



The Wildlife Society's Conservation Affairs Network

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TWS & CAC Activities

TWS submits FY 2020 Interior appropriations testimony to U.S. Congress – The Wildlife Society submitted [funding requests](#) to congressional appropriators for their use in crafting the Fiscal Year 2020 Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies [appropriations bill](#). These requests for Department of the Interior and U.S. Forest Service programs contrasted with many of the Administration's [FY 2020 funding requests, which were also released](#) in March. The Administration's requests included the elimination of the USGS Cooperative Research Units program, massive cuts to several programs including Forest Service Research and Development and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Migratory Bird Joint Ventures, and an increase in funding to the USFWS National Wildlife Refuge System. *Staff contact:* [Caroline Murphy](#)

TWS, Units engage in STWG funding advocacy – The Wildlife Society took part in the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies' annual fly-in supporting the [State and Tribal Wildlife Grants](#) program. The State and Tribal Wildlife Grants program is the only federal program in the U.S. dedicated to the conservation of at-risk species at the state level. This point, along with several others, was discussed in great detail with congressional staff by state agency employees and partners during the fly-in.

Several TWS organization units also advocated for adequate funding for the program by sending requests to members of the U.S. House of Representatives to sign a Dear Colleague letter in support of adequate funding for the program. The House letter wrapped up with [168 members](#) of the House signing the letter and expressing their support. If your member signed onto the letter, you or your unit can consider sending them a thank you email for their support of the program. TWS staff will keep organization units updated on a Senate companion Dear Colleague Letter.

Staff contact: [Caroline Murphy](#)

Alaska Chapter submits comments on Arctic Refuge DEIS regarding leasing – The [Alaska Chapter of The Wildlife Society](#) submitted [comments](#) to Department of the Interior Acting Secretary David Bernhardt on March 12, 2019, identifying specific concerns regarding the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for the Coastal Plain Oil and Gas Leasing Program. The Chapter recommended maintaining the coastal plain of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge in an undeveloped state for the conservation

of Refuge resources and for long-term studies of the effects of climate change in the Arctic on wildlife resources and ecosystem processes.

CAC Contact: [Michael Spindler](#)

EKU Student Chapter publishes letter to editor on feral cats – [The Eastern Kentucky University Student Chapter of The Wildlife Society](#)'s President Ted Brancheau submitted a letter to the editor of the *Eastern Progress*. Titled "[The negative impact of feral campus cats](#)," the letter was a response to the media outlet's February 28 article, "Meet the campus group who feeds and manages ECU's feral cat population." Brancheau argued that the February 28 article "paints a biased picture and fails to address the strong scientific consensus about the negative impacts of feral cats and their management," while also citing TWS' [issue statement on feral and free-ranging domestic cats](#). CAC Contact: [Terri Brunjes](#)

North Dakota Chapter urges state representatives to vote against SB 2315 – The [North Dakota Chapter of The Wildlife Society](#) encouraged members to attend hearings for [SB 2315](#) in March and urged them to contact their Representatives and recommend a "NO" vote on the bill. The bill would change hunting access on private lands and reverse the state's existing trespass laws. CAC Contact: [Rick Warhurst](#)

South Carolina Chapter delivers statement on feral cats and TNR – The [South Carolina Chapter of The Wildlife Society](#), in collaboration with the SC Wildlife Federation and American Bird Conservancy, delivered statements to State Senator McElveen regarding [SC Senate Bill S. 105 application to feral cats and promotion of TNR programs](#). As a result of the communication, Senator McElveen has agreed to amend the bill to remove all mention of TNR. CAC Contact: [Beau Bauer](#)

Tennessee Chapter develops position statement on CWD – The [Tennessee Chapter of The Wildlife Society](#) membership approved a [position statement on the invasion of chronic wasting disease in Tennessee](#). CAC Contacts: [Mike Butler](#) and [Emma Willcox](#)

Federal Updates

Gray Wolf proposed for delisting – The U.S. Department of the Interior announced in mid-March a proposed rule to [delist](#) the gray wolf (*Canis lupus*) from the Endangered Species List across the lower 48 states and Mexico. The ESA listing status of the species has been a point of contention for the past several years, with several prior attempts to remove Distinct Population Segments or the entire lower 48 population of the species from the Endangered Species List being rejected by the judiciary. Apart from the Northern Rockies population segment and the state of Wyoming, the species

currently retains ESA designation throughout the lower 48. [Comments](#) on the proposed rule can be submitted until May 14. *Staff contact:* [Caroline Murphy](#)

WOTUS comment period open until April 15 – The [new definition](#) of “Waters of the United States” under the Clean Water Act was [released for public comment](#) in mid-February. This rule would remove the stronger protections for certain hydrologically connected wetlands and intermittent streams provided for in the [2015 modification of the rule](#), and is open for public comment until April 15. Please let TWS Headquarters staff know if your unit submits comment or has any questions.

Staff contact: [Caroline Murphy](#)

Sage-grouse plan revisions finalized – Acting Interior Secretary David Bernhardt [announced final changes](#) to the revisions of the [2015 Sage-Grouse Conservation Plans](#). These revisions, published in mid-March via Department Records of Decision, showcase certain large-scale shifts to the overall plans, such as doing away with mineral extraction withdrawals and associated regulations that create buffers around sage-grouse lekking sites. The Department of Agriculture is [expected](#) to announce its own finalized changes within the next few months. *Staff contact:* [Caroline Murphy](#)

Tools

TWS publishes new issue statement on wildlife killing contests – The Wildlife Society’s Executive Committee recently approved a new issue statement on [wildlife killing contests](#). In the document, The Wildlife Society discourages contests that adversely affect the wildlife resource or the public’s appreciation of wildlife resources. TWS also highlights that killing contests may undermine the public’s perception of ethical hunting and encourages public attitude surveys to be used by agencies when managing or regulating killing contests. *Staff Contact:* [Keith Norris](#)

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 with the new contact information to ensure continuity of communications in the Network.