



The Wildlife Society's Conservation Affairs Network

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On the Horizon

Recovering America's Wildlife Act engagement shifts to the Senate – Last month, the U.S. House of Representatives [passed](#) the Recovering America's Wildlife Act ([H.R. 2773](#); [S. 2372](#)), teeing up the legislation for further consideration in the Senate. TWS leaders applauded the move in a [press release](#) thanking members of Congress for their support. Several [amendments](#) were adopted during floor consideration, with most amendments focusing on the expansion of the available uses and oversight of funding distributed by the bill. Any interested units can still send [letters of thanks](#) to Representatives in their state's congressional delegation.

The Senate is expected to consider the bill later this summer. TWS units should [send a letter](#) to their Senators now requesting their support and cosponsorship of the bill, and encourage TWS members to reach out directly to their Senators using constituent email portals provided on the Senators' websites. In the coming weeks, TWS will distribute engagement resources to units that have high-priority Senate targets for cosponsorship requests. *Staff Contact:* [Kelly O'Connor](#)

Engagement Opportunities

TWS seeking input to inform comments on proposed Endangered Species Act experimental population rule – TWS staff is seeking your input to inform our comments on the recent USFWS [proposed rule](#) modifying the implementation of [Section 10\(j\)](#) of the Endangered Species Act. The newly proposed regulatory language is intended to allow for the introduction of experimental populations of federal-listed species to habitats outside their known historical ranges. A [brief](#) is available summarizing the historical interpretation of Section 10(j) and the language included in the proposed rule. Feedback provided via [Google Form](#) is due **July 14, 2022**. *Staff Contact:* [Kelly O'Connor](#)

CAC Activities

CACs lead engagement efforts to support House Recovering America's Wildlife Act Vote – CAC members helped make two recent engagement opportunities a success by promoting participation among their broader unit memberships. On June 7th, over 100 TWS members—including members and chairs of many CACs—participated in a call-in day urging their members in the U.S. House of Representatives to vote yes for the Recovering America's Wildlife Act on the House floor. CACs were also instrumental in promoting member engagement, with 460 letters of support sent to Representatives prior to the floor vote. *Staff Contact:* [Kelly O'Connor](#)

Federal Updates

USFWS rescinds regulatory definition of “habitat” – The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and National Marine Fisheries Service have [finalized](#) the removal of a short-lived regulatory definition of “habitat” [adopted](#) in the last Administration. The now-rescinded rule defined habitat as “the abiotic and biotic setting that currently or periodically contains the resources and conditions necessary to support one or more life processes of a species”, and was intended for use in determining the designation of critical habitat. TWS [provided comments](#) on the proposed definition in 2020. In a [press release](#), the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service stated that a single definition of “habitat” could impede the Services’ ability to fulfill their obligations to designate critical habitat based upon the best available science. The final rule takes effect on July 23. *Staff Contact:* [Caroline Murphy](#)

USFWS publishes new hunt-fish rule – The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has [announced](#) proposed plans to expand hunting and fishing opportunities in 19 National Wildlife Refuges across 54,000 acres. If this [rule is finalized](#), 436 refuges would provide public access for hunting and 378 refuges to fishing. There are 568 refuges and 38 wetland management districts covering more than 150 million acres in the National Wildlife Refuge System. This proposal is part of a now-yearly review of access opportunities by the National Wildlife Refuge System.

This proposal comes as the USFWS is contemplating next steps for the regulation of lead ammunition and fishing tackle on USFWS lands. Seen as introductory step to future FWS action on the issue, the proposal only expands hunting and fishing opportunities at refuges that are currently or have previously phased-out the use of lead ammunition and fishing tackle. TWS is currently gathering information to inform comments on the proposed rule, and welcomes input from TWS members and units. Comments on the proposal are due to the Administration by August 8. *Staff Contact:* [Caroline Murphy](#)

House moves forward on FY 2023 funding – The House Appropriations Committee has made significant progress in drafting Fiscal Year 2023 [funding bills](#) over the past month, including those that would fund the [U.S. Department of the Interior](#) and the [U.S. Department of Agriculture](#). The bills propose several minimal funding increases for federal conservation programming, including for the [State and Tribal Wildlife Grants](#) program (\$74.36 million, +\$1.7 million) and the [National Wildlife Refuge System](#) (\$574 million, +\$55 million). These and other proposals in the House bill do not provide for adequate funding needs as identified by both [TWS](#) and the [Administration](#), but are a promising start as funding discussions begin in the Senate. With Congress’ Fourth of July recess underway and the August recess looming, limited days on the legislative calendar mean a continuing resolution is increasingly likely again this year. *Staff Contact:* [Caroline Murphy](#)

Updates from Headquarters

TWS releases new lead ammo and fishing tackle position statement – TWS Council has [approved](#) a new position statement on [lead in hunting ammunition and fishing tackle](#). The revised position statement continues to recognize the harmful effects of lead exposure on

wildlife, and conveys TWS support for the voluntary replacement of lead-based hunting ammunition and fishing tackle with non-lead products; support for educational opportunities, practices, and policies that promote the phase-out of lead; and support for human dimensions research into the use of lead hunting ammunition and fishing tackle. *Staff contact:* [Keith Norris](#)

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 Kelly O’Connor at koconnor@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 Kelly O’Connor at koconnor@wildlife.org.