



BLM NEWS RELEASE

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BLM's New Policy Will Reduce Threats to Migratory Birds *100,000 Bird Deaths Could Be Avoided Annually*

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) today released a new policy to reduce a common hazard to migratory birds and other wildlife that can become trapped and die in uncapped pipes on public lands. When fully implemented the new guidance could save more than 100,000 birds a year.

The new [policy](#) requires agency personnel to identify pipes on BLM facilities and BLM-managed structures like fences, signposts, survey markers, outbuilding vents, and other structures. Where possible, BLM employees are directed to cap, close, remove or screen open pipes. In addition, all open pipes on future facilities are required to have permanent caps or screens to prevent harm to wildlife. The policy does not require action from public land lessees or permittees, but does provide useful guidance for those willing to take voluntary action.

“This is a small change that will make a big difference,” said BLM Director Neil Kornze. “Too often birds, bats, lizards, snakes, and small mammals find themselves unable to escape from pipes and vents.”

The policy also encourages voluntary action by mining claimants to prevent wildlife deaths in uncapped hollow pipes, and encourages the use of wildlife-safe markers for new mining claims. Uncapped pipes are commonly used to mark mining claims in parts of the West. It is estimated that every post, rock marker or capped pipe used, in the place of uncapped pipes, represents two to four birds and other small animals that will be saved annually.

“This is a very positive step in the right direction,” said Steve Holmer, senior policy advisor for American Bird Conservancy. “This threat of open pipes can be easily prevented, and today’s action moves us closer to solving this problem.”

The BLM is issuing this policy, which is effective immediately, to mitigate threats to migratory birds and other wildlife in response to Executive Order 13186 (Federal Responsibilities to Protect Migratory Birds). The Executive Order directs federal agencies to protect migratory birds when taking actions that have, or are likely to have, a measurable negative effect on migratory bird populations.

The BLM manages more than 245 million acres of public land, the most of any Federal agency. This land, known as the National System of Public Lands, is primarily located in 12 Western states, including Alaska. The BLM also administers 700 million acres of sub-surface mineral estate throughout the nation. The BLM's mission is to manage and conserve the public lands for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations under our mandate of multiple-use and sustained yield. In Fiscal Year 2014, the BLM generated \$5.2 billion in receipts from public lands.

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**Caption: Photo shows uncapped pipes used to mark mining claims.
Photo by Christy Klinger**