



The Wildlife Society's Conservation Affairs Network

February 2016, Volume 2, Issue 1

Take Action!

TWS Position Statements – Member Review Requested – TWS Council and the Government Affairs & Partnerships staff have revamped the structure of [TWS' policy engagement documents](#). Two new styles of policy documents were created – “Standing Positions” and “Issue Statements” – in order to improve member engagement in policy and management issues. TWS Council has drafted two new position statements to conform to this new structure. Draft statements on [“Invasive & Feral Species”](#) and [“Energy Development & Wildlife”](#) are available for a 60-day member review period.

- Who should act: TWS members
- Deadline for Action: March 6, 2016
- Action to Take: Review the two new statements and send comments and edits to caroline.murphy@wildlife.org by March 6, 2016.
- Resources: [TWS News article](#)
[“Invasive & Feral Species”](#) draft statement
[“Energy Development & Wildlife”](#) draft statement

Western Governors Association – Species Conservation and Endangered Species Act Initiative – The Western Governors Association has launched the [Species Conservation and Endangered Species Act Initiative](#). This effort includes workshops, webinars, resource libraries and stakeholder comments, with the goal of providing recommendations for state species conservation activities and improved collaboration in the ESA's implementation.

- Who should act: TWS members, any interested parties
- Deadline for Action: See the [initiative's website](#) for activity deadlines.
- Action to Take: Attend conferences, webinars and workshops to provide input
- Resources: TWS Technical Review: [Practical Solutions to Improve the Effectiveness of the Endangered Species Act for Wildlife Conservation, 2005](#)
[TWS Position Statement on Endangered Species Act](#)

Public Comment Period Open for Final Rule on Salamander Trade Ban – A [new ruling](#) under the [Lacey Act](#) is aiming to halt the spread of *Batrochochytrium salamandrivorans* (Bsal) – a fungus that targets salamander skin cells and commonly results in the death of the host -- through a salamander trade ban. An interim rule went into effect on January 28, and public comments will be reviewed in preparation for the final ruling on the ban in March.

- Who should act: U.S. members
- Deadline for Action: March 14, 2016
- Action to Take: Use the [Federal Register](#) to submit comment on the bill.
- Resources: [TWS Web Article](#)
[TWS Policy Brief on the Lacey Act](#)

CAC Activities

Texas Chapter Involved in Rattlesnake Working Group – The Texas Chapter has been [appointed by the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department](#) as a member of the Snake Harvest Working Group (SHWG). The working group was created to discuss a proposal to ban “gassing” – a controversial method of capturing rattlesnakes. A consensus has not been reached on the ban, but the working group intends to further their discussion at a meeting in March. For more information on gassing, see the [TWS factsheet on rattlesnake roundups](#). Chapter CAC Contact: [Clint Faas](#)

Manitoba Chapter Encourages Action on Moose Decline – The Manitoba Chapter submitted a [report and letter](#) to the Provincial Minister of Conservation and Water Stewardship, with a series of suggestions and concerns over the declining moose population in the province. The population is believed to have suffered from a variety of factors, including disease, over-harvesting and human development. Chapter CAC Contact: [Jack Dubois](#)

TWS Signs Letter Opposing an Anti-Trapping Amendment – [TWS](#) signed onto a letter in collaboration with the American Wildlife Conservation Partners coalition that strongly urged the Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works to reject an amendment to the Bipartisan Sportsmen’s Act ([S. 659](#)) proposed by Senator Cory Booker (NJ) that would [limit the use of traps](#) in the National Wildlife Refuge System. Senator Booker withdrew the amendment during the hearing, but the stand-alone bill introduced in May 2015 ([S.1081](#)) still has potential to move forward. Staff Contact: [Keith Norris](#)

New Mexico Chapter Encourages Wolf Release – The New Mexico Chapter submitted a [letter](#) in November to the New Mexico Department of Game and Fish encouraging the agency to reconsider a decision to deny FWS permits to release Mexican wolves into New Mexico. Chapter CAC Contact: [Brian Hanson](#)

Southwest Section engages Mexican Wolf debate – At the request of the New Mexico Chapter, the Southwest Section submitted a letter to the Chair of the New Mexico State Game Commission, Director of New Mexico Department of Game & Fish, and the Regional Director for FWS, outlining the need to work together to manage and recovery Mexican Wolf populations. The letter incorporated information from the TWS Technical Reviews and Position Statements on the subject. Section CAC Contact: [Jim Ramakka](#)

