



THE ALABAMA CHAPTER OF THE WILDLIFE SOCIETY

October 5, 2023

The Honorable Katie Britt
Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20003

Dear Senator Britt,

The Alabama Chapter of The Wildlife Society (ACTWS) is writing to request your co-sponsorship of the Recovering America's Wildlife Act (S.1149), introduced in March 2023 by Senators Martin Heinrich (D-NM) and Thom Tillis (R-NC). This legislation would provide state wildlife agencies and Tribes 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 ACTWS was formed in 1978 and has a current membership of approximately 125 wildlife professionals representing academia, state and federal agencies, non-governmental organizations and private industry. ACTWS, along with other professional societies and conservation organizations are excited to support this legislation.

Alabama ranks 5th in the country in plant and animal diversity, 1st in aquatic diversity and 3rd in the number of threatened and endangered animal species within our borders. The State of Alabama has 366 aquatic and terrestrial wildlife species of greatest conservation need (SGCN) as identified by the Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources in their congressionally mandated conservation action blueprint, known as the State Wildlife Action Plan (SWAP). The crawfish frog, green salamander, southeastern myotis, Bankhead darter and reticulated flatwoods salamander are just a few of the species identified as at risk of extinction and needing immediate research and/or conservation action.

Nationally, conservation efforts for these at-risk species are critically underfunded, only receiving about \$70 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 ACTWS support for this legislation, please feel free to contact our chapter at alabamatws@gmail.com.

Sincerely,

J. Allison Cochran

Allison Cochran

President, ACTWS

On behalf of the ACTWS Executive Board and Membership