



# The Wildlife Society's Conservation Affairs Network

December 2022, Volume 8, Issue 12

*After receiving this request from several TWS organization units, we have added all TWS Chapter and Section Presidents to the TWS CAN distribution list. If you would prefer to not receive the monthly TWS CAN newsletter, please reach out to Kelly (contact information at the bottom of this issue) to be removed from the distribution list.*

## Take Action!

### Recovering America's Wildlife Act continues towards passage – but we need your help! –

Thanks to the continuous work of TWS members and partners, the [Recovering America's Wildlife Act](#) continues on a positive trajectory on Capitol Hill. With conversations moving forward on a potential funding mechanism for the legislation being tied to cryptocurrency assets, bipartisan agreement is within reach.

The bill is now being considered for inclusion in the end-of-year funding package, but additional support is still needed to secure its adoption. Now is the final opportunity to make your voice heard this Congress. Please let TWS staff know if you are interested in participating in virtual meetings on behalf of your unit with members of Congress to build support for the bill. [This spreadsheet](#) includes a list of office targets and confirmed meetings; contact [Kelly O'Connor](#) if you're interested in attending a meeting or engaging with a member of Congress not listed on the spreadsheet. You can also consider sharing the below resources with your unit memberships:

- Look up your members' phone numbers using the [Contact Your Member feature on congress.gov](#) and voice your support for the bill using TWS' [Recovering phone call script](#). Log your calls to offices with TWS staff using this [form](#).
- Write messages of support for the Recovering America's Wildlife Act to your members of Congress using the [Alliance for America's Fish and Wildlife Action Center](#).
- Share your support for the legislation on social media using TWS' [Recovering America's Wildlife Act social media templates](#). Be sure to use #RecoverWildlife and tag The Wildlife Society (@thewildlifesociety on [Facebook](#) & [Instagram](#) and @wildlifesociety on [Twitter](#)).

Staff contact: [Kelly O'Connor](#)

## CAC Activities

**Maine chapter collaborates with UMaine students on tabling event for the Recovering America's Wildlife Act** – CAC members from the [Maine Chapter of The Wildlife Society](#) and students from the University of Maine coordinated a tabling event on campus to build support for the Recovering America's Wildlife Act. The event organizers adapted TWS' [social media templates](#) and [fact sheet](#) to create posters and handouts for their table. Participants spent the

*Increasing the Society's effectiveness through communication and collaboration*

day talking about the importance of the legislation with interested undergraduates on campus, including students from majors outside the natural sciences. CAC contact: [Kyle Smelter](#)

**Illinois chapter urges Senate action on the Recovering America's Wildlife Act** – The [Illinois Chapter of The Wildlife Society](#) sent letters to Senators [Durbin](#) and [Duckworth](#) asking them to support action for the Recovering America's Wildlife Act in the Senate. CAC contact: [Scott Meister](#)

*If your TWS organization unit is interested in sending similar requests for action to your members of Congress, you can get started using [TWS' template letter](#).*

**TWS units support the Recovering America's Wildlife Act in an Alliance for America's Fish and Wildlife sign-on letter** – A total of 9 TWS organization units, including the [Arizona](#), [Arkansas](#), [Illinois](#), [Maine](#), [Maryland-Delaware](#), [Nebraska](#), [New Mexico](#), [Pennsylvania](#), and [Texas](#) Chapters of The Wildlife Society, joined The Wildlife Society in asking Congress to pass the Recovering America's Wildlife Act by the end of 2022. The [sign-on letter](#) was led by the [Alliance for America's Fish and Wildlife](#), and was sent to majority and minority leaders in the U.S. House and Senate.

