

## Wild Bird Index (forest & farmland specialist birds)

### Key indicator facts

Indicator type	Last update
State	2019
Applicable for national use	Coverage
Yes ( <i>find out more</i> )	Global
Indicator classification	Availability
Operational and included in the CBD's list of indicators	Data available on request:
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### Partners



**European Bird Census Council**

*[View website >](#)*



**Royal Society for the Protection of Birds**

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**BirdLife International**

*[View website >](#)*

### Contact point

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### Key resources

#### Publications and reports

Common European birds are declining rapidly whilst less abundant species' numbers are rising (Inger et al. 2014)

EU agricultural reform fails on biodiversity (Pe'er et al. 2014).

A mid-term analysis of progress towards international biodiversity targets (Tittensor et al. 2014).

The Wild Bird Index - Guidance for National and Regional Use (Sheehan et al. 2010).

#### Websites

State of the World's Birds: indicators for our changing world (2013)

### Related Aichi Targets



## Related SDGs



## Other related MEAs and processes



## Themes



## Partners



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## Indicator description

The Wild Bird Index (WBI) is the average trend in relative abundance of a group of bird species during the breeding season, often grouped by their association and dependence on a particular habitat. It is particularly suited to tracking trends in the condition of habitats through obligate or specialist species.

Birds are recognised as good indicators of environmental change and as useful proxies of wider changes in nature. The Wild Bird Index measures average population trends of a suite of representative wild birds as an indicator of the general health of the environment.

## Contact point

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## Graphs / Diagrams

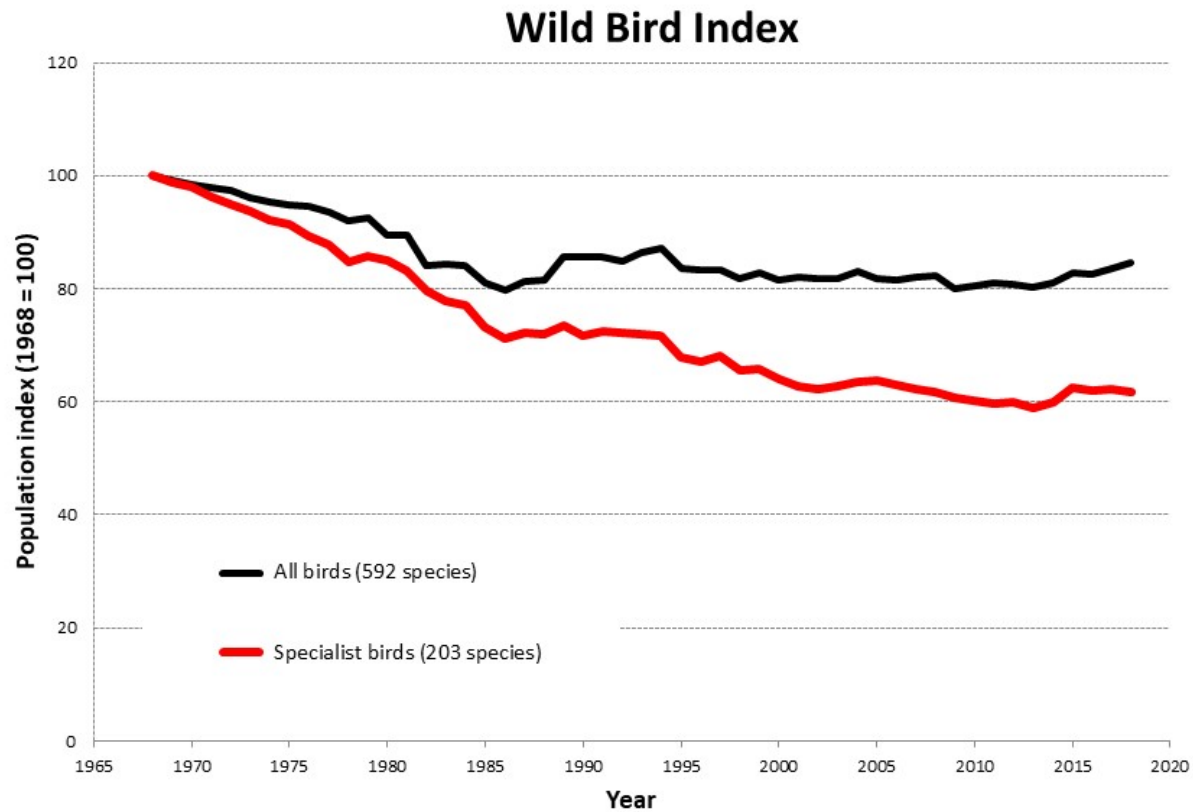


Figure 1. The Wild Bird Index for North American and European birds species.

Source: Pan-European Common Bird Monitoring Scheme (European Bird Census Council/BirdLife International/RSPB/CSO) and North American Breeding Bird Survey (courtesy of John Sauer USGS Patuxent Wildlife Research Center).

