



The Wildlife Society's Conservation Affairs Network

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Opportunities

Help promote the Recovering America's Wildlife Act with a new t-shirt or face mask – The Wildlife Society is joining with other members of the [Alliance for America's Fish and Wildlife](#) to raise awareness and support for the [Recovering America's Wildlife Act \(H.R. 3742\)](#) through the launch of a coalition [t-shirt and face mask campaign](#). TWS members can check out recoverwildlife.com/discount/WILDLIFE%2520SOCIETY to purchase 100% recycled material t-shirts for \$25.00. New to the campaign are face masks/buffs, which can be purchased for \$13.00. Funds raised from shirt and mask sales will support the advocacy efforts of the Alliance and its partners to work towards passage of the Act. *Staff Contact:* [Caroline Murphy](#)

Sign-on to highlight the economic benefits of Recovering America's Wildlife Act – Chapters and sections of The Wildlife Society can sign-on to a [letter](#) to House leadership requesting that a future economic recovery package responding to the COVID-19 pandemic include the [Recovering America's Wildlife Act \(H.R. 3742\)](#). The letter emphasizes that the bill will have a positive impact on both the economy and wildlife by putting Americans to work on conservation projects. Units can sign-on by using this [form](#). The deadline to sign on is Monday, June 8. *Staff Contact:* [Caroline Murphy](#)

Resources

BLM releases report on Wild Horse and Burro Program – The Bureau of Land Management [delivered](#) in May [a report to Congress](#) on what resources would be needed to achieve ecologically sustainable levels of wild horses and burros on BLM rangelands. The report stated that it would take 15-18 years to reduce the current horse and burro population of over 95,000 animals down to the appropriate management level of 26,715. BLM estimated it will cost over \$900 million in just the next five years to implement plans to intensify wild horse gathers, removals, and fertility control treatments. Though this report was congressionally mandated, it is unclear if any congressional action will result from its delivery within the Fiscal Year 2021 funding package. *Staff Contact:* [Keith Norris](#)

DOI announces 2020 Bison Conservation Initiative – The Department of the Interior [unveiled](#) its 10-year vision for management and conservation of federally-managed bison herds in the [2020 Bison Conservation Initiative](#). The Initiative focuses on ecological and cultural restoration of bison and highlights the need for translocations of bison between herds to maintain genetic diversity. It was guided by a [population viability study](#) published by the National Park Service that said without gene flow, isolated bison herds will lose genetic diversity and will be left with reduced adaptive capacity. The

Initiative will inform how DOI manages over 11,000 federal bison in 19 separate herds around the country. *Staff Contact:* [Keith Norris](#)

CAC Activities

Alberta Chapter commends ban on toxic product for gopher control – The [Alberta Chapter of The Wildlife Society](#) wrote a [letter](#) to the Canadian Minister of Health to commend the decision to ban 2% strychnine control of Richardson’s ground squirrel (*Urocitellus richardsonii*, also known as prairie gophers). The letter applauds the decision as an example of the proper use of wildlife science. The Chapter said that although use of strychnine-laced carcasses or grains is the most effective way to control prairie gophers, strychnine’s toxicity presents a high environmental cost. The Chapter says that most of Alberta’s threatened and endangered species live in prairie ecosystems alongside prairie gophers and could be negatively impacted by non-selected strychnine use. Finally, the Chapter stated that alternative control methods like trapping, shooting, or other poisons can be used to control prairie gophers without threatening non-target species. *CAC Contact:* [Mark Boyce](#)

Wyoming Chapter comments on brucellosis bacteria regulations – In May, the [Wyoming Chapter of The Wildlife Society](#) submitted [comments](#) to the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the Department of Health and Human Safety. In its comment, the Wyoming Chapter supported the removal of *Brucella abortus* from the current list of select agents and toxins that pose a severe threat to animal health. *B. abortus* is the bacteria that causes brucellosis infection in elk, bison, and cattle in and around Yellowstone National Park and the National Elk Refuge in Wyoming. The Chapter said that listing *B. abortus* as a select agent limits field research opportunities on the bacteria, including testing of animals with a live field strain of *B. abortus*. This research is important, the Chapter said, in understanding the dynamics of disease transmission between and among wildlife species and livestock. Removal of the bacteria as a select agent will allow scientists to do research designed to inform management actions to control brucellosis. *CAC Contact:* [Rhiannon Jakopak](#)

