



A CRITICAL BALANCE

Artists Take Action



Lewis Gallery
Portland Public Library
Portland, Maine
2026

A Critical Balance

*“In the end, we will conserve only what we love,
We will love only what we understand,
And we will understand only what we are taught.”*
– Senegalese environmentalist Baba Dioum

Extinction is the death of all members of a species of plants, animals, or other organisms. One of the most dramatic examples of a modern extinction is the passenger pigeon. Until the early 1800s, billions of passenger pigeons darkened the skies of the United States in spectacular migratory flocks. Easy to trap or shoot, passenger pigeons became a popular cheap food. Commercial hunters killed them in vast numbers, eventually decimating the population. The last passenger pigeon, named Martha, died in the Cincinnati Zoological Garden in 1914, and was donated to the Smithsonian Institution.

Recent studies estimate about eight million species on Earth, of which over 48,600 species face extinction. It's hard to pinpoint the exact extinction rate because many endangered species have not been identified or studied yet. Several scientists grapple with improving methods for estimating extinction rates.

Regardless, scientists agree that today's extinction rate is hundreds, or even thousands, of times higher than the natural baseline rate. Judging from the fossil record, the baseline extinction rate is about one species per every one million species per year. According to the Smithsonian Institution, scientists are racing to catalogue the biodiversity on Earth, working against the clock as extinctions continue to occur.

The eight artists in this exhibit have a dedication to the natural world and have a unique opportunity to share their observations and use their art to convey both the beauty of their chosen endangered species and the need to protect them. Their intent is to use art to inspire and educate in ways that will reach beyond statistics, policy, and politics. Each artist has chosen subjects that are both endangered and are found in the Amboseli National Park in Kenya, Africa. These birds are listed on the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Red List as endangered or threatened.

About the Classifications

The conservation status of a species is an indicator of how likely that species is to remain alive at present or in the near future. Many factors are used to assess a species' conservation status, including the number remaining, the overall increase or decrease in the population over time, breeding success, and known threats.

The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species is a worldwide conservation status listing and ranking system. Following are the categories that we focus on with this group of species:

- Extinct (EX)
- Extinct in the Wild (EW)
- Critically Endangered (CR)
- Endangered (EN)
- Near Threatened (NT)
- Vulnerable (VU)



About Biodiversity Research Institute (BRI) and Amboseli National Park, Kenya, Africa

Linking Science and Art

BRI's conservation biologists are on a mission to know: how ecosystems work; how contaminants affect those ecosystems; how wildlife respond to changes over time. As part of their mission, BRI is dedicated to advancing environmental awareness and informing decision makers about the research these scientists conduct. To that end, BRI publishes science communications materials and offers outreach programs that highlight their research and are accessible to the public. These materials incorporate art, photography, and graphics as a way to explore and explain complex scientific concepts, as well as to engage people in conservation.

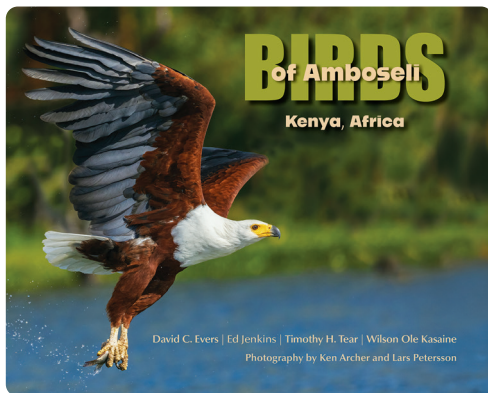
As with any creative endeavor, conservation is a process that requires first and foremost an idea that strikes a chord. Paul Bannick, wildlife photographer and conservationist, writes in BRI's book *Journey with Owls*, "We protect what we love, and we love what we know...we must create empathy, and thus inspire the education and love that will support conservation..."

Art reaches people at that emotional level. Once captivated, we can begin to gain an understanding of a given concern, and once we understand an issue, we will be more apt to take positive action, which is the ultimate goal. Linking science and art helps BRI achieve that goal. Sharing knowledge can lead to others knowing and protecting what they love.

BRI has enjoyed an enduring relationship with artists Linda Mirabile and Adelaide Murphy Tyrol. Their many collaborations include the first art exhibit *A Critical Balance* (ACB), which featured endangered or threatened species depicted at life-size. The two organizations sponsored a joint exhibit at the Portland Public Library.

For this second joint exhibit, the founders of ACB decided to highlight the endangered birds of Amboseli National Park—an area in Kenya where BRI conducts research. Interest in conserving the wildlife in this region has grown over the years and BRI was asked to produce a book about the 500+ species of birds that reside in or migrate to and from Amboseli National Park.