Minnesota Chapter Meets with Governor Regarding Moose Decline – The Minnesota Chapter [met with Governor Mark Dayton](#) regarding his decision to halt the use of GPS collars on moose populations by state agencies and researchers. The Chapter voiced their concerns to the governor that the decision would impact science-based management of moose populations within the state. The chapter volunteered their assistance in future reviews of draft policy regarding wildlife. Chapter CAC Contact: [Jodie Provost](#)

Wyoming Chapter Backs State Migration Policy – The Wyoming Chapter of the Wildlife Society created migration corridor definitions that provided a strong foundation for the new ungulate migration mitigation policy in the state. Mule deer populations have declined in recent years due to disruptions to their migration routes from human activity, prompting the Wyoming Game and Fish Commission to formally approach the Chapter for assistance. Chapter CAC Contact: [Tony Mong](#)

Arizona & New Mexico Chapter Meeting hosts discussion on public land management – The discussion brought seven panelists together to inform chapter members and the public on public land management issues. The panel was developed based on the recent discussions throughout western states regarding the desire to transfer federal lands over to state management. This panel involved state legislators, agency commissioners, county supervisors, university professors, and non-profit organization leaders. Contact: [Jon Hanna](#)

Issue Spotlight

Authority of FWS to seek compensation for damages to National Wildlife Refuge Resources – Unlike other federal land management agencies, the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service does not currently have the authority to seek compensation for damages caused by a third party on National Wildlife Refuge System lands. Congress is currently debating ways to fix that issue to ensure those responsible for damages are held accountable for the cost of the repairs. TWS expects a bill called the Resource Protection Act will be introduced soon to help solve this issue. This legislation was [discussed as an amendment to the Bipartisan Sportsmen's Act](#) but ultimately not put to a vote at a Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works hearing on January 20, 2016. The recent events at the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge provide a clear example of why this type of authority is needed by the FWS, as the agency will now be stuck repairing damaged incurred during the armed occupation. Staff Contact: [Keith Norris](#)

On the Horizon

Teaming with Wildlife Annual Fly-in – March 1-2, 2016 – Washington, D.C. - The Teaming With Wildlife Fly-In will take place March 1-2 of this year. The fly-in will bring state officials to Washington, D.C. to advocate the implementation of State Wildlife Action Plans. To register for the 2016 Teaming with Wildlife Fly-in, see [registration instructions](#). Staff Contact: [Keith Norris](#)

North American Conference Workshop Focused on Integrating Science and Management – Tuesday, March 15, 2016 1:00-5:00 pm – Pittsburg, Pennsylvania – TWS and its partners will be [hosting a workshop](#) titled *Barriers and Bridges in Reconnecting Natural Resources Science and Management* at the [81st North American Wildlife and Natural Resources Conference](#). The workshop will address the complicated relationship between natural resource science and management by identifying the causes of disconnect as well as exploring possible solutions to the issue. You can register to attend the conference and workshop at [wildlifemanagementinstitute.org](#). Staff Contact: [Keith Norris](#)

Release of President's Budget Request – President Obama is scheduled to release his budget proposal for FY 2017 on February 9, 2016. This will kick off the FY2017 appropriations process. Be on the lookout for future calls to support funding for wildlife conservation and management programs in the federal budget. Staff Contact: [Keith Norris](#)

Policy Partnerships

National Horse and Burro Rangeland Management Coalition Commercial Campaign – The [National Horse and Burro Rangeland Management Coalition](#) launched an information and education commercial campaign in the Denver metro region. The [commercials](#) focus on the impacts overpopulated horses and burros have on native wildlife, health of horse herds, the rangeland ecosystem, Western heritage, and taxpayer dollars. The Wildlife Society currently chairs this diverse coalition of wildlife, sportsmen, livestock, and land management organizations. You are encouraged to help spread the campaign on [social media](#). Staff Contact: [Keith Norris](#)

TWS Policy News and Training Opportunities

Leadership Institute Accepting Applications – TWS' Leadership Institute is now accepting applications for the 2016 class. The Institute facilitates the professional development of 10-15 early career wildlife professionals and recent graduates, enabling them with enhanced leadership and interpersonal skills. The deadline to [apply](#) is March 21, 2016. Staff Contact: [Laura Bies](#)