

2020ConradRebecca-abstract

## Abstract

Cities and states across the country are introducing taxes and bans on single-use plastic bags as concern mounts over the environmental impact of decades of plastic waste. This legislation seeks to decrease litter, encourage the use of reusable bags, and protect marine wildlife and habitats. Seabird species are especially susceptible to harm through entanglement or ingestion of plastic bags. First, I outline the basics of this legislation and the history of plastic bag bans and taxes. I then use data on bird populations from the Audubon Society's Christmas Bird Count to analyze the impact of a plastic bag tax in Washington, D.C., on seabird populations. I find evidence that this tax, enacted in 2010, led to statistically significant decreases in seabird populations and did not have a significant impact on non-seabird populations.

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