For more information, visit: briwildlife.org



Birds of Amboseli: Kenya, Africa

160-pages, Hardcover

\$48 USD

ISBN: 979-8-9952423-0-7

BRI's new publishing imprint, Big Dipper Books, continues their tradition of producing high-quality, general interest books related to their research around the globe. Big Dipper's inaugural book release, *Birds of Amboseli*, highlights many of the charismatic, unique, and spectacular birds (more than 500 species) that occupy this protected wildlife park in southern Kenya, as well as the integrated culture of the Maasai people of that region. Book content will include stunning photographic images, detailed illustrations, and scientific infographics to help create a more complete picture of the world as it exists in Amboseli.

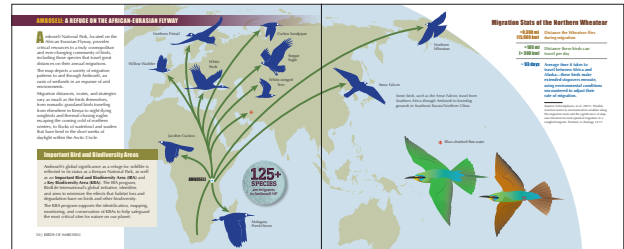
A Celebration of Birds, Art, and Conservation

Birds of Amboseli features:

- Stunning wildlife photography
- Original illustrations weave stories of animal interactions
- Infographics explain scientific concepts
- Annotated checklist of 536 bird species
- Local research, management, and conservation efforts



For more information or to order books, scan the QR code or visit: bigdipperbooks.com



Heidi Broner

Egyptian Vulture, 2025
Neophron percnopterus

24" x 30"

Acrylic on canvas



An adult Egyptian Vulture grooms itself while the juvenile looks out over the Savannah. These small vultures are partially migratory over a wide range—including Africa, the Middle East, Central and South Asia, and Southern Europe. They are one of the few bird species that will use tools: pebbles to break open large eggs and twigs to wind wool for nesting material. Sadly, their numbers have greatly declined due to poisoning (eating carcasses of livestock treated with medication that is toxic to the birds), electrocution by uninsulated power lines, and poaching of the birds and of their eggs by collectors.



Heidi Broner

Shoebill in Flight, 2026

Neophron percnopterus

40" x 60"

Acrylic on canvas



Standing at up to five feet tall, this very striking swamp-dwelling bird is only rarely seen in Amboseli National Park. Their large, wide feet and long toes allow them to walk and stand on floating water plants in order to hunt. They will stand perfectly still for long periods of time, then dart at their aquatic prey—lungfish, catfish, even baby crocodiles or baby turtles.

There are only about 3,300 to 5,300 Shoebills left in the wild, their numbers declining due to habitat loss, climate change, poaching, and pollution.



Susan Bull Riley

Pallid Harrier

Circus macrourus

NT

With its creamy plumage and black-tipped wings, the male Pallid Harrier is a stunning sight. Perched on this fencepost, it is catching sunlight while dining on one of its preferred foods—a songbird. In addition to songbirds, its varied diet includes lizards, other small reptiles, frogs, and insects, such as locusts and dragonflies. Like some other raptors, it attends grass fires, catching insects and other small animals fleeing the smoke and flames.

Their declining numbers are caused by familiar factors—habitat loss, the use of toxic rodenticides and agricultural chemicals, and illegal shooting and trapping along the long, vulnerable migratory pathways between their breeding and wintering grounds.

Reference material provided by: Oren Shatz / e-bird checklist: 5296485229 ML649695745

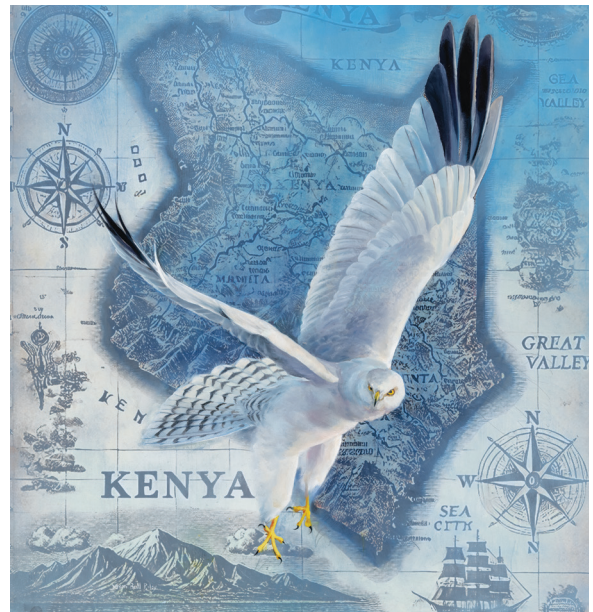


Photo reference: Akajitt Chakraborti; Cornell Lab of Ornithology | Macaulay Library

