



# The Wildlife Society's Conservation Affairs Network

August 2018, Volume 4, Issue 8

## CAC Activities

***British Columbia Chapter submits letter on wildlife habitat and management*** – The [British Columbia Chapter of The Wildlife Society](#) submitted a [letter](#) to the Government of British Columbia on July 25, 2018. The letter was addressed to the Honorable Doug Donaldson, Minister of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development, and commended the government for striving to improve wildlife and wildlife habitat management in the province. The Chapter offered support and perspectives to further advance wildlife and wildlife habitat management and requested the opportunity to be invited as a stakeholder in future discussions on this issue. CAC Contact: [Tyler Muhly](#)

***Colorado Chapter develops position statement on transfer of federal lands*** – The [Colorado Chapter of The Wildlife Society](#) developed a chapter stated [position regarding the transfer of federal lands](#). CAC Contact: [Krysten Zummo-Strong](#)

***Illinois Chapter sends letter to Governor requesting veto on deer feed legislation*** – The [Illinois Chapter of The Wildlife Society](#) sent a second [letter](#) to Illinois Governor Bruce Rauner on August 1, 2018 urging him to veto [SB2493](#) as it could result in increased risk to the state's wildlife populations by undermining efforts to prevent the spread of diseases. Despite passing both chambers of the Illinois General Assembly, the deer feeding bill isn't law yet and the chief sponsor has filed a motion to reconsider, meaning it could be discussed again during a special session or during the fall veto session in November. CAC Contact: [Scott Meister](#)

***Manitoba Chapter letter on black bear rehab center*** – The [Manitoba Chapter of The Wildlife Society](#) submitted a [letter](#) to the Director of Wildlife and Fisheries on July 4, 2018 inquiring about details of a new black bear rehab center in Manitoba. There are significant human and wildlife health risks associated with rehabilitation and the Chapter outlined concerns regarding several of these risks. CAC Contact: [Brian Kiss](#)

***Maryland-Delaware Chapter urges Governor to veto feral cat legislation*** – The [Maryland-Delaware Chapter of The Wildlife Society](#) sent a [letter](#) to Delaware Governor John Carney urging him to veto legislation that would promote trap-neuter-return practices by decriminalizing the release of feral cats back into the environment. CAC Contact: [Rob Gano](#)

## Federal Updates

***Government of Canada protects Species at Risk habitat*** – A [Newswire article](#) from July 25 stated that the Honorable Jonathan Wilkinson, Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, announced four Critical Habitat Orders under the Species at Risk Act. The approved Critical Habitat Orders will allow for further protection of four at-risk species – Spring Cisco, Eastern Sand Darter (Quebec population), Lake Chubsucker, and Northern Bottlenose Whale (Scotian shelf population).

***Recovering America's Wildlife Act Introduced in Senate; TWS eyes 100 cosponsors by November elections*** – The [Recovering America's Wildlife Act \(S. 3223\)](#) was [introduced](#) in the U.S. Senate in mid-July by Senators James Risch (R-ID), Joe Manchin (D-WV), Heidi Heitkamp (D-ND), and Lamar Alexander (R-TN). Unlike the House version ([H.R. 4647](#)), the proactive conservation funding identified within this legislation would need to go through the annual appropriations process to determine how much of the \$1.3 billion would be appropriated and distributed to states each year. Lack of dedicated funding could result in continued uncertainty for states, as currently exists under the [State Wildlife Grants](#) program. The Wildlife Society is pushing support for the Senate introduction of this legislation, and urging Senators to recognize the need for [dedicated](#) conservation funding at the state level. See [here](#) for a press release put out by The Wildlife Society and the American Fisheries Society on Senate introduction. You can also check out a form [organization unit letter](#) and a form [individual letter](#) for use by your units in pushing this legislation with your Senators.

We have now reached [80 cosponsors](#) on the House version of the Recovering America's Wildlife Act, with a goal of reaching 100 cosponsors before the November U.S. elections. See below for a list of cosponsors that have signed-on since the last newsletter:

Rep. Brown, Anthony (D-MD)  
Rep. Lance, Leonard (R-NJ)  
Rep. Vela, Filemon (D-TX)  
Rep. Lee, Barbara (D-CA)  
Rep. Rutherford, John (R-FL)

Rep. Burgess, Michael (R-TX)  
Rep. Davis, Rodney (R-IL)  
Rep. Zeldin, Lee (R-NY)  
Rep. Doyle, Michael (D-PA)

If your organization unit is interested in sending correspondence to your House congressional delegation, check out TWS' [Dropbox folder](#) and the Alliance for America's Fish and Wildlife's [Google Drive](#) for templates and other materials. In addition to organization unit correspondence being a way for your unit to make yourself known to your representatives on issues impacting wildlife professionals, correspondence also provides a valuable way for TWS headquarters staff to refer to constituents of a member of Congress when discussing the legislation. TWS staff are available to help organization units find the correct congressional contacts for distribution of letters. *Staff Contact:* [Caroline Murphy](#)

