



# The Wildlife Society's Conservation Affairs Network

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*The Wildlife Society's Conservation Affairs Network supports communication, collaboration, and coordination on policy engagement across our organization and participating chapters, sections, and working groups. The monthly CAN Newsletter highlights policy issues occurring at local, regional, and national levels, and provides opportunities for wildlife professionals to engage with those issues.*

## Engagement Opportunities

**Invite your members of Congress to the National Wildlife Refuge Expo and Capitol Hill Bison Day Reception** – The Wildlife Society and other member organizations in the Cooperative Alliance for Refuge Enhancement (CARE) will be hosting the National Wildlife Refuge Expo on 11/15/23 in Washington D.C. The Expo will highlight the value of the National Wildlife Refuge System, featuring interactive exhibits and presentations from U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service leadership and other members of Congress. Units interested in outreach with their state's congressional delegation can forward [this invitation](#) to office staff to request their participation in the Expo. On the same day, The Wildlife Society will be sponsoring the Wildlife Conservation Society's Capitol Hill Bison Day reception. This event is also open to members of Congress and their staff if units are interested in inviting their members to attend. *Staff contact:* [policy@wildlife.org](mailto:policy@wildlife.org)

**Continue outreach with members of Congress to support dedicated funding to conserve at-risk wildlife** – The Recovering America's Wildlife Act ([S. 1149](#)) needs more cosponsors to help build momentum toward time on the Senate floor. Outreach to Republican offices is especially valuable at this time, but any support is beneficial.

- If your Senator(s) have **already signed-on** as [cosponsors](#), consider sending them a thank-you letter using this [TWS template](#). If you don't see your Senator(s) on the official cosponsor roster, check their level of support on this [targeting spreadsheet](#); for Democratic Senators who have already committed to cosponsoring the legislation, consider sending a letter of thanks for their support.
- If your Senator(s) **have not already cosponsored** the legislation or indicated their commitment to supporting the bill, you can request their cosponsorship using this [TWS template letter](#).
- You can use TWS' updated [social media guidance](#) to post about the current version of the legislation on your unit's social media accounts.

For TWS member engagement:

- Share this [phone call script](#) with unit members and encourage them to call their senators to request cosponsorship of the bill (or thank any senators who have [cosponsored](#) the legislation).
- Encourage members to write to their Senators directly using this [Alliance for America's Fish and Wildlife action center](#).

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

Although we're waiting on bill text in the House, touches to House Republicans to emphasize the importance of this legislation are warranted and valuable. TWS policy staff is available to assist with outreach to House offices. *Staff contact:* [policy@wildlife.org](mailto:policy@wildlife.org)

## CAC Activities

**Alabama chapter requests support from Senators for the Recovering America's Wildlife Act** – The [Alabama Chapter of The Wildlife Society](#) submitted letters requesting cosponsorship of the Recovering America's Wildlife Act ([S. 1149](#)) to Senators [Britt](#) and [Tuberville](#). Both Senators have been high-priority targets for cosponsorship as TWS and partners in the Alliance for America's Fish and Wildlife look to build support for this legislation among Senate Republicans. Letters from the Chapter focused on the benefits of the legislation to the nearly 400 Species of Greatest Conservation Need in Alabama, which ranks 5th in the country in plant and animal diversity. *CAC contact:* [Ray Metzler](#)

## Federal Updates

**USFWS releases results of the 2022 National Survey of Fishing, Hunting, and Wildlife-Associated Recreation** – The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service recently published the results of the [2022 National Survey of Fishing, Hunting, and Wildlife-Associated Recreation](#). This national survey is conducted every five years and asks U.S. residents about outdoor recreation which specifically involves wildlife in some capacity. Wildlife watching, specifically bird watching, ranked the highest among wildlife-associated recreational activities reported by respondents in 2022; 148 million U.S. residents engaged in recreational wildlife watching in 2022. Additionally, 40 million U.S. residents participated in fishing and 14.4 million in hunting, an increase from the reported 11.5 million hunters in the 2017 survey. An approximate \$394 billion was spent by outdoor recreationists on equipment, travel, licenses, and fees in 2022 according to survey results.

