



The Wildlife Society's Conservation Affairs Network

December 2014, Issue 4, Pilot Volume

Take Action!

Duck Stamp Bill – U.S. National – The U.S. House of Representatives passed a bill to increase the price of the Duck Stamp from \$15 to \$25 in mid-November. There is an identical bill awaiting action in the Senate. Duck Stamps are an important source of funds for conserving wetland habitat for waterfowl and the price increase is necessary to keep up with rising land prices. The Government Affairs team promoted the bill through a coalition letter in April, and Senators should hear from Sections and Chapters to get regional perspectives. Staff Contact:

[Mark Hofberg](#)

- Who Should Act: U.S. Members
- Deadline for Action: End of congressional session, when the 113th Congress adjourns its 2nd Session; likely in mid to late December
- Action to Take: Call or write your Senators urging action and support for the Duck Stamp legislation
- Resources: [House Bill](#); [Senate Bill](#)
[Coalition Letter](#), [Policy Brief](#)
[TWS News story](#),
[Action Alert](#)

Appropriations – U.S. National – Congress passed a continuing resolution (CR) in the fall to fund the government at Fiscal Year 2014 levels until December 11, 2014. Congress needs to pass Appropriations bills for important programs to continue to operate and avoid a government shutdown. The House and Senate Appropriations Committee have already approved bills to fund the USDA, EPA and the Department of the Interior, but all appropriations bills are awaiting action by the full House and Senate. Staff Contact: [Keith Norris](#)

- Who Should Act: U.S. Members
- Deadline for Action: 11 December 2014
- Actions to Take: Contact your Congressmen to pass Appropriations bills that adequately fund important wildlife and natural resource programs.
- Resources: [Wildlife Policy News, Interior and Environment Appropriations](#)
[Wildlife Policy News, Agriculture Appropriations](#)

Issue Spotlight

State Ballot Initiatives – The midterm elections proved successful for state initiatives on conservation. Several states had ballot initiatives regarding conservation funding and securing rights to hunt and fish. Six states across the country had proposed different ways to bring in more money for conservation efforts, to the tune of several billion dollars. [Five of those measures passed](#) — California, Florida, Maine, New Jersey, and Rhode Island – while the measure in North Dakota failed. Both the North Dakota Chapter and the Florida Chapter actively supported

the initiatives in their respective states and worked as part of a larger coalition to get the measures approved.

Alabama and Mississippi voted on [ballot measures related to wildlife management](#) – primarily in regards to how hunting is managed and treated within the state. Both states approved constitutional amendments to ensure hunting and fishing rights for its citizens, a relatively common trend over the past several election cycles.

The success of these state ballot initiatives shows that conservation is not a single party issue. Most of these ballot measures were passed by substantial margins, regardless of party affiliation. Staff Contact: [Julia King](#)

On the Horizon

New elected officials at the state level – November’s U.S. elections resulted in turnover for many elected state offices. Several states will install new governors, delegates, and senators in the near future. Developing good relationships between your CAC and these officials will assist you in your future policy work. It would be a good idea to contact these new officials to make them aware of the pertinent wildlife issues in your state or region, and introduce them to your CAC and your goal of science-based wildlife management policies. TWS headquarters regularly sends a packet to new House members and Representatives that includes an introduction to TWS and a selection of our fact sheets and position statements. See our [Policy Toolkit](#) for more information on how to contact and meet with government officials. Staff Contact: [Keith Norris](#)

Teaming With Wildlife Annual Fly-in – Teaming With Wildlife (TWW) is a diverse coalition of conservation groups, agencies, businesses, and sportsmen that support funding for the federal [State and Tribal Wildlife Grants Program](#) and other wildlife conservation funding programs. TWW organizes an annual fly-in event to raise awareness and garner support for the program and overall wildlife funding among Representatives and Senators. The [2015 fly-in](#) will take place February 24-25. Register at the [TWW website](#) by February 20 to participate. Consider asking your state chapter or section to support your efforts to be a part of this important event on their behalf – we want a strong showing of wildlife professionals! Please contact [Keith Norris](#) if you plan to attend.

Trends to Watch

U.S. Senate changing hands – The U.S. Senate will be changing from a Democratic majority to a Republican majority this January as a result of the November elections. This means that the committee chairs, who have significant power over what bills make it to the Senate floor, will change hands as well. The Senate Environment and Public Works committee, which oversees the EPA, and the Energy and Natural Resources committee, which oversees the Department of the Interior, are two committees changing hands that could have a significant impact on wildlife policy and legislation. Look for more bills on the Senate floor that will impact the Endangered Species Act, federal land ownership, and oil and gas development on federal lands. Staff Contact: [Mark Hofberg](#)

CAC Activities

Maine Chapter involvement in black bear hunting debate – The Maine Chapter of The Wildlife Society was successful in its opposition to a state ballot initiative last month. Question 1 on Maine’s ballot asked do “you want to ban the use of bait, dogs or traps in bear hunting except to protect property, public safety, or for research?” The Maine Chapter of TWS came out in opposition to the proposed ban because Maine’s wildlife professionals rely on those tools to manage the state’s bear populations. The Chapter was able to inform voters through the creation of a [position statement](#) on the 2014 black bear referendum. The [CAN Policy Toolkit](#) can provide guidance for chapters and sections interested in developing their own position statements. Staff Contact: [Julia King](#)

Toolbox

Policy Brief Series – TWS’s Government Affairs Team has developed the [Policy Brief Series](#), a valuable resource on federal policies and programs regarding conservation. Each policy brief outlines key provisions in a particular policy and discusses its current status including recent appropriations and ongoing debates to alter the legislation. The *Policy Brief Series* is an excellent resource for the CAN and TWS members advocating for federal programs with their legislators. We encourage the CAN to use the *Policy Brief Series* as educational tools for students, prospective members, and legislators. Staff Contact: [Keith Norris](#)

New TWS Website – TWS has officially launched a new website. The new [wildlife.org](#) boasts a streamlined scheme designed to get you the information you need faster. The news section is now on the front page to highlight the actions we take at headquarters; new conservation, policy, and research stories; and local chapter news. CAN and policy resources - fact sheets, policy briefs, technical reviews, position statements, and the policy toolkit - can be accessed at [wildlife.org/policy](#). Staff Contact: [Keith Norris](#)

REQUEST FOR MATERIAL

The success of the Conservation Affairs Network and TWS’s policy program **depends upon your involvement! Send us any relevant policy issue within your region or state that you need assistance addressing.** If your CAC has successfully engaged in a policy issue, **we want to hear about it!** We want to hear your stories, issues, concerns, upcoming policy issues, and action items for inclusion in this bi-monthly newsletter and other Network communications.

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