Natural Resource Professionals Commend Reintroduction of Recovering America's Wildlife Act

Today, fisheries and wildlife professionals from across the United States welcomed the reintroduction of groundbreaking legislation to empower natural resource professionals to conserve at-risk species for generations to come.

The Recovering America's Wildlife Act, introduced by Representatives Debbie Dingell (D-Mich.), Jeff Fortenberry (R-Neb), and eight of their bipartisan colleagues, would secure $1.3 billion in dedicated funding annually for state fish and wildlife agencies and $97.5 million annually for tribal nations to proactively and cost-effectively work on the conservation and monitoring of at-risk species.

This bipartisan group of representatives are working to provide a new funding approach that would reverse the steep declines in our nation's remarkable biodiversity. Today, nearly one-third of U.S. fish and wildlife species are imperiled and threats such as climate change, habitat degradation, and invasive species threaten to exacerbate the problems without proactive funding to address them.

State Wildlife Action Plans have identified 12,000 species at-risk of becoming threatened or endangered, known as species of greatest conservation need, and have detailed, proactive plans to reduce population declines in an effort to prevent the need to list them under the Endangered Species Act. Funding would provide the much needed resources to implement these plans and funding for tribal nations to identify, plan, and conserve at-risk species.

"The Recovering America's Wildlife Act is a once in a generation opportunity to secure the funding needed to keep common species common and proactively invest in America's native wildlife" said President of The Wildlife Society Carol Chambers. "We are excited to help move this legislation forward in support of America's wildlife professionals and the species they conserve."

"Increases in water temperatures, lack of water in streams and rivers, poor water quality, and loss of habitat have led to 40 percent freshwater species now being at risk and unfortunately, a changing climate means the situation will only get worse. With a dedicated stream of funding, we can implement science-based conservation plans that will build resilience in the face of climate change." said Doug Austen, Executive Director, American Fisheries Society.

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Founded in 1937, TWS and its network of affiliated chapters and sections represent more than 15,000 professional wildlife biologists, managers, and educators dedicated to excellence in wildlife stewardship. TWS' mission is to inspire, empower, and enable wildlife professionals to sustain wildlife populations and habitat 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 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.