



# The Wildlife Society's Conservation Affairs Network

June 2021, Volume 7, Issue 6

## Opportunities

**Join TWS and partners for 6/21-6/25 Recovering America's Wildlife Act fly-in event** - The Wildlife Society and our partners with the [Alliance for America's Fish and Wildlife](#) are hosting a virtual fly-in in support of efforts to pass the [Recovering America's Wildlife Act](#) during the week of June 21. The Fly-In will connect TWS members and other in-state conservation partners with their congressional delegation to ask for co-sponsorship of this game-changing legislation. The Alliance will host a webinar training on best practices for engaging with Congressional offices, taking place in the week leading up to the fly-in. TWS members interested in engaging should expect:

- Assistance in connecting with other in-state partners registered for the fly-in.
- Assistance with scheduling meetings. Meetings usually do not last more than 30 minutes and can be scheduled throughout the work week.
- TWS-provided talking points and best practices for speaking with congressional staff.

**Please let Caroline know as soon as possible if you or anyone in your unit membership have interest in engaging in the fly-in.** TWS and our partners would like to get an idea on the number of individuals interested by the end of this week (6/4) in order to begin connecting in-state partners and scheduling congressional meetings.

*Staff Contact:* [Caroline Murphy](#)

## Resources

**Recovering America's Wildlife Act unit engagement tools, webinar recording** - As we continue the push for Recovering America's Wildlife Act cosponsors, units and members can use the below resources to assist in education and outreach to TWS membership and congressional offices:

- [Action Center](#): The Wildlife Society's Recovering America's Wildlife Act action center page enables members to easily reach out to their representative to request support of the bill via email.
- [Phone call script](#): Individual members can use this script as a reference when contacting their U.S. House member office to request support for the bill. TWS members can find their House representative's contact information by visiting [house.gov](#).
- [Form letter](#): Units can adapt this form letter with relevant local information to request support from their region's congressional delegation. Units can also check out [congress.gov](#) to see if any House representatives in their region have

already cosponsored the legislation, and consider sending them a [thank you letter](#).

- National Wildlife Federation's [social media toolkit](#): Provides sample content and ideas for units posting about reintroduction of the legislation. Be sure to use the hashtag #RecoverWildlife in any postings.

These tools and more were discussed in additional detail during the May 2021 Recovering America's Wildlife Act reintroduction webinar hosted by TWS and the American Fisheries Society. A recording of the webinar can be viewed [here](#). For additional partner resources, check out the Alliance for America's Fish and Wildlife [toolkit](#). Staff Contact: [Caroline Murphy](#)

## CAC Activities

**TWS Chapters work to support the Recovering America's Wildlife Act** – The [Arkansas Chapter of The Wildlife Society](#), the [Maine Chapter of The Wildlife Society](#), and the [Mississippi Chapter of The Wildlife Society](#) all sent letters to their congressional representatives requesting co-sponsorship of Recovering America's Wildlife Act.

- The Arkansas Chapter sent four letters on to congressional representatives about Recovering America's Wildlife Act. They thanked [Rep. French Hill](#) on May 13 for his co-sponsorship of the bill and sent letters to [Rep. Rick Crawford](#), [Rep. Bruce Westerman](#), and [Rep. Steve Womack](#) requesting their co-sponsorship. CAC Contact: [Virginie Rolland](#)
- The Maine Chapter sent a letter to [Senator Susan Collins](#) on May 14 requesting her support for the soon-to-be reintroduced Senate version of the bill. CAC Contact: [Joe Roy](#)
- The Mississippi Chapter sent a letter to [Rep. Trent Kelly](#) on May 16 requesting his co-sponsorship. CAC Contact: [Chris Ayers](#)

Has your unit reached out to their congressional delegation in support of this legislation? Reach out to [policy@wildlife.org](mailto:policy@wildlife.org) to let us know.

**New Jersey Chapter expresses opposition to protection of feral monk parakeet** – The [New Jersey Chapter of The Wildlife Society](#) wrote to the state Senate Environment and Energy Committee to [express their strong opposition](#) to introduced bill, [S2640](#). The bill would require protection for feral monk parakeet (*Myiopsitta spp.*) by the Department of Environmental Protection “in the same manner and to the same extent as any nongame species of bird indigenous to the State that is protected by The Endangered and Nongame Species Conservation Act.” Additionally, the bill would require that the non-native monk parakeet not be considered or listed by the Department of

Environmental Protection or any other state agency as a “potentially dangerous species.” CAC Contact: [Lisa Clark](#)

**Oklahoma Chapter shares info on plains spotted skunk SSA** – The [Oklahoma Chapter of The Wildlife Society](#) received a [letter](#) from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Oklahoma Ecological Services Field Office on May 25, stating that the Service is currently conducting a Species Status Assessment (SSA) to inform their listing decision of the plains spotted skunk (*Spilogale putorius interrupta*). The Chapter shared the letter with their membership, encouraging members to submit information related to the SSA. CAC Contact: [Josh Richardson](#)

**Virginia Chapter shares comment period on proposed DWR changes with membership** – The Virginia Chapter of The Wildlife Society emailed their members on May 6 about several of the Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources (DWR) [proposed regulatory changes](#). The comment period closed on May 10 and the Chapter encouraged members to review the proposed changes and provide specific feedback. CAC Contact: [Nelson Lafon](#)

## Federal Updates

**U.S. Administration FY 2022 budget request released** – Last week the Biden-Harris Administration released [additional details](#) on the federal government’s [discretionary spending](#) request to Congress for the coming fiscal year. The proposed budget includes [suggested increases](#) to several federal conservation programs, including the [State and Tribal Wildlife Grants](#) program (+\$10 million) and the [National Wildlife Refuge System](#) (+\$74 million). TWS staff are currently combing through additional details on the proposed budget, which will be included in this week’s *eWildlifer*. Staff Contact: [Caroline Murphy](#)

**MBTA comment period closes June 7** – In recent months, TWS has worked alongside U.S. conservation partners to push for increased protections and funding for species covered under the [Migratory Bird Treaty Act](#). Most recently, The Wildlife Society and partners sent [correspondence](#) to Congress urging them to include FY 2022 funding for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to begin evaluation of a potential MBTA incidental permitting program – a recommendation that was echoed by the Administration in their recent funding request to Congress. In addition, TWS staff has updated our [action center](#) on MBTA rulemaking to include information on a May 7 [proposal](#) to reinstate the longstanding interpretation of “take” under the MBTA to include incidental or accidental take of MBTA-listed species. **Units interested in providing comment can do so until June 7.** Staff Contact: [Caroline Murphy](#)

**Infrastructure talks continue well into spring** – The Wildlife Society and partners have been monitoring discussions on Capitol Hill regarding an infrastructure package expected to materialize sometime before July 4. If a bipartisan deal on infrastructure is unable to come together, the bill will likely go through the reconciliation process instead of regular order – meaning the Senate would only need 50 votes instead of the usual 60 to allow for consideration and passage. One hopeful sign of bipartisanship occurred last week in the Senate, when the Senate Environment and Public Works committee [passed](#) a bipartisan highway reauthorization bill out of committee - a core component of any infrastructure package that comes together. The Senate bill includes \$350 million in funding for investment in wildlife crossings, a provision [supported](#) by TWS and several conservation organizations. TWS is also working with partners to [keep provisions within](#) the Recovering America's Wildlife Act as a component of bipartisan talks. *For information on the ins and outs of the reconciliation process, you can check out this [handy guide](#) from the Center for Budget and Policy Priorities.*

*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](mailto: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 Beyers at [MSimmons@wildlife.org](mailto:MSimmons@wildlife.org).