.L., N.E. Seavy, J.M. Eadie, T. Gardali, D.L. Humple, and G.R. Geupel. Condor.

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Long-Term Datasets

Point Blue's ongoing bird and ecosystem data collection encompasses extensive time spans and provides the foundation for our innovative, collaborative conservation efforts. We are grateful to our partners who make this possible.

Here are our 2017-18 milestones:

Palomarin Field Station – 52 years

Farallon Islands – 50 years

Bolinas Lagoon – 47 years

Coastal Snowy Plovers – 40 years

Mono Lake Gulls – 36 years

Ross Island, Antarctica – 35 years

Central Valley Riparian – 25 years

Sierra Nevada – 22 years

San Francisco Bay Tidal Marshes – 22 years

Northern Spotted Owls – 20 years

Vandenberg Air Force Base – 19 years

California/Arizona Deserts – 16 years

Gulf of the Farallones – 14 years

TomKat Ranch Field Station – 8 years

Facing page: Point Blue Farallon Island biologists at tidepools. Photo: Maps for Good.

Right: Adélie Penguins, Ross Sea, Antarctica. Photo: Annie Schmidt/Point Blue.

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Above: Point Blue donors on Sea of Cortez expedition. Photo: Julie Chase Baldocchi.

continued on next page



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We rely upon the skill and generosity of volunteer skippers in the Farallon Patrol for year-round transportation between the mainland and our research station at the Farallon Islands National Wildlife Refuge. We are grateful to our current Patrol skippers for helping to make our Farallon program possible.

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The Tern Society honors individuals who are building an enduring legacy of conservation science through their planned gifts to Point Blue. We gratefully acknowledge our Tern Society members.

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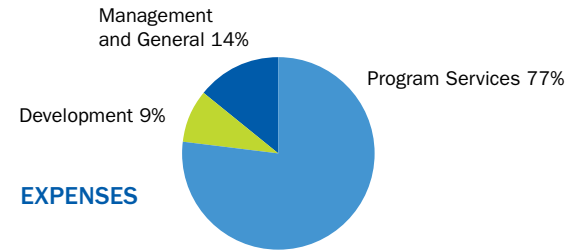
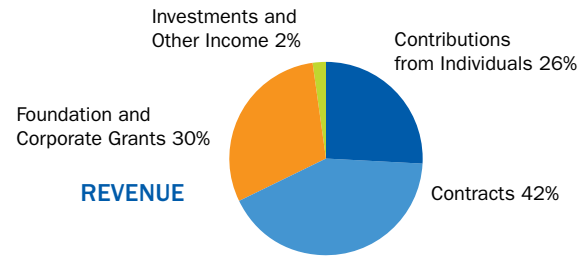
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Opposite: Working Lands Program Director Wendell Gilgert demonstrates restoration techniques at a “Hands on the Land” donor event. Photo: Point Blue.

Right: Sandhill Crane and chick. Photo: Kirsten Wahlquist.





2017-18 Key Financial Figures

Statements of Financial Position as of March 31, 2018 and 2017

	2018	2017
Assets		
Current assets:		
Cash and cash equivalents	\$ 6,364,785	6,642,417
Restricted cash, endowment	100,002	0
Contracts receivable	1,464,710	1,425,190
Grants and contributions receivable	1,251,585	1,302,468
Other receivables	86,793	66,214
Prepaid and other current assets	138,966	92,623
Total current assets	9,406,841	9,528,912
Non-current assets:		
Certificates of deposit	0	253,783
Endowment	310,195	288,837
Contributions receivables, net of current portion	711,301	86,85
Property and equipment, net	5,781,042	4,862,787
Total non-current assets	6,802,538	5,492,257
Total Assets	16,209,379	15,021,169
Liabilities and Net Assets		
Current liabilities:		
Accounts payable	597,420	291,110
Accrued vacation	402,669	389,204
Deferred revenue	97,747	185,285
Total current liabilities	1,097,836	865,599
Net assets:		
Unrestricted		
Board-designated funds	3,282,325	3,418,914
Undesignated	7,328,002	6,558,708
Total unrestricted	10,610,327	9,977,622
Temporarily restricted	4,301,216	4,077,948
Permanently restricted	200,000	100,000
Total Net Assets	15,111,543	14,155,570
Total Liabilities and Net Assets	\$ 16,209,379	\$ 15,021,169

Statements of Activities for the Years Ended March 31, 2018 and 2017

	2018	2017
Changes in unrestricted net assets:		
Revenues, gains and other support:		
Contract revenue	\$ 5,825,794	5,550,189
Grants and contributions	1,472,201	1,226,863
Interest income	1,200	5,876
Realized and unrealized gains (losses), net	15,058	17,456
Other income	388,279	2,312,229
Net assets released from restrictions:	6,284,665	4,808,473
Total revenue, gains and other support	13,987,197	13,921,086
Functional expenses:		
Program services	10,319,016	9,756,386
Support services		
Management and general	1,820,519	1,475,377
Advancement	1,214,957	1,398,942
Total support services	3,035,476	2,874,319
Total functional expenses	13,354,492	12,630,705
Change in unrestricted net assets*	632,705	1,290,381
Changes in temporarily restricted net assets:		
Grants and contributions	6,496,748	3,212,849
Interest income	1,254	0
Realized and unrealized gains (losses), net	9,931	11,496
Other income	0	0
Net assets released from restrictions	(6,284,665)	(4,808,473)
Change in temporarily restricted net assets	223,268	(1,584,128)
Changes in permanently restricted net assets:		
Grants and contributions	100,000	0
Change in permanently restricted net assets	100,000	0
Change in net assets	955,973	(293,747)
Net assets at beginning of year	14,155,570	14,449,317
Net assets at end of year	\$ 15,111,543	\$ 14,155,570

The condensed financial statements presented above reflect Point Blue's complete set of financial statements for 2018 & 2017 which have been audited by Armanino LLP Certified Public Accountants, and on which they have rendered an unmodified opinion

dated July 17, 2018. The organization's complete audited financial statements and the independent auditor's report can be found at www.pointblue.org/2017-2018auditreport.

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Above: Point Blue scientists, interns, and partners embark on an ACCESS research cruise. Photo: Julie Chase Baldocchi.



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