## Current storyline

The global Wild Bird Index project seeks to mobilise relevant information on bird trends globally and to encourage the establishment of breeding bird surveys in countries and regions where none exist. For example, national schemes have been successfully established in several African and Asian countries recently, and provisional Wild Bird Indices have been calculated for Botswana and Uganda. Long-term bird population indices are currently only available for North America (from 1968) and Europe (from 1980), and they are brought together in a Wild Bird Index combining these data. Across Europe and North America in the last fifty years, all bird species covered by generic monitoring schemes have declined by 17%, whereas specialist birds of these particular habitats have declined by around 41% (Figure 1). The largest population declines have occurred in grasslands (49%) and arid lands (43%) in North America (since 1968), and in farmed lands (57%) in Europe (since 1980), whereas widespread specialists of forests show fluctuating or stable trends with signs of recent increase in both North America (17%) since 1968 and Europe (+2% since 1980: Figure 2). The average trends across all species monitored by these count schemes are more positive, reflecting increasing trends among generalist species and in some specific habitats. Although not illustrated, for example, populations of many wetland specialists have increased in both regions, largely it is thought in response to conservation action.

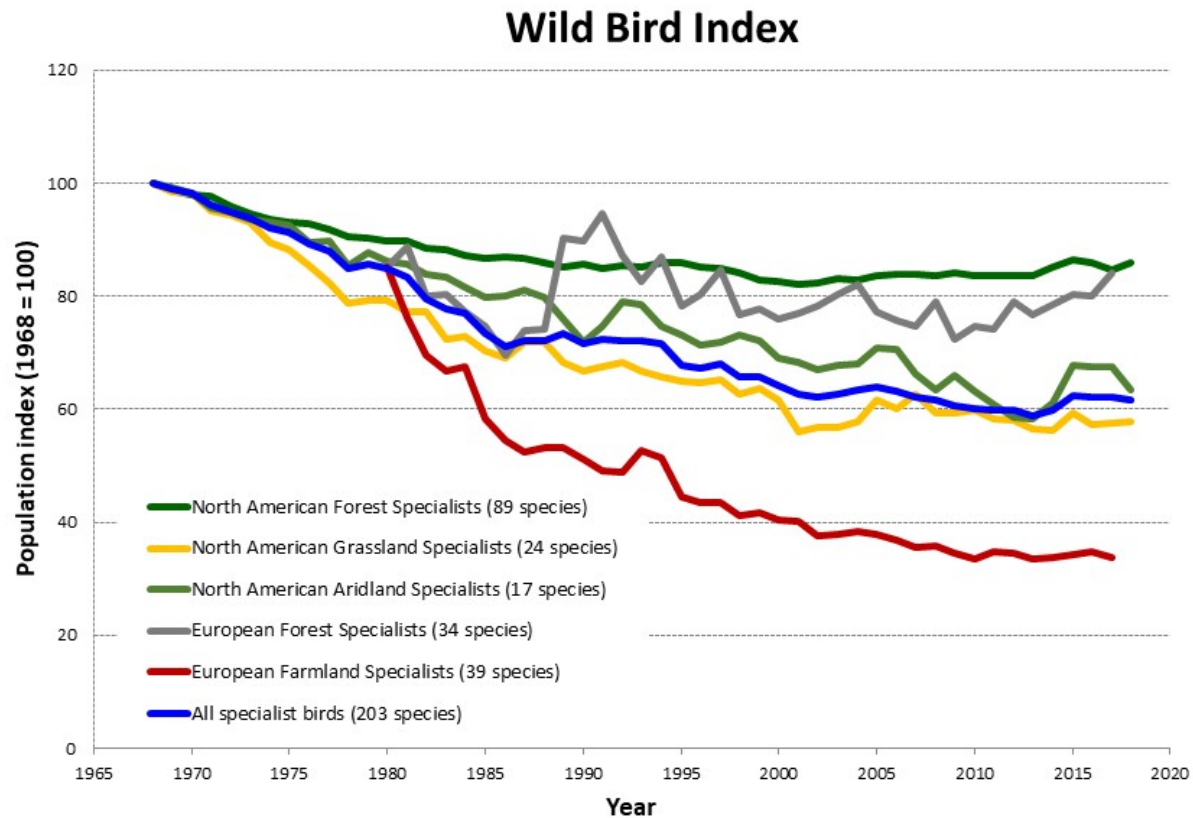


Figure 2. The Wild Bird Index for North American and European habitat specialists.

Source: Pan-European Common Bird Monitoring Scheme (European Bird Census Council/BirdLife International/RSPB/CSO) and North American Breeding Bird Survey (courtesy of John Sauer USGS Patuxent Wildlife Research Center).

The indices are set to a value of 100 in 1968. The North American time series begin in 1968, and the European time series in 1980.

Source: Pan-European Common Bird Monitoring Scheme (European Bird Census Council/RSPB/BirdLife International/Statistics Netherlands), and North American Breeding Bird Survey (courtesy of John Sauer USGS Patuxent Wildlife Research Center).

## Data and methodology

## National use of indicator

## Further resources

### BIP secretariat

The BIP secretariat is hosted by the UN Environment World Conservation Monitoring Centre in Cambridge, UK. Please do not hesitate to contact our global helpdesk regarding the Biodiversity Indicators Partnership, global indicators or national support.

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The Partnership is supported by **UN Environment**, the **European Commission** and the **Swiss Federal Office for the Environment**.



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