



The Wildlife Society's Conservation Affairs Network

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Take Action!

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Resource Protection Act ([H.R. 4558](#)) – The USFWS Resource Protection Act would give USFWS the authority to collect compensation for unlawful damages to resources within the National Wildlife Refuge System. Currently, damages to the Refuge System deliberately caused by a third party are restored using general tax dollars from the existing USFWS budget, stripping funds that could otherwise be attributed to wildlife management and conservation programs. *Staff Contact:* [Cameron Kovach](#)

- Who should act: U.S. Members
- Deadline for Action: Near future
- Action to Take: Use [TWS' Action Center](#) to contact your Representative and urge them to support the USFWS Resource Protection Act. Enter your zip code to locate your Representative.
- Resources: [TWS News Article](#)
[H.R. 4558 Text](#)

Funding for federal natural resource programs in Fiscal Year 2017 – After the release of the [President's budget request](#) in early February, Congress has been meeting with leaders of federal agencies to discuss budgets for Fiscal Year 2017. TWS has submitted written testimony on behalf of wildlife professionals for full-funding of natural resource conservation programs. *Staff Contact:* [Keith Norris](#)

- Who should act: U.S. Members
- Deadline for Action: Near future
- Action to Take: Contact your members of Congress and urge them to support funding for important conservation programs.
- Resources: [CAN Policy Toolkit: Writing a Letter](#)
[CAN Policy Toolkit: U.S. Federal Budgeting Process](#)
[TWS Appropriations Testimony: Agriculture](#)
[TWS Appropriations Testimony: Interior](#)

CAC Activities

KS Chapter Issues Concern over State Wildlife Bill – The [Kansas Chapter](#) issued a [position statement](#) opposing [SB. 384](#) which would redefine critical habitats and associated protections in the [Kansas Nongame and Endangered Species Conservation Act](#). The bill has functioned as the state's primary source of regulations for threatened and endangered species conservation since 1975. The Chapter believes that redefinitions of critical habitat would limit the ability of imperiled species to expand their range. *CAC Chair:* [Matt Smith](#)

TWS submits fiscal testimonies to Congress – TWS continues to engage in the [federal appropriations process](#) by submitting written testimonies to Congress. The Society [submitted testimony](#) to both the House and Senate Appropriations Subcommittees on Agriculture, Rural Development, Food Administration and Related Agencies, and prioritized funding levels for natural resource conservation programs. TWS also [submitted testimony](#) on federal funding for wildlife and science-focused programs in the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Forest Service, U.S. Geological Survey, and Bureau of Land Management. *Staff Contact:* [Keith Norris](#)

VA Chapter and TWS headquarters each submit comments on Bsal – TWS headquarters submitted [comments](#) to support a new [rule](#) under the [Lacey Act](#) that would ban the importation of 201 salamanders species in order to prevent the spread of *Batrochochytrium salamandrivorans* (Bsal). TWS' comments highlighted the U.S.'s vulnerability to wildlife diseases, including Bsal, and ultimately urged the development of a new comprehensive approach to addressing the complexities of emerging wildlife diseases. The [Virginia Chapter](#) also submitted formal [comments](#), noting the state's 56 species of salamanders would be at high-risk of extinction if they are exposed to the deadly fungus. For more information about wildlife diseases, see TWS' [position statement](#). *CAC Chair:* [Nelson Lafon](#); *Staff Contact:* [Caroline Murphy](#)

Western Section, MN Chapter, and TWS Staff participate in Teaming With Wildlife Fly-in – Representatives from the Western Section and Minnesota Chapter CACs joined TWS staff and others in the Teaming With Wildlife Coalition in Washington, D.C. on March 1-2 to lobby Congress for full funding of [State and Tribal Wildlife Grants](#) – the nation's core program for preventing species from becoming listed under the Endangered Species Act. Through the hard work of individuals at the [fly-in](#), 154 members of the House and 39 members of the Senate signed onto Dear Colleague letters, urging their contemporaries to appropriate robust funding to the program. *Staff Contact:* [Keith Norris](#)