▲ 30" x 32"
Oil on paper, 2025

◀ 23" x 18"
Watercolor on paper, 2026

Susan Bull Riley

Martial Eagle, 2025

Polemaetus bellicosus

EN

36" x 36"

Oil on canvas

The Martial Eagle is one of the largest and most powerful of the “booted” eagles, meaning that their legs are covered with feathers right down to their feet. These magnificent giants dominate the skies over sub-Saharan Africa, ranging from Senegal to Somalia and down to South Africa. Their name is derived from the Latin word *martialis*, meaning “from Mars,” referring to the Roman god of war—quite fitting, as these raptors are expert hunters. Evidence suggests that their decline might be related to their diet, specifically a reduction or shift in the availability of prey species. Habitat loss is also a factor. Additionally, it is one of the most persecuted bird species in the world, hunted by farmers and game wardens on account of its appetite—probably exaggerated—for livestock as well as valuable game species.



Red-necked Stint, 2025

Calidris rufficollis

NT

14" x 28"

Graphite on paper

These birds, classified as Near Threatened, due to the loss of key stopover sites during migration, are among the smallest of waders, measuring 5.1–6.7 inches in length. They are regarded as “Extant and Vagrant” in Kenya, but they are migratory world travelers, spending the nonbreeding season in places as far flung as southeast Asia, Australasia, Tasmania, and New Zealand although their breeding habitat is tundra!

In their nonbreeding habitat, they forage for insects or small invertebrates in wet grasslands, in the soft mud of intertidal mudflats, or along the margins of freshwater lakes. The call is a hoarse *stit*, which might have given the species its name.



Susan Bull Riley

European Turtle Dove, 2025

Streptopelia tur tur

V

24" x 24"

Oil on paper

This elegant bird with a gentle purring song and distinct scaly-patterned feathers on its wings, winters in northern sub-Saharan Africa although its breeding territory is south western Palearctic and North Africa.

A lover of seeds and grains, it is vulnerable to the increased use of pesticides and herbicides in farming. The Turtle Dove faces the threat of illegal shooting, particularly in the Mediterranean, where many birds are unlawfully hunted or trapped. European populations have plummeted by 30-40%, with some countries witnessing staggering declines of over 90% since 1994.

Flying mostly at night, this dove migrates between its European breeding grounds and Africa's vast Sahel belt, covering up to 435 miles without stopping. The journey is dangerous, and the greatest threat comes from humans.



Photo reference: Tomas Grim; Cornell Lab of Ornithology | Macaulay Library

Basra Reed Warbler, 2026

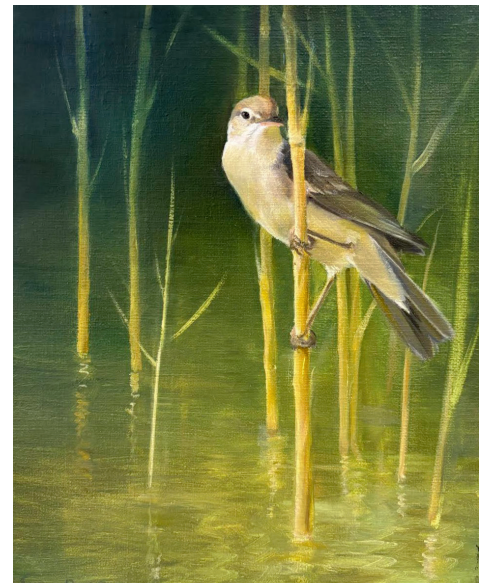
Acrocephalus griseldis

EN

9" x 12"

Oil on canvas

Globally endangered, the Basra Reed Warbler is found in aquatic vegetation in or around shallow fresh or brackish water, still or flowing, mainly in dense reed beds. Their known winter distribution is concentrated in Kenya, Tanzania, Malawi, and Mozambique. The species' marshy wetland habitat required for breeding has suffered significant loss because of climate change and major hydrological projects since the 1950s.



Susan Bull Riley

White-backed Vulture, 2025

Gyps africanus

EN

22" x 33"

Watercolor on paper

These magnificent white-ruffed birds, with wingspans up to 7.5 feet, earn their name from the patch of white plumage on their otherwise light-colored backs. Along with many other vulture species, they are among the most important animals on the planet because of the speed and efficiency with which they clean up carrion, thus preventing the spread of disease.

An example of the importance of vultures can be seen in a study in which the near-extinction of vultures across India in the 1990s led to the spread of disease-carrying pathogens from an excess of dead animals, killing more than a half-million people from 2000 to 2005.