**Virginia chapter members join TWS staff to advocate for the Recovering America's Wildlife Act** – Members of the [Virginia Chapter of The Wildlife Society](#) and TWS staff participated in a meeting with Representative Jennifer Wexton's office to provide updates on, and request support for, the Recovering America's Wildlife Act. The participating Chapter members provided a crucial perspective on how RAWA will benefit wildlife and wildlife professionals in Virginia. CAC contact: [David Luther](#)

**CAN leadership opportunity in TWS Northeast Section** – The [Northeast Section of The Wildlife Society](#) is seeking a member interested in serving as the Section's CAC Chair. Section Chairs communicate policy engagement activities and issues of interest from across the section's jurisdiction to the section's board, provide coordination and support to chapter CACs, and meet every other month with TWS staff and other section CAC chairs to coordinate on regional and national policy issues. Staff contact: [Kelly O'Connor](#)

## Federal Updates

**Lesser prairie chicken listed under ESA** – The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service recently [announced Endangered Species Act](#) protections for two distinct population segments (DPS) of the lesser prairie chicken (*Tympanuchus pallidicinctus*), a grassland bird that has been the focus of conservation efforts for decades. The Northern DPS can be found in certain regions Texas, Oklahoma, Colorado, and Kansas, and was designated as threatened, while the Southern DPS, ranging from the Texas panhandle to New Mexico, received an endangered designation. The [final rule](#) will go into effect on Jan. 24, 2023. Staff contact: [Caroline Murphy](#)

**Northern long-eared bat uplisted to endangered** – The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service published a [final rule](#) reclassifying the Northern long-eared bat to endangered under the

Endangered Species Act (ESA). The species was originally listed as threatened back in 2015, but now faces an increased risk of extinction due to the rapid expansion of white-nose syndrome. This [upgraded listing](#) to endangered will nullify the regulations around take in the 4(d) rule of the ESA previously applied to the species, removing federal flexibility in managing human activities that result in harming or killing of northern long-eared bats. The final rule will go into effect on Jan. 30, 2023. *Staff contact:* [Caroline Murphy](#)

**Bald & Golden Eagle Protection Act Comment deadline extended** – The US Fish and Wildlife Service is [extending](#) the comment period on proposed [rule changes](#) to the implementation of permitting under the [Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act](#). The proposal aims to increase participation in the permitting process to improve compliance and bald and golden eagle conservation. The proposal includes the creation of general permitting programs for four activities: wind energy projects, power line infrastructure, disturbance of breeding bald eagles, and bald eagle nest take. TWS is currently reviewing the proposed rule, and welcomes input from TWS membership on its potential impacts to wildlifers and bald and golden eagle populations. Comments on the [proposed](#) rule are now due by December 29. *Staff contact:* [Caroline Murphy](#)

**Congress once again approaches funding deadline** – Congress has a self-imposed deadline of December 16 to finalize a government [funding package](#) for the remainder of [fiscal year 2023](#), which began in October. In what is now an all too familiar tale, no bipartisan congressional negotiations are occurring at present, meaning Congress will likely have to continue funding the federal government under current funding levels until at least December 23. All parties do not want consideration of a full-year package to be extended into the New Year, but agreement on top-line numbers that would allow for negotiations to begin has remained elusive. *Staff contact:* [Caroline Murphy](#)

## Updates from Headquarters

**TWS updates climate change and grazing position statements** – The Wildlife Society's governing Council recently [released](#) updated position statement on [Climate Change, Sustainability, and Wildlife](#) and [Rangeland Livestock Grazing](#). TWS' [position statements](#) are broad and topical messages on important wildlife issues that are part of TWS' suite of [policy engagement resources](#). The TWS Council Position Statements Committee reviews each statement no less than every 10 years to ensure continued relevance to the wildlife profession. *Staff contact:* [Caroline Murphy](#)

**Thank you to all TWS sections, chapters, and working groups for your engagement with TWS' 2023-2024 policy priorities** – TWS staff are currently in the process of reviewing the written and verbal feedback received on future policy priorities, and will provide updates as we move closer to a list of finalized priorities for 2023 and 2024. *Staff contact:* [Kelly O'Connor](#)

## 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](mailto: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](mailto:koconnor@wildlife.org).