MN Chapter engaged in lead ammunition debate – The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources released a proposed rule in 2015 to ban the use of lead (Pb) ammunition in state wildlife management areas. The final rule is expected to be released in mid-April. The [Minnesota Chapter](#) has been heavily engaged in the issue of lead ammunition and fishing tackle and the impacts of toxic shot on wildlife. The Chapter formed a [Non-Toxic Working Group](#) in 2014 and has encouraged the use of non-toxic shot through demonstrations and events. For more information on lead in ammunition and fishing tackle and the impact on wildlife, see TWS' [position statement](#) and [factsheet](#). *CAC Chair:* [Jodie Provost](#)

IL Chapter submits letter on feral cats to General Assembly – The [Illinois Chapter](#) submitted a letter to the Illinois General Assembly to oppose House Bill 4671, which legitimizes trap/neuter/return (TNR) programs for feral cats by subsidizing neuters using pet-owner fees. The bill also allows TNR programs to be administered by animal shelters and control facilities. The Chapter supports actions that eliminate problems imposed by feral cats to native wildlife. For more information about feral cats, see TWS' [position statement](#) and [factsheet](#). *CAC Chair:* [Paul Brewer](#)

Southwest Section submits 47 letters in support of USFWS Resource Protection Act – The [Southwest Section](#) submitted 47 letters to all of the U.S. Representatives from their region's states, urging support for the USFWS Resource Protection Act. The letters were customized to cite the number and names of refuges within each state, expressing the value of the refuge system to each district. *CAC Chair:* [Jim Ramakka](#)

Issue Spotlight

Blue Ribbon Panel Recommendations – The [Blue Ribbon Panel on Sustaining America's Diverse Fish & Wildlife Resources](#) announced their [recommendations](#) for sustainable wildlife conservation and funding as a part of the annual Teaming with Wildlife Fly-in event in early March. The panel is comprised of business and conservation leaders that collaborated to produce recommendations for sustaining biodiversity. The panel recommended that Congress dedicate \$1.3 billion annual in existing revenue from energy development on federal lands to the Wildlife Conservation Restoration Program. *Staff Contact:* [Keith Norris](#)

On the Horizon

National Wild Horse and Burro Advisory Board Meeting – April 13-14, 2016 – Redmond, Oregon – The Bureau of Land Management will host the spring National Wild Horse and Burro Advisory Board meeting in Redmond, Oregon to discuss the management of free-roaming horses and burros on public land. For more information about the meeting, and how to submit comment, see the [Federal Register](#). TWS will be submitting written and oral testimony, and we encourage your chapter and/or section to also submit testimony based on TWS' [position statement](#) and [fact sheet](#). *Staff Contact:* [Keith Norris](#)

Policy Partnerships

Wildlife profession to benefit from increased collaboration – The Wildlife Society, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, American Fisheries Society, and the U.S. Geological Survey Cooperative Research Units [signed a Memorandum of Understanding](#) to support partnerships between the four groups. The [MOU](#) will enable TWS to address USFWS and CRU needs through *The Wildlife Professional*, chapter and section meetings, and working groups. TWS believes that this partnership will allow the Society to bring greater benefits to members, and will expand its role as a leader in the wildlife conservation community. *Staff Contact:* [Keith Norris](#)

TWS works to bridge gap between science and management through workshop – As a part of the 81st North American Wildlife and Natural Resources Conference, [TWS co-hosted](#) a workshop titled [Barriers and Bridges in Reconnecting Natural Resources Science and Management](#), which addressed the divide between natural resource science and management. The workshop brought in a crowd of more than 120 wildlife and fisheries professionals. Discussions on this issue will continue throughout the next few years at both TWS and AFS annual meetings and future North American conferences. *Staff Contact:* [Keith Norris](#)

TWS Policy News and Training Opportunities

VA Chapter meeting meets to discuss collaboration and certification – The [Virginia Chapter](#) held their annual meeting in late February to [discuss the role of TWS](#) in facilitating networking,

mentorship, and professional development. TWS Staff attended the meeting to support collaboration between chapters, sections, and headquarters, and to discuss the TWS certification process. For more information about becoming certified, see TWS' [website](#). *Staff Contact:* [Caroline Murphy](#)

TWS GAP staff visit Western Section and affiliated Chapter meetings – TWS Director of Government Affairs and Partnerships Keith Norris attended the [Western Section](#) meeting in late February to discuss the Conservation Affairs Network and TWS engagement at the local and national scale. For talks on CAN, certification, or other TWS activities contact the [Government Affairs & Partnership Staff](#).