



The Wildlife Society's Conservation Affairs Network

June 2016, Volume 2, Issue 3

CAC Activities

TWS supports delisting, continued monitoring of Yellowstone grizzlies – TWS headquarters submitted [comments](#) to USFWS supporting the agency's [proposal](#) to remove the distinct population segment of grizzly bears (*Ursos arctos horribilis*) in the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem (GYE) from the federal list of endangered and threatened species under the Endangered Species Act. TWS expressed that the application of sound science, in addition to cooperation between state and federal agencies has led to growth in the species' population. TWS expects that state agencies will continue to monitor and manage the species to ensure that viable populations are sustained in GYE, and encourages USFWS to reinstate ESA protections if the GYE grizzly bear population falls below the recovery goal. *Staff Contact:* [Keith Norris](#)

New England Chapter supports Massachusetts timber rattlesnake introduction – The [New England Chapter](#) CAC submitted a [letter](#) to the Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs, encouraging the agency to support MassWildlife's [proposal](#) to [introduce timber rattlesnakes](#) on Mount Zion Island, a 1,400 acre island in the Quabbin Reservoir. The Chapter believes that MassWildlife's plan to introduce timber rattlesnakes to the island is based on sound science, and will eventually lead to sustainable population growth and long-term survival of the species. *Chapter Contact:* [David Paulson](#)

Northeast Section releases Deer Management Position Statement – The [Northeast Section](#) CAC published a [position statement](#) on the management of overabundant white-tailed deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*) in the Northeast and Mid-Atlantic states. The position statement outlines potential actions that communities can take in order to address impacts of overabundant deer which deer-vehicle collisions, tick-borne disease transmission, and damage to agricultural crops. *Section Contact:* [Terra Rentz](#)

Oregon Chapter and TWS HQ submit oral testimony to Wild Horse & Burro Advisory Board – The [Oregon Chapter](#) and TWS headquarters provided [oral testimony](#) to the Bureau of Land Management's National Wild Horse and Burro Advisory Board during the April meeting in Redmond, Oregon. Both testimonies highlighted the need for increased and immediate horse and burro removals from the range in order to establish healthy rangeland ecosystems. The Oregon Chapter's [testimony](#) further encouraged the removal of on-range horses and burros in sage-grouse habitat areas, and emphasized the importance of science-based decision-making. *Staff Contact:* [Keith Norris](#); *CAC Contact:* [Todd Mabee](#)

Issue Spotlight

American Bird Conservancy releases "10 Worst-Sited Wind Energy Projects for Birds" report – The American Bird Conservancy released a [report](#) on the ten worst wind energy project locations for birds across the United States. According to the report, thousands of protected birds

die each year when they collide with wind turbines and power lines. Listed projects include Cape Wind in Massachusetts, which would impact migratory species, and the Chokecherry and Sierra Madre projects in Wyoming, which are located in key breeding and foraging habitats for the greater sage-grouse.

Toolbox

Report shows steep declines for North American birds – The North American Bird Conservation Initiative ([NABCI](#)) released a report entitled the [State of North America's Birds 2016](#) to coincide with the 100th anniversary of the Migratory Bird Treaty. The report is the first ever conservation vulnerability assessment for all 1,154 species of birds that occur in North America and off the coast. Of the 1,154 species, 432 were identified as high priority concern, aligning with growing trends of habitat loss, pollution, and climate change. NABCI believes that the report can be used as a scientific tool to improve policies surrounding the conservation of native birds in North America. *Staff Contact:* [Cameron Kovach](#)

AWCP releases recommendations for the next administration – The American Wildlife Conservation partners (AWCP) has released a series of recommendations for the next administration regarding wildlife conservation and sportsmen's issues. [Wildlife for the 21st Century](#) focuses on improving wildlife conservation and recreation through funding, enhanced hunter and recreational access to public lands, and improved collaboration among state and federal agencies. *Staff Contact:* [Keith Norris](#)

