



Critical Habitat Exemptions

Steve Holmer, Vice President of Policy
American Bird Conservancy
sholmer@abcbirds.org

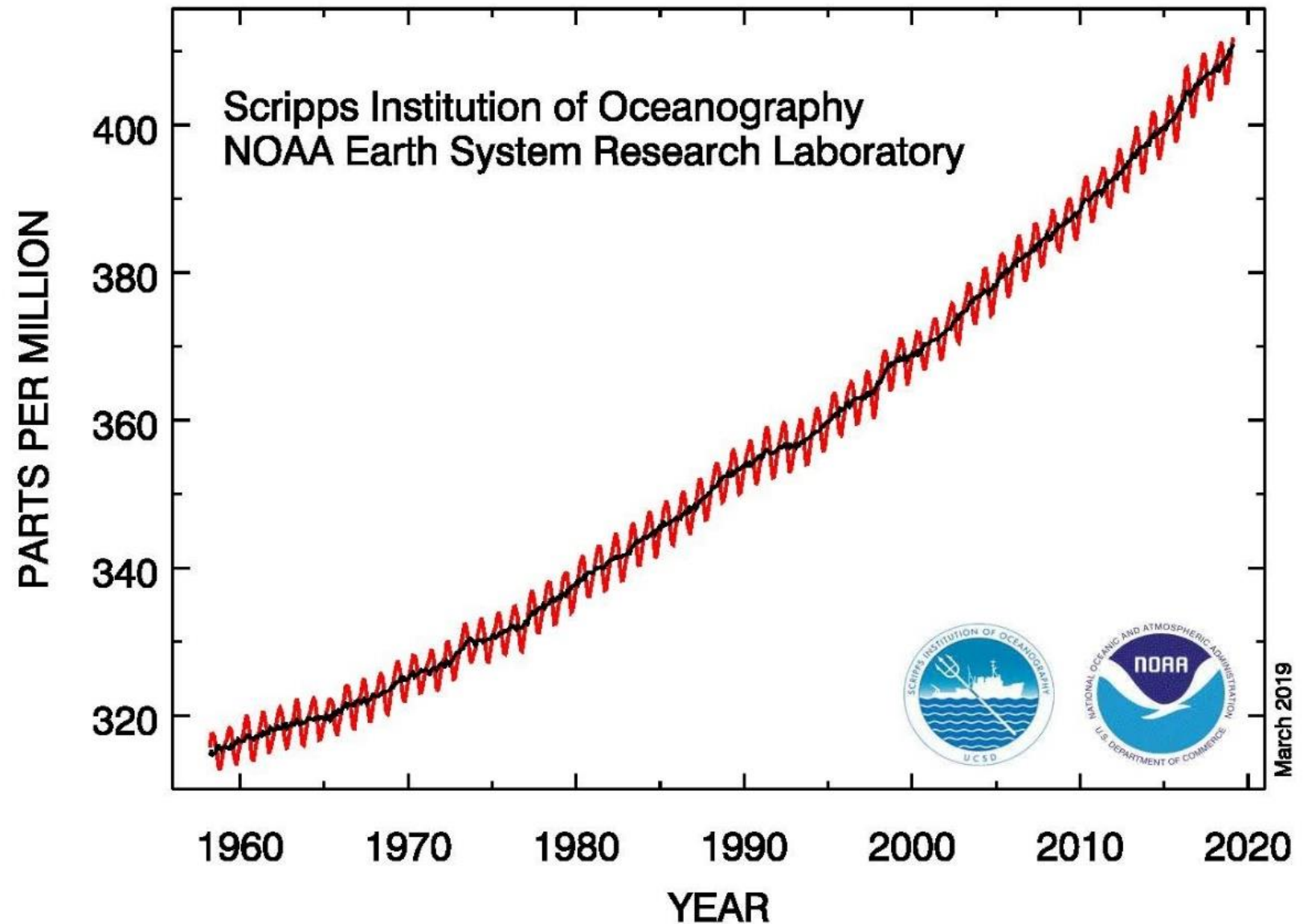


Net Population Change: *1970-2017*



- *Net Population Loss of 2.9 billion birds since 1970*
- 29% Loss of Abundance across N. American Avifauna