This vulture is now considered at extreme risk for extinction due to the familiar causes of bird decline—habitat destruction, fewer food resources, hunting, poisoning (deliberate as well as unintentional), persecution, and collision with electric wires. In Kenya especially, a toxic pesticide called *Furadan* has led to many vulture deaths.



Lesser Flamingo, 2025

Phoeniconaias minor

NT

36" x 36"

Oil on canvas

Even though it's the smallest flamingo species in the world, the Lesser Flamingo is still a large bird at up to 3 feet tall. It has bright red eyes and plumage that, owing to a diet of blue-green algae, shows off some of the prettiest pinks in the avian world. These birds feed on the surface of the water with their beaks upside down, scooping up microorganisms and small invertebrates. They rest most comfortably standing on one leg, and despite those very long legs, they are excellent swimmers!

Their breeding sites of alkaline and saline lakes, known as soda lakes, in sub-Saharan Africa and western India, which are few in number to start with, are vulnerable to habitat loss caused by farming, urban development, road construction, and water pollution.



Susan Bull Riley

Madagascar Pratincole, 2026

Glareola ocularis

NT

12" x 18"

Watercolor on paper

The Madagascar Pratincole is an elegant, tern-like bird that breeds in Madagascar and winters in East Africa. Its beautiful plumage includes distinctive markings such as a white line below its dark crown, black flight feathers, a distinctive white rump, and a lovely rusty orange on the upper belly.

The estimated 5,000-10,000 individuals remaining of what was already a naturally small population are threatened by the usual pressures exerted by agricultural expansion that diminishes the natural wetlands, rivers, and flooded plains these birds depend on.



Linda Mirabile

Hooded Vulture, 2025

Necrosyrtes monachus

CR

20" x 28"

Acrylic on Fabriano

The Hooded Vulture is a lovely, relatively petite vulture at 24-28 inches with a wing-span of 61-65 inches. Overall it has a dark chocolatey brown color, with a white "collar" sometimes visible around its neck. True to its name, the Hooded Vulture has a patch of downy feathers that runs along the back of its neck to the crown of its head, appearing to wear a fluffy, cream-colored hood. It has dark eyes and a long, narrow bill. Its face is devoid of feathers and its bare skin is normally white. However, when the vulture gets agitated or anxious, the white face flushes to a light pink or red, as if it were blushing. The Hooded Vulture has a wide distribution through-out sub-Saharan Africa and is facing extinction due to a combination of factors, including poisoning, illegal trade for traditional medicine, and hunting for food. Habitat loss and degradation, as well as collisions with power lines, also contribute to their decline.



Curlew Sandpiper, 2025

Calidris ferruginea

VU

10" x 30"

Oil on canvas

This wader is highly gregarious, and forages in soft mud on marshes along the coast, mainly picking up food by sight. It eats mostly insects and other small invertebrates. A migratory bird, the Curlew Sandpiper breeds on the tundra of Arctic Siberia, and overwinters mainly in Africa, but also in south and southeast Asia, Australia, and New Zealand. It is a vagrant to North America.



This little bird is preyed upon by Arctic fox when lemming populations are down. Global warming is another threat, having an impact on food sources. Shown here is a juvenile Curlew Sandpiper.

Linda Mirabile

Kori Bustard, 2025

Ardeotis kori

NT

29" x 26"

Acrylic on Fabriano

The Kori Bustard is the largest flying bird native to Africa. It is one of the four species (ranging from Africa to India to Australia) in the large-bodied genus *Ardeotis*. The male Kori Bustard is believed to be the heaviest living animal capable of flight. This species, like most bustards, is a ground-dwelling bird and an opportunistic omnivore. Males, which can be more than twice as heavy as the female, attempt to breed with as many females as possible and then take no part in raising the young. This male is shown in his courtship stance with puffed out neck feathers. He can stand to be 3.5-4.5 feet tall.

Although not classified as a game bird they are hunted for their meat. Habitat loss as well as ingesting poisons used to control locusts and collision with overhead power wires are all sources of population loss.



Shoebill, 2026

Balaeniceps rex

NT

22" x 30"

Acrylic on Fabriano

The shoebill is a large swamp-dwelling bird found in East Africa. They are closely related to pelicans and herons. They have a daunting appearance, measuring as tall as five feet, but are not dangerous, and even friendly, around humans. They avoid contact with other animals and even members of their own species. They primarily eat lungfish, tilapia, and water snakes. When necessary, they will eat frogs, lizards, mollusks, and baby crocodiles or turtles. These birds can live to be 35 years old. They are capable of flying but are rarely seen doing so, being one of the slowest birds to fly.

These birds are vulnerable with an estimated 3,300 to 5,300 individuals in the wild, with very few in captivity. Habitat degradation caused by agricultural expansion and construction of buildings and canals is in large part responsible for their status. They are also caught illegally and sold as pets or to zoos, and even for consumption.