***Senate passes Interior, Agriculture appropriations package*** – Last week the Senate overwhelmingly passed a minibus spending package that included the Interior-EPA and

Agriculture FY2019 spending bills. Now differences between the Senate and House passed Interior spending bills will be resolved through a conference committee of select House and Senate lawmakers. Since the House is on recess until September 4, both chambers have very few days left to get all [twelve appropriations bills](#), none of which have reached the President's desk, signed into law before the Federal Government runs out of funding on October 1. An increasingly likely scenario is that Congress will pass a short-term funding measure in order to keep the government open past September 30. *Staff Contact: [Caroline Murphy](#)*

***House and Senate gear up for Farm Bill conference committee*** – The Senate voted last week to go to conference committee with the House on the chambers differing versions of the [2018 Farm Bill](#). The House performed this procedural vote and appointed conferees to the committee back in mid-July. Now that the House is on recess, the conferees will have to wait until September to resolve differences between the two pieces of legislation. As with the appropriations package, the conferees will only have until September 30 to pass a 2018 Farm Bill before funding and authorization for Farm Bill programs expires. *Staff Contact: [Caroline Murphy](#)*

***Multiple ESA packages move forward*** – The Wildlife Society has been monitoring three separate ESA reform packages proposed by lawmakers and the Administration in the past several weeks. The first is a set of [Trump Administration proposals](#) that would modify the existing implementation of the law by altering the factors considered when evaluating listing decisions, creating a framework for what can be considered an adverse impact within the “foreseeable future” to a species being considered for a threatened listing, providing additional parameters by which critical habitat designations for a listed species may not be necessary, and eliminating uniform take restrictions on threatened species. TWS staff are in the middle of reviewing this rule and have sent out a form requesting input from CAN Section leaders. **If you would like to discuss contributing to TWS comments on these Administration proposals, please reach out to your CAN Section representative.**

Another ESA package on the horizon comes from the office of Wyoming Senator John Barrasso – who recently [released a draft bill](#), the [Endangered Species Act Amendments of 2018](#), that largely focuses on state involvement in the listing, delisting, and recovery processes. Some of the changes proposed in the draft legislation include requiring state approval before federal officials can release experimental populations, requiring the Secretary of the Interior to solicit annual feedback from states on USFWS employee performance, and codifying into law existing voluntary private lands conservation programs such as Safe Harbor Agreements and Candidate Conservation Agreements with Assurances. The Wildlife Society provided [comments](#) to Senator Barrasso's office on the draft legislation, and will be continuing conversations with his office.

A third ESA overhaul has been proposed by the U.S. House's [Congressional Western Caucus](#) through a series of nine diverse and far-reaching bills introduced in mid-July. These bills focus

on streamlining the listings and delisting process, providing for more state authority and involvement within the Act, codifying existing voluntary private lands conservation programs, and reducing the role litigation is able to play in interfering with delisting decisions. All of these bills are still at the first stages of the [legislative process](#) and have yet to receive a committee hearing. *Staff Contact:* [Caroline Murphy](#)

## **Tools**

***Policy Library Update - Section and Chapter Letters Now Available*** – [Your Membership](#) now includes a Policy Library where members can search for policy documents generated by headquarters staff since 2010. Section and Chapter letters and policy activity that TWS has on file have recently been uploaded so be sure to [login](#) and browse the new content. If there are letters, comments, and position papers submitted by your organization unit regarding legislative or regulatory matters that you'd like added please contact Mariah.

*Staff Contact:* [Mariah Simmons](#)

## **Member and Organization Unit Input Opportunities**

***TWS 2018 Annual Conference and CAN Annual Meeting*** – Registration is still open for TWS' 2018 Annual Conference in Cleveland, Ohio from October 7-11. The Conservation Affairs Network will have a meeting during the conference – Monday, October 8 from 8:00 am – 10:00 am. If there are items your organization unit would like included for discussion on the agenda please let Mariah know. Visit the [conference website](#) for more information.

*Staff Contact:* [Mariah Simmons](#)

## **Request for Submissions**

Do you need assistance with a wildlife conservation policy issue? Does your CAC have a success story to tell? Is a new partnership developing at your organization unit? Send it in! Let the CAN hear about it and help you in your work. *Staff Contact:* [Mariah Simmons](#)

## **CAC Contact Information**

***Update TWS HQ on Conservation Affairs Committee Point of Contacts*** – As your Sections and Chapters have new elections and appointments of officers, board members, and other organization unit volunteers, be sure to update TWS staff of your new CAC Chairs. Email Mariah Simmons at [MSimmons@wildlife.org](mailto:MSimmons@wildlife.org) with the new contact information to ensure continuity of communications in the Network.