Federal Updates

TWS advocates for wildlife crossings – The Wildlife Society [signed a letter](#) with nearly 40 other organizations asking the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee to address wildlife-vehicle collisions in the reauthorization of the next Federal Highway Bill. The [letter](#) says that hundreds of people and thousands of animals are killed every year in vehicle collisions. However, these collisions can be prevented with wildlife crossings and habitat connectivity measures. Several critical wildlife crossing measures were passed in the Senate Committee version of the bill ([S. 2302](#)). These included a grant program for wildlife infrastructure projects and a study on wildlife-vehicle collision reduction. The signatories urged the House Committee to take

up the wildlife crossing provisions of the Senate bill. The House recently adopted remote voting procedures that could allow committees to get back to work quickly on this legislation and others despite the pandemic's impacts on travel and in-person legislative work. *Staff Contact:* [Caroline Murphy](#)

TWS continues advocacy work while 2021 appropriations process is delayed – In May, The Wildlife Society signed a coalition [letter](#) to both the House and Senate Appropriations Committees. The letter requested that 302(b) allocations, which set the maximum spending levels for each of Congress's [12 annual appropriations bills](#), be increased for spending bills related to environmental priorities. The letter said that it is necessary that environmental agencies and programs have enough funding to pay expenses for their normal activities plus the new expenses incurred as agencies respond to the COVID-19 pandemic. The federal appropriations process for Fiscal Year 2021 has been delayed – appropriations bills and 302(b) levels are unavailable for now while Congress focuses on responding to the pandemic. We expect that spending bills will not to be unveiled until at least late June. *Staff Contact:* [Caroline Murphy](#)

TWS Responses to COVID-19 Pandemic

TWS urges Congress to support wildlife professionals during pandemic – In May, The Wildlife Society [sent a letter](#) to House and Senate leadership requesting that future responses to COVID-19 support wildlife professionals and empower them to manage wildlife diseases. Among TWS' recommendations were increased funding for the U.S. Geological Survey's National Wildlife Health Center, the USDA-Wildlife Services Methods Development program, and the USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture. Investing in these areas, TWS argued, would support important research on wildlife and zoonotic diseases. TWS also supported advancement of three bills for responding to Chronic Wasting Disease and the Invasive Fish & Wildlife Prevention Act, which would strengthen federal authority under the Lacey Act to control invasive species. TWS suggested that, during this crisis, states may need short-term relief from federal match requirements for programs like [State and Tribal Wildlife Grants and Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration](#). Finally, TWS emphasized that the [Recovering America's Wildlife Act \(H.R. 3742\)](#) provides an excellent opportunity to provide funding for wildlife conservation and support jobs for wildlife professionals. Congress has been discussing additional stimulus packages, but it isn't clear if or when one will be fully crafted. *Staff Contact:* [Caroline Murphy](#)

TWS signs-on to support the Great American Outdoors Act and America's Conservation Enhancement Act – The Wildlife Society joined [a letter](#) with dozens of other conservation groups to urge House and Senate leaders to advance both [The Great American Outdoors Act](#) (GAOA, [S. 3422](#)) and the America's Conservation

Enhancement (ACE) Act ([H.R. 925](#), [S. 3051](#)). The GAOA would establish a fund to address the deferred maintenance backlog on federal lands and provide permanent funding for the [Land and Water Conservation Fund](#) (LWCF) at \$900 million per year. It is expected to be passed by the Senate this month, but there is no matching bill in the House yet. The ACE Act, meanwhile, reauthorizes a variety of conservation funding mechanisms, including the [North American Wetlands Conservation Act](#). It was passed by the Senate in January. The sign-on letter recommended that both bills be enacted, whether as stand-alone bills or as part of a future COVID-19 stimulus package.

Staff Contact: [Caroline Murphy](#)

CAC Activity and Contact Updates

Policy consultation – Do you want assistance with a wildlife conservation policy issue? Curious as to the various ways your organization unit can support federal efforts by TWS or engage on local level issues? Contact policy@wildlife.org.

Activity updates, success stories, and CAC Contact information – Does your CAC have a success story to tell? Is a new partnership developing at your organization unit? Do you have a new CAC Chair? Send it in! Let the CAN hear about it and help you in your work. Email Mariah Simmons at MSimmons@wildlife.org.