Adelaide Murphy Tyrol

Bearded Vulture, 2026

Gypaetus barbatus



48" x 60"

Acrylic, chalk, and natural iron oxide particles on canvas

The Bearded Vulture is an enormous raptor, with a wingspan that can reach up to 10 feet across. These birds are native to mountainous regions, where they live and breed on rocky crags. They are known to soar over flatlands, such as Amboseli, as they search for carcasses to feed on.

This vulture is the only living bird species whose diet consists primarily of bones. This specialized diet is possible due to their strong gastric acid (almost pure hydrochloric acid), allowing them to dissolve bones within 24 hours.

The natural plumage of the Bearded Vulture is black, white, and gray. However, these birds engage in a unique behavior of bathing in dust or clay deposits of red iron oxide. This practice stains their white feathers a vivid orange red.

All Bearded Vultures partake in this behavior, though the purpose behind it remains unknown.

In eastern Africa, the Bearded Vulture is classified as Near Threatened. These birds face significant threats, including unintentional poisoning from pesticides illegally placed on livestock carcasses.



Adelaide Murphy Tyrol

Bateleur, 2025

Therathopius ecaudatu

EN

48" x 60"

Acrylic on canvas

The Bateleur is a colorful eagle known as the aerial acrobat of Africa. Its common name, from the French, translates as “street performer.” Its mating ritual involves unique on-the-wing somersaulting and dive bombing. Both male and female spin through the air clapping their wings together loudly and hurtling towards each other.

This highly adaptive hunter can cover 300 miles in an eight-hour day, preferring open habitat where it can be seen soaring unusually close to the ground, searching for prey, or perching in tall trees above carrion.

The scavenger practice of Bateleurs has contributed to their population decline throughout Africa. Local ranchers often lace farm animal carcasses with deadly toxins to kill large predators such as lions and jackals. The Bateleur, because of its low flying habit, is often the first to come upon a carcass and succumb to the poison. This poisoning and pesticide use, along with habitat loss, contributes to its endangered status on the IUCN list.



Black-tailed Godwit chicks and eggs, 2025

Limosa limosa

NT

12" x 16"

Acrylic, chalk, gold leaf on wood panel

Black-tailed Godwits can fly incredible distances during migration, with some individuals covering over 7,000 miles—nearly the diameter of our planet—in a single, nonstop flight. The species breeds in fens, lake edges, damp meadows, moorlands, and bogs, and uses estuaries, swamps, and floods in winter; it is likely to be found inland and on fresh water. The world population is estimated to be 634,000 to 805,000 birds and is classified as Near Threatened. On African wintering grounds, swamps, floods and irrigated paddy fields attract flocks of birds.

Black-tailed Godwits are mostly monogamous. A study of a specific population showed that despite spending winters apart, pairs are reunited on their breeding grounds within an average of three days of each other. If one partner does not arrive on time, "divorce" occurs. The Black-tailed Godwit is the national bird of the Netherlands.



Susan Parmenter

Gray Crowned-Crane, 2025

Balearica regulorum

30" x 40"

Oil on canvas

EN

The Gray Crowned-Crane is a striking and iconic bird. Recognized by its golden crown of feathers, large gray body, and elegant courtship dances, this crane thrives in wetlands, grasslands, and open savannas. In Amboseli, it feeds on seeds, insects, and small animals while nesting near seasonal marshes.

These cranes mate for life and form strong, long-term pair bonds. Gray Crowned-Cranes perform elaborate courtship dances that are complete with bows, jumps, and wing flaps for mating, and social bonding.

Though still fairly widespread, the species is listed as endangered due to continued habitat loss, wetland drainage, and human disturbance. The Gray Crowned-Crane's graceful presence in Amboseli highlights the Park's role in protecting East Africa's wetland-dependent wildlife and emphasizes the importance of conserving freshwater habitats for future generations.



Susan Parmenter

Malagasy Pond-Heron, 2025

Ardeola idae

EN

18" x 24"

Oil on panel

The Malagasy Pond-Heron is an endangered water bird that visits Amboseli National Park during the bird's nonbreeding season. Native to Madagascar, it migrates to East Africa for feeding and resting, making an annual round-trip journey of over 1,200 miles—a remarkable migration for a small, elusive heron. In Amboseli's wetlands and seasonal marshes this heron forages for fish, insects, and amphibians.

The species faces major threats from habitat loss, pollution, and competition with other more common heron species. Though rare, the Malagasy Pond-Heron's presence in Amboseli highlights the Park's role as a vital refuge for migratory and endangered bird species.



