



MINNESOTA

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Chair Fong Hawj  
Senate Environment, Climate, and Legacy Committee  
95 University Ave. W.  
Minnesota Senate Building 3231  
St. Paul, MN 55155

March 13, 2023

Re: Senate File 1324

Dear Chair Hawj and Members of the Committee:

A recent study from the Cornell Lab of Ornithology finds a staggering loss of birds. **North American bird populations have declined by 29%, and grassland bird populations have declined by 53% since 1970.** These population declines are tied to reductions in habitat quality and quantity associated with the conversion of native habitats to human-dominated landscapes.

Research reveals how the fragmentation of habitat from the introduction of roads and trails create edge habitats that can cause declines in habitat quality, especially for species that need large areas of habitat for breeding. In response to this research and significant declines in bird populations, it is critical that we enhance habitat quality and food availability by minimizing the creation of new, unsanctioned trails in our public lands. For this reason, we support efforts to reduce and mitigate the impacts of Off-Highway Vehicles.

Sincerely,

Rob Schultz  
Vice President

Dr. Dale Gentry  
Conservation Director

Lindsay J. Brice  
Policy Director

[Audubon Minnesota Iowa Missouri](#)

**Alongside the following independent Audubon chapters across Minnesota:**

- Catherine McGoldrick, Vice President of [Brainerd Lakes Area Audubon Society](#)
- Daniel Kneip, President of [Central Minnesota Audubon Chapter](#)
- Greg Burnes, President of [St. Paul Audubon Society](#)
- Marian Weidner, Board Chair of [Audubon Chapter of Minneapolis](#)
- Peter Mattson, President of [Austin Audubon Society](#)
- Rob Daves, President of [Minnesota River Valley Audubon Society](#)
- Viola Riggle, President of [Prairie Lakes Audubon Society](#)