Atmospheric CO₂ at Mauna Loa Observatory



Northern Spotted Owl Marbled Murrelet Critical Habitat

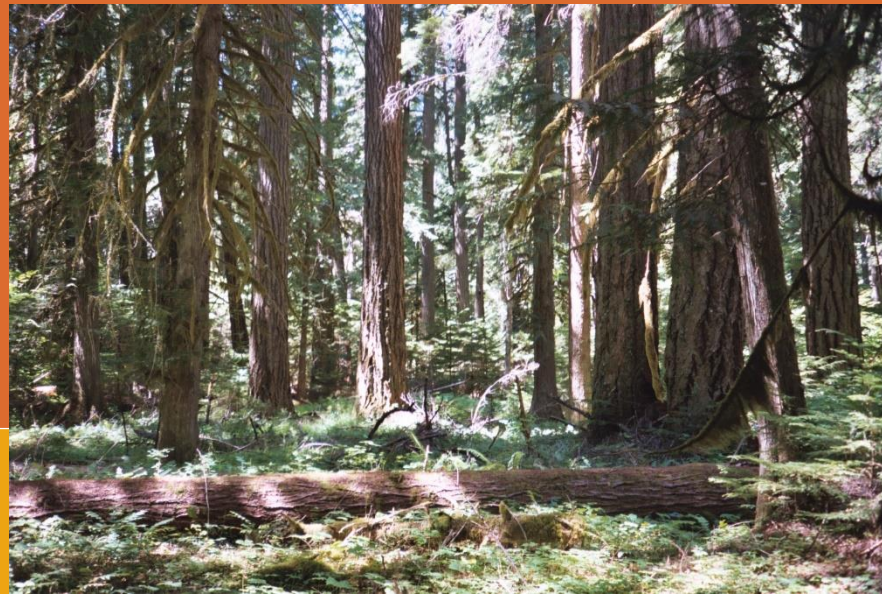






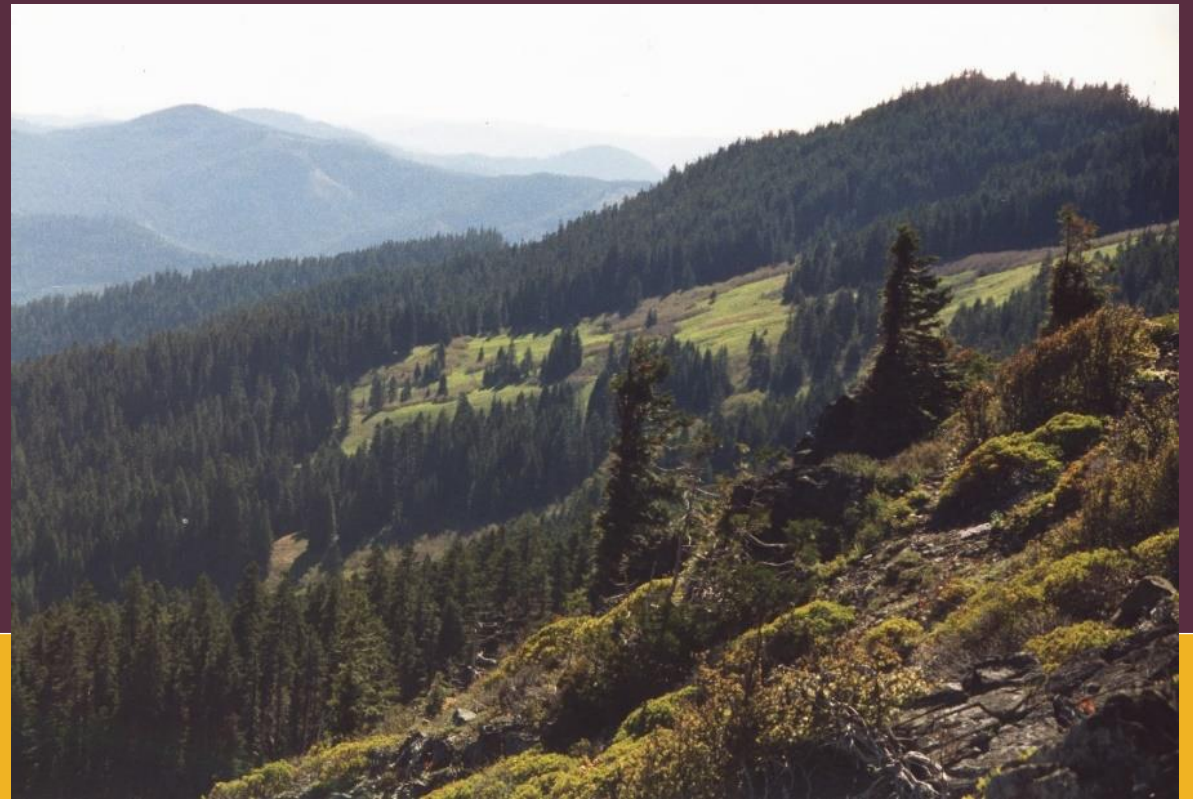
Northwest Forest Plan is Working

- Monitoring Reports: habitat restoration is working – and producing a climate benefit – the region's forests are now an overall carbon sink.
- Marbled Murrelet habitat restoration needs time – added habitat 50-75 years away.
- Northern Spotted Owl decline and Barred Owl competition – added habitat 20-25 years away.



Critical Habitat Protection Essential

- Critical Habitat Rule and Presidential Memo of 2012
- Marbled Murrelet Critical Habitat Proposed for Six-Year Elimination
- Western Oregon Plan Revision – Increased Mature Forest Logging



Critical Habitat Protection Essential

- Northern Spotted Owl Uplist to Endangered (2020 warranted but precluded).
- Critical Habitat Rule of 2021 (3.4 million acre exemption)
- Jeopardy for the Northern Spotted Owl
- ESA Critical Habitat Exemptions Rule



ESA Critical Habitat Exemptions Rule

- Makes possible extensive exemptions. (i.e. 3.4 million acre Northern Spotted Owl rule).
- Allows federal agencies to be unaccountable for their actions.



Critical Habitat Exemptions Final Rule

- Gives undue weight to outside parties in guiding the authority to exclude areas from critical habitat designations.
- Gives parties other than the Service, including proponents of exclusions, an outsized role in determining whether and how the Secretary will conduct exclusion analyses.
- Mandates a rigid process for when the Secretary will enter into an exclusion analysis, how weights are assigned to impacts, and when an area is excluded.
- Standards for evaluating Federal and non-Federal lands would be the same.
- The Secretary “shall” exclude an area where the benefits of exclusion outweigh those of inclusion, so long as the exclusion will not result in the extinction of the species concerned.



Strengthen Critical Habitat

- Rescind the Critical Habitat Exemptions Rule
- Rescind the proposed Northern Spotted Owl 200,000 acre exemption
- Rescind the Presidential Memo of 2012
- Designate additional Critical Habitat
- Further Protect Owl and Murrelet Critical Habitat as Climate Reserves