Horse and burro coalition creates education materials – The National Horse and Burro Rangeland Management Coalition has published a series of fact sheets to the coalition's [website](#). The seven [fact sheets](#) provide an overview of the issues of wild horse and burro overpopulation, discuss the possible management options, and address the specific impacts of excess horses and burros on taxpayer dollars, native wildlife, the rangeland ecosystem, and rural western communities. *Staff Contact:* [Cameron Kovach](#)

Trends to Watch

Horse & burro population grows; BLM lays out options – The Bureau of Land Management recently released the current estimated population of wild horses and burros on BLM land. Currently, there are 67,000 animals on the rangelands, which exceed the agency's target appropriate management level of 27,000. An additional 46,000 horses and burros are currently being cared for in contract facilities, which cost the BLM approximately \$50 million per year. In May, the [National Horse and Burro Rangeland Management Coalition](#) – which TWS currently chairs – met with several members of Congress to discuss wild horse and burro management. An oversight hearing is being scheduled in the House Natural Resource Committee for late June, in which the Coalition is expected to testify. *Staff Contact:* [Keith Norris](#)

Success Stories

TWS-led letter changes bill aimed at National Wildlife Refuge System management practices – TWS headquarters lead a broad sign-on [letter](#) to the Senate urging members to oppose Senator Burr's (R-NC) amendment to the Senate energy bill ([S. 2012](#)) on managing the Corolla wild horse population on the Currituck National Wildlife Refuge in North Carolina. The [original](#)

[amendment](#) would have required the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to manage for nonnative wild horses on a wildlife refuge, which goes against the purpose of the refuge system to protect native species. The final amendment, which passed the Senate in April, addressed all concerns outlined in the letter, and eliminated language that would compromise the intent of the National Wildlife Refuge. *Staff Contact:* [Caroline Murphy](#)

IL Feral Cat bill effectively “dead for this session” after letter from Chapter - [House Bill 4671](#) has stalled in the Illinois House. The Illinois Chapter previously [submitted a letter](#) opposing this bill. The Illinois Senate is currently working on a resolution to appoint a Feral Cat Task Force to evaluate management of feral cats; the Illinois Chapter will continue to monitor and engage in this issue as needed. *CAC Contact:* [Paul Brewer](#)

On the Horizon

Interior funding bill passes through committee – Last week, the Interior, Environment and Related Agencies Appropriations Subcommittee passed their [funding bill](#), which included an [overall decrease](#) in spending for environmental programs when compared to the Fiscal Year 2016 funding levels. A total of \$32.1 billion was appropriated to agencies within the Department of the Interior, Environmental Protection Agency, U.S. Forest Service and other agencies. The amount is \$1 billion below the President’s budget request, and \$64 million below last year’s enacted budget. Appropriation bills will continue through Congress over the summer, but a limited amount of legislative days remain before the election. Most experts expect an omnibus appropriations bill or a Continuing Resolution later this year to continue government funding. Check out [TWS’ Policy Toolkit](#) for more information on appropriations process. *Staff Contact:* [Keith Norris](#)

Policy Training and Professional Development Opportunities

Trapping Matters workshops – Max McGraw Wildlife Foundation has partnered with the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies and a number of state and federal agencies for the revived delivery of the popular “Trapping Matters” workshops. These are one day workshops that discuss the communication skills needed to understand and explore the role that regulated trapping plays in wildlife conservation and wildlife science. More detailed announcements, including registration information, will appear on the International Hunter Education Association [website](#) in the coming weeks. These workshops qualify for TWS Continuing Education Units for [certification renewal](#). *Staff Contact:* [Keith Norris](#)

- July 13 – Portland, Oregon
- July 26 – Dundee, Illinois – Max McGraw Wildlife Center
- August 3 – Westboro, MA – MassWildlife Field Headquarters

CAC Contact Information

Update TWS HQ on Conservation Affairs Committee Point of Contacts – As your Section and Chapters have new elections and appointments of officers, board members, and other organizational unit volunteers, be sure to update TWS GAP staff of your new CAC Chairs. Email keith.norris@wildlife.org with the new contact information to ensure continuity of communications in the Network.