Saddle-billed Stork, 2026

Ephippiorhynchus senegalensis

NT

18" x 24"

Oil on panel

The Saddle-billed Stork is one of Africa's tallest and most striking wading birds, standing 4.5-5 feet tall with a wingspan of up to 8 feet. It has glossy black-and-white plumage, long dark legs, and a lengthy bright red and black bill topped with a distinctive yellow "saddle," which gives the bird its name. Males and females can be distinguished by eye color: males have brown eyes while females have bright yellow eyes.

These storks are usually solitary, or seen in pairs. They hunt mainly by sight, slowly stalking fish, frogs, crabs, and small reptiles in shallow water. Like many storks, they have a limited voice box and are generally quiet, communicating instead with bill-clattering.

Saddle-billed Storks live in wetlands across sub-Saharan Africa and are regularly observed in Amboseli National Park, where they forage in the Park's swamps and seasonal wetlands. Although still widespread, the species is often listed as Near Threatened (NT) due to habitat loss and wetland degradation.



Susan Parmenter

Secretarybird, 2025
Sagittarius serpentarius

30" x 40"

Oil on canvas

V

The Secretarybird is a striking bird of prey known for its long legs, eagle-like features, and unique hunting style—they primarily stalk through grasslands preying upon insects, small mammals, and reptiles. Often, they kill prey by stomping with powerful kicks, strong enough to crush a large venomous snake in seconds!

Standing almost four feet tall, these terrestrial raptors are easily recognized by their black crest feathers and long tail plumes. Secretarybirds mate for life and develop strong pair bonds, hunting together as well as building large stick nests in acacia trees that are used year after year. Amboseli's open savanna is ideal for ground-based foraging. Although capable of flight, Secretarybirds prefer walking and can cover long distances throughout a day. Their presence in Amboseli reflects the Park's rich biodiversity and a need to protect Kenya's unique grassland ecosystems and bird life.



Susan Parmenter

Woodchat Shrike, 2026

Lanius senator

NT

5" x 7"

Watercolor and gouache on paper

The Woodchat Shrike is a striking bird that visits East Africa during the northern winter, including the savannas and bush country around Amboseli National Park. Woodchat Shrikes feed mainly on large insects such as beetles, grasshoppers, and locusts, but they may also catch small lizards or other tiny invertebrates. Like other shrikes, they are known for the unusual habit of impaling prey on thorns or barbed wire, creating a temporary food store and helping them tear apart larger catches. Around Amboseli, these birds favor open acacia woodland, scrub, and lightly wooded grassland where scattered perches provide hunting vantage points.

Habitat loss is a potential concern, but it has not yet significantly impacted the overall population. Conservation efforts are in place to monitor and protect its habitats, and continued research is essential to ensure its status remains stable in the future.



Maccoa Duck, 2026

Oxyura maccoa

EN

18" x 24"

Oil on panel

The Maccoa Duck is a small but distinctive diving duck found in wetlands across parts of eastern and southern Africa. It measures 16-19 inches long and is known for its stiff black tail, often held upright, and stout compact body, a feature that helps diving underwater for food. Breeding males are especially striking, with their dark russet plumage, black head, and bright blue bill. Females are a subdued brown color with a white horizontal cheek stripe.

Maccoa Ducks spend most of their time on water because their legs are positioned far back on their bodies, making walking awkward. They are strong divers and feed mainly on aquatic invertebrates, small snails, seeds, and plant material taken from the bottom of lakes and marshes. The species prefers deep wetlands and freshwater lakes, occasionally visiting the seasonal swamps of Amboseli National Park, which attract many waterbirds. Maccoa Ducks are solitary or sometimes found in small groups.

The Maccoa Duck is currently listed as Endangered (EN) because of declining populations, with only a few thousand mature individuals remaining. Wetland and water habitat pollution is the main concern as well as habitat loss, and climate change.



Susan Parmenter

Black Heron, 2026

Egretta ardesiaca



18" x 24"

Oil on panel

The Black Heron is a distinctive wading bird found in wetlands across sub-Saharan Africa. It is medium-sized, measures about 17-19 inches in length, with entirely black plumage, a slender neck, and long dark legs. Its bill is black and sharply pointed, adapted for catching small aquatic prey.

This heron is best known for its unusual hunting technique called “canopy feeding.” The bird quickly spreads its wings forward and downward over the water and forms a shaded “umbrella.” The shade attracts fish and reduces glare, allowing the heron to see and catch prey more easily, striking with its sharp bill to capture fish, tadpoles, insects, and small crustaceans.

Black Herons live in shallow wetlands such as marshes, lake edges, floodplains, and slow-moving rivers. They are widely distributed across Africa and are regularly observed in Amboseli National Park, where swamps and seasonal wetlands provide ideal feeding areas.

