

# AKN Fact Sheet

## *How to contribute to and use the AKN*

The goal of the Avian Knowledge Network (AKN) is to gather, archive, visualize, and disseminate observational data on birds in order to better understand their spatial and temporal patterns. The AKN accomplishes this through organizing these data in a common format; summarizing these data available using maps, graphs and other visualizations; and providing direct downloads of the data when permitted by the data owner.

**Who is the AKN?** The AKN is an international network of governmental and non-governmental institutions and individuals working in avian conservation, monitoring and science that have agreed to use common standards for describing, sharing, and displaying data. The Cornell Lab of Ornithology is the central node of the AKN, and regional or thematic nodes are also maintained by institutions such as PRBO Conservation Science, Rocky Mountain Bird Observatory, Bird Studies Canada, and the Avian Science Center.

**What are the benefits of contributing?** Contribution to the AKN provides off-site backup, visibility for your dataset at the AKN and beyond (depending on the access level you specify, see below), allows your data to be cross-analyzed with others, brings multi-faceted visualization tools to bear on your data, and increases the value of your dataset by combining it with those of other projects. Your data are also automatically tied to our Covariates Table, which associates hundreds of landscape and climatic variables with your data.

**How can I use the AKN?** There are several ways to explore AKN resources:

- 1) **Explore** AKN data resources: <http://www.avianknowledge.net/content/datasets>
- 2) **Download** raw data directly from: <http://www.avianknowledge.net/content/download>
- 3) **Visualize** and explore data: <http://www.avianknowledge.net/content/toolbox>
- 4) **Request** additional information. If you have a research interest in a dataset that is not publicly downloadable, contact an AKN Project Leader to discuss access to the data. Contact us also if you would like to use our Covariates Table with your data.

**How do I contribute to the AKN?** To contribute to the AKN, first get in touch with one of the AKN Project Leaders via email: Marshall Iliff (East; [mji26@cornell.edu](mailto:mji26@cornell.edu)); Chris Wood (Central and Latin America; [clw37@cornell.edu](mailto:clw37@cornell.edu)); Brian Sullivan (West; [bls42@cornell.edu](mailto:bls42@cornell.edu)). If you can send a sample of your data we will assess how to bring it into the AKN format. If the region or protocol of your data are appropriate, we may put you in touch with an AKN node (data contributed through a node are automatically part of the AKN). For a list of AKN nodes: <http://www.avianknowledge.net/content/nodes>.

**How much of my time will it take to participate?** Your time investment is minimal: *manipulation of the data to conform to our standard is done by a project leader or node*. We just ask you to provide the data and assist with questions about the data structure and design of the project. You may review the mapped data if you wish.

**How are the data updated?** Once your data structure conforms to AKN format, updates are easy and can be done any time you submit revisions or new data.

**How is use of the data controlled?** The AKN has 5 access levels that control data use and all data are coded accordingly. The levels are summarized below but also appear in full on the AKN website (<http://www.avianknowledge.net/content/about/akn-data-sharing-policy>):

- Level 1: Data fully protected: stored and archived in AKN but available only to the data owner
- Level 2: Data displayed in certain approved visualizations
- Level 3: Data may be available for use, with express permission of data owner
- Level 4: Data displayed in certain visualizations, and a subset of core elements of data shared with GBIF ([www.gbif.org](http://www.gbif.org)) and ORNIS ([www.ornisnet.org](http://www.ornisnet.org)).
- Level 5: Data can be downloaded directly from AKN website.