**TWS staff conduct outreach with members of Congress to support policy priorities** – The Wildlife Society, as a member of the Cooperative Alliance for Refuge Enhancement, has met with multiple Senate offices this past month to discuss challenges facing the National Wildlife Refuge System (NWRS) and funding requests for the NWRS via the annual U.S. Congressional appropriations process. As a Council-approved policy priority for the 118th Congress, TWS supports adequate funding for U.S. federal land management efforts, with emphasis placed on operations and maintenance accounts within the NWRS. More information on TWS' engagement with the U.S. Congressional appropriations process can be found [here](#). *Staff contact:* [policy@wildlife.org](mailto:policy@wildlife.org)

**TWS supports EPA pilot program to address cleanup of abandoned mines** – TWS joined with other members of the American Wildlife Conservation Partners (AWCP) to sign-on to a [letter](#) in support of the *Good Samaritan Remediation of Abandoned Hardrock Mines Act of 2023* ([S. 2781](#)). The legislation would establish a new pilot program administered by the EPA to permit remediation of abandoned hardrock mine sites by Good Samaritans. The letter cites the tremendous opportunity for cleanups to restore the productivity of abandoned mines, not only

improving the health of wetlands and downstream fisheries, but also regenerating wildlife habitat on de-vegetated abandoned mine lands. *Staff contact:* [policy@wildlife.org](mailto:policy@wildlife.org)

**TWS supports updates to National Wildlife Refuge System planning policies** – TWS submitted [comments](#) to the US Fish and Wildlife Service supporting four updated planning policies for the National Wildlife Refuge System (NWRS). The comments included support for increased considerations for climate change in NWRS planning, as well as tribal and state collaboration in the updated policies. Additional updates to NWR planning policies include considerations around the broader landscape context of refuge units, land protection, comprehensive conservation plans, and step down planning processes. *Staff contact:* [policy@wildlife.org](mailto:policy@wildlife.org)

**Efforts to mitigate WOTUS revisions underway via the Clean Water Act of 2023** – Representative Rick Larsen (WA) recently introduced [H.R. 5983](#) to clarify the scope of "protected water resources" under the original Clean Water Act. The introduction of this legislation comes in response to the *Sackett v. EPA* SCOTUS decision which required the EPA to [redefine Waters of The United States](#) (WOTUS) under the Clean Water Act. The Wildlife Society has [previously opposed](#) reductions to wetland protections via changes to the definition of WOTUS. *Staff contact:* [policy@wildlife.org](mailto:policy@wildlife.org)

**Colorado gray wolf web article correction** – After consulting with wildlife professionals in Colorado, TWS updated an [article](#) originally published in late September focusing on efforts to reintroduce gray wolves in the state. Corrections specifically address the species' listing status and scenarios for permitted lethal take. *Staff contact:* [policy@wildlife.org](mailto:policy@wildlife.org)

## Updates from Headquarters

**TWS seeking applicants for Spring 2024 Joe Burns Memorial Wildlife Policy Internship** – The Wildlife Society has an opening for a paid wildlife policy intern with an interest in federal natural resource policy issues. The internship appointment will be from January-June 2024. This is an excellent opportunity for students or recent graduates to learn more about wildlife policy and non-profit organization engagement in the policy arena. Details on how to apply can be found in the [position announcement](#). Applications are due November 12, 2023. *Staff contact:* [Keith Norris](#)

**CAN communications and TWS policy assistance November through January** – Please note that Kelly O'Connor will be on extended leave beginning this month and continuing through the end of January. CAC contacts and other members requiring assistance with CAN business and other policy engagement needs can reach out to TWS policy staff at [policy@wildlife.org](mailto:policy@wildlife.org) during this time.

## 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 [policy@wildlife.org](mailto:policy@wildlife.org).