Although generally considered a species of Least Concern (LC), local populations are affected by wetland degradation, water pollution, and human disturbance. The bird's unique feeding behavior and striking dark appearance make it a memorable sight within the African landscape.



Gabriel Tempesta

Steppe Eagle, 2025

Aquila nipalensis

EN

36" x 24"

Watercolor on board

The Steppe Eagle is a large bird of prey native to open dry habitats across Eastern Europe, Central Asia, and parts of Africa. Distinguished by its broad wings, dark brown plumage, and piercing yellow eyes, it is a powerful flier and skilled hunter, feeding mainly on small mammals and carrion.

The Steppe Eagle is migratory, traveling long distances between breeding and wintering grounds. It nests on the ground or low cliffs. Due to habitat loss, electrocution, and poisoning, its population is in decline and classified as Endangered by the IUCN. Conservation efforts are ongoing to protect its habitats.



Gabriel Tempesta

White-headed Vulture, 2025

Trigonoceps occipitalis

CR

18" x 30"

Watercolor on board

The White-headed Vulture, native to the African continent, is a critically endangered bird of prey known for its distinct white head and neck, contrasting with its dark body feathers. This scavenger plays a vital role in the ecosystem by consuming carrion, which helps prevent the spread of disease. Unfortunately, its population has drastically declined due to habitat loss, poisoning, and reduced food availability. Conservation efforts are underway to protect these majestic birds and ensure their survival for future generations.



Ann Young

Black-Tailed Godwit, 2025

Limosa limosa

NT

24" x 30"

Oil on canvas

The Black-tailed Godwit's breeding range stretches from Iceland through Europe and areas of central Asia. They spend winters in areas as diverse as the Indian subcontinent, Australia, New Zealand, western Europe and west Africa. The species breeds in fens, lake edges, damp meadows, moorlands and bogs, and uses estuaries, swamps and floods in (the northern hemisphere) winter; it is more likely to be found inland and on fresh water than the similar Bar-tailed Godwit.

The world population of the Black-tailed Godwit is estimated to be 634,000 to 805,000 birds and is classified as Near Threatened. It is the national bird of the Netherlands. These birds are hunted in France with an annual kill of between 6,000 to 8,000 birds. Loss of nesting habitat due to wetland drainage and agricultural intensification are the most significant threats.



Madagascar Pratincole, 2026

Glareola ocularis

NT

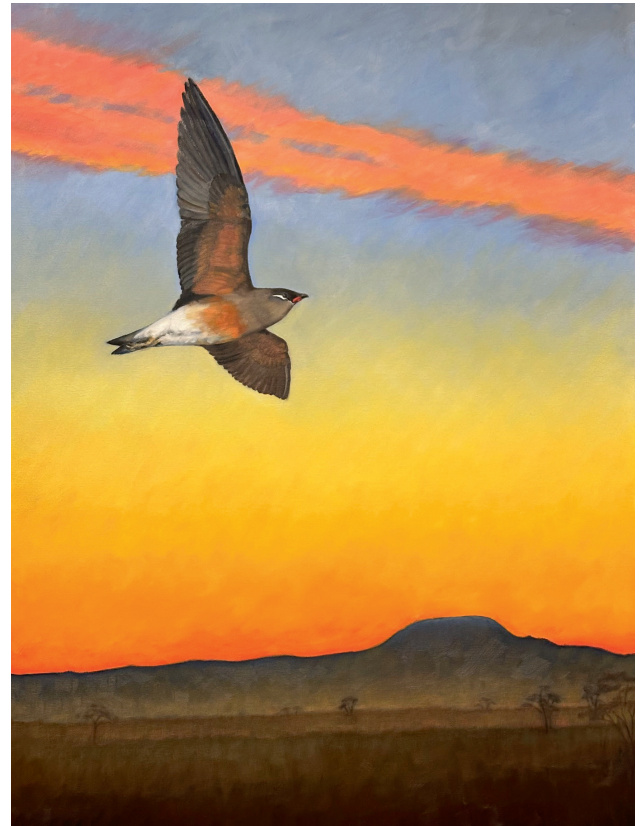
40" x 30"

Oil on canvas

The Madagascar Pratincole is a dark, long-winged bird that has an elegant body and is agile in flight. This migratory bird is found in wetland habitats, including subtropical or seasonally tropical wet or flooded lowland grasslands, rivers, freshwater lakes, rocky shores, and marches.

The bird's range includes Comoros, Ethiopia, Kenya, Madagascar, Mozambique, Somalia, and Tanzania. During the winter it migrates to the coast of East Africa.

It is currently listed as Near Threatened. The primary threat this bird faces is habitat loss.



