

December 7, 2021
The Honorable Ben Cardin
Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20003

Dear Senator Cardin:

The Maryland/Delaware Chapter of The Wildlife Society is writing to **request your cosponsorship of the Recovering America's Wildlife Act (S. 2372)**, introduced in July by Senators Martin Heinrich (D-NM) and Roy Blunt (R-MO). This legislation would provide state and tribal wildlife agencies with a vital source of funding needed to proactively and cost-effectively conserve America's at-risk wildlife populations.

Founded in 1937, The Wildlife Society and its 15,000 professional and associated members work to inspire, empower, and enable wildlife biologists and managers to sustain wildlife populations and habitat through science-based management and conservation. The Maryland/Delaware Chapter of The Wildlife Society represents 120 conservation minded individuals with a variety of backgrounds centered on wildlife conservation within both states. TWS and other professional societies and conservation organizations are excited to support this legislation alongside similar, bipartisan efforts endorsed by dozens of representatives in the U.S. House (H.R. 2773).


The states and tribes within our Southeast Section/Maryland/Delaware Chapter have 1,200 at-risk species as identified by Maryland Department of Natural Resources in their congressionally mandated conservation action blueprints, known as State Wildlife Action Plans. Maryland has over 15,000 plant and animal species, and 1,200 are considered rare, uncommon, or declining. Species such as the wedgemussel, piping plover, or bog turtle are endangered species in the state. Other endangered species like the Delmarva Fox Squirrel have recovered. They are one example of a success story. Listed in 1967 as a member of the first Endangered Species Act listing, good things have happened. The squirrel's range increased from four to 10 counties, and a population of up to 20,000 squirrels now covers 28 percent of the Delmarva Peninsula, primarily in Maryland. Based on extensive review of the best scientific and commercial data available, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service removed the Delmarva fox squirrel from the endangered species list in December 2015. Last year squirrels were transplanted from Dorchester County to Sussex County and released on the Assawoman Wildlife Area. We have evidence they are reproducing.

Nationally, conservation efforts for these at-risk species are critically underfunded, only receiving about \$60 million annually through the existing State and Tribal Wildlife Grants program. This is not nearly enough for states and tribes to plan for multi-year conservation and recovery projects or prevent costlier measures, such as Endangered Species Act listings, from occurring.

Passage of the Recovering America's Wildlife Act would match an appropriate solution to the scale of this crisis. By dedicating \$1.3 billion annually for the adequate implementation of State Wildlife Action Plans, and \$97.5 million annually for tribal agencies to plan long-term conservation projects, wildlife professionals will have the resources needed to hold the nation's wildlife in the public trust for generations to come.

Thank you for considering this important legislation. If you have any questions regarding the Recovering America's Wildlife Act and the Maryland/Delaware Chapter of The Wildlife Society's support for this legislation, please feel free to reach out to Robert Gano at robgano1972@gmail.com by phone at 302.542.5559.

Sincerely,



Robert D. Gano, Jr.
Resolutions and Public Statements Committee, Chair
Maryland/Delaware Chapter