



AFS, TWS continue push for dedicated conservation funding

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July 17, 2018 (Bethesda, MD) - The Wildlife Society and the American Fisheries Society continue to seek dedicated federal funding that enables state-based, proactive, and science-based wildlife and fisheries conservation across the United States.

The Senate version of the Recovering America's Wildlife Act, which was introduced on Tuesday, strongly emphasizes the need for more fisheries and wildlife conservation funding. TWS and AFS are committed to working with the Senate to enhance the bill's language to include dedicating the funds necessary to meet the goals outlined in states' Wildlife Action Plans.

Dedicated funding is a core element of the House's version of the Recovering America's Wildlife Act (H.R. 4647), the bipartisan bill introduced in December by Representatives Fortenberry (R.-Neb.) and Dingell (D.-Mich.). The Senate version introduced today by Senators Risch (R.-Idaho), Manchin (D.-W. Va.), Heitkamp (D.-N.D.), and Alexander (R.-Tenn.), authorizes, rather than dedicates, \$1.3 billion in funding annually for conservation of at-risk species as identified by state agencies in their State Wildlife Action Plans. Enhancing this language to include dedicated funding would secure wildlife and fisheries professionals the necessary funding to ensure common species remain common and at-risk species receive the intervention necessary to keep them from becoming endangered.

"We are pleased that the Senate is making steps to address the serious crisis for America's fish and wildlife, but we are concerned that the lack of dedicated funding in the Senate bill will leave states and their partners without a reliable funding stream to address at-risk species before they become endangered," said Doug Austen, executive director of the American Fisheries Society. "The crisis calls for a change in the status quo. State Wildlife Action Plans are chronically underfunded and without a shift in the approach, many species already struggling will be on the path to extinction due to increasingly warmer temperatures, drought, poor water quality, and habitat degradation and fragmentation."

In 2014, a group of visionary conservationists, sportsmen and women, and business leaders were tasked with determining a 21st century funding model for proactive, cost-effective fish and wildlife conservation. They agreed that a dedicated funding mechanism was necessary to ensure that state wildlife agencies have the financial security necessary to plan multiyear conservation projects. TWS and AFS are part of a broad coalition of organizations and businesses supporting this dedicated funding.

"We deeply appreciate the leadership Senators Risch, Manchin, Heitkamp, and Alexander have displayed in support of the conservation efforts by fisheries and wildlife professionals through advancing this bill," said John McDonald, president of The Wildlife Society. "The Wildlife Society

and American Fisheries Society look forward to working with Senate offices to advance language that will provide a path forward for financial and regulatory certainty at the state level.”

The Wildlife Society was founded in 1937 and is a non-profit professional society representing more than 10,000 wildlife biologists and managers, dedicated to excellence in wildlife stewardship through science and education. Our mission is to inspire, empower, and enable wildlife professionals to sustain wildlife populations and habitats through science-based management and conservation. www.wildlife.org

Founded in 1870, the American Fisheries Society (AFS) is the world’s oldest and largest fisheries science society. The AFS mission is to improve the conservation and sustainability of fishery resources and aquatic ecosystems by advancing fisheries and aquatic science and promoting the development of fisheries professionals. With its renowned journals, books and conferences, AFS is the leading source of fisheries science and management information in North America and around the world. www.fisheries.org

To learn more about TWS’ and AFS’ efforts on the Recovering America’s Wildlife Act, check out the recently released [Reversing America’s Wildlife Crisis](#) report, a collaboration between TWS, AFS, and [National Wildlife Federation](#). This report calls attention to North American and migratory wildlife species facing population declines due to a variety of threats. It echoes the intent of the Recovering America’s Wildlife Act in calling for more proactive management to prevent these declines and an improved funding mechanism to support such efforts.