Michael Boardman

Crowned Eagle, 2026
Stephanoaetus coronatus

NT

30" x 40"

Watercolor on paper

You would be hard put to find a more magnificent raptor than the Crowned Eagle. While not the largest eagle in East Africa, it can be considered one of the fiercest, regularly hunting monkeys and antelope many times their weight. They are equipped with huge talons and muscular feet to accomplish this task. Crowned eagles are built for the forested habitat they prefer, short broad wings and a long tail for maneuvering through the canopy, barred feathers on their chest and tail, and a royal crown of head feathers they can raise or lower as needed. Biologists studying these raptors find them highly intelligent and inquisitive with an edgy, cautious nature. Adults are mostly fearless of humans, and in fact there is at least one modern report of a Crowned Eagle preying on a human child. The famed 'Taung child' fossil *Australopithecus africanus* was found to have marks in its skull consistent with a Crowned Eagle's talons.

Crowned Eagles prefer tall trees to nest in, usually above the canopy as an aerie to watch for prey. Unfortunately, these taller trees are often the first to fall when forests are cleared, which is a problem in the areas around Amboseli through agricultural encroachment. Populations of Crowned Eagles are declining in unison with the deforestation of its preferred habitat. These birds have been part of our evolutionary history since time immemorial; it would be a great loss if they were to disappear.



The Artists

Michael Boardman

Michael Boardman is a wildlife artist based in North Yarmouth, Maine. His practice involves direct observation and field sketching from life whenever possible and has connected his work to conservation throughout Maine and Alaska. Michael and his wife Linda spent a month in East Africa before having children, both in the rainforests of Uganda and the Serengeti Plain of Tanzania. Although he was not a birder then, his notes claim they saw a Crowned Eagle by the road in Uganda. A likely story!

mboardman.com

Heidi Broner

Heidi is a self-taught artist living in Calais, Vermont. A colorist by nature and an ardent observer of the richness of the natural world, her subjects are usually people, but she was happy to have the opportunity to paint these handsome creatures. Her paintings have been exhibited in numerous galleries and museums.

heidibronerpaintings.com

Susan Bull Riley

Susan typically paints the birds, plants, and landscapes of her native Vermont. Her involvement in this project, however, has required that she paint birds she has never seen—who live in lands she has never visited—and thus has been an adventure in combining her general understanding of birds with reference material from photographers. She seeks to convey the character of these birds whose existence in our planet's complex and fragile ecosystems is increasingly threatened. susanbullriley.com

Linda Mirabile

Linda is a graphic designer as well as painter. Her work, in both areas, focuses on environmental issues, aiming to raise awareness and aid organizations with mission-driven agendas. Her painting is primarily avian in nature, trying to capture personality and attitude with her bird portraits.

LindaMirabile.com

Adelaide Murphy Tyrol

Adelaide works out of her studios in Vermont and New Hampshire. She is a natural history illustrator for the Wellborn Ecology Fund—part of the New Hampshire Charitable Foundation, which encourages ecological

and environmental science knowledge. She is also a large-format commercial backdrop painter. Her own fine art paintings often have a dual nature combining direct scientific observation with memory and allegory. "I hope my work imparts a sense of the magic of our world—of what we look at every day and how it blinks back at us." Adelaide has a BA from the University of Vermont and an MFA from the Art Institute of Boston. adelaidetyrol.com

Susan Parmenter

Susan is a New Hampshire-based artist with over 40 years experience in illustration and fine art. Her current work focuses on endangered species, wildlife, birds and habitat, blending scientific accuracy with artistic expression, to raise awareness and appreciation for these vulnerable creatures. Through art, she aims to inspire a deeper connection to the natural world in support of conservation efforts around the world. susanparmenter.com

Gabriel Tempesta

Gabriel is from Wolcott, Vermont, where he started life in an off-grid log cabin at the edge of the woods overlooking a beaver swamp. His formative years before a power and telephone line came to the house led to an appreciation of the natural world and a strong connection to wildlife that has stayed with him ever since. His formal illustration training and photography hobby are influences that can be seen in the detail and lens effects that he likes to play with in his paintings. Not a strict medium adherent, Gabriel likes to move between oil, watercolor, charcoal, and casein, sometimes blending them, and is always playing with new techniques to keep things interesting. gabrieltempesta.com

Ann Young

Born in Chicago and raised on the great plains, Ann Young has enjoyed a long relationship with space and nature. Young earned a BFA in ceramics from the Rhode Island School of Design and used those skills to build a career in sculpture of porcelain miniature figures. In 2001, Young took up a lifelong desire to paint in oils and hasn't looked back. Her works are eclectic and include landscape, cityscape, people, people in surreal settings, social commentary, and most recently, almost microscopic views of leaves and other living things on their way through the process of decay and the renewal of life. annyoungart.com



Pallid Harrier by Susan Bull Riley