



The Wildlife Society's Conservation Affairs Network

January 2024, Volume 10, Issue 1

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

Urge your Representative in the House to join the Bipartisan Congressional Refuge Caucus – The Congressional Wildlife Refuge Caucus was recently registered in the House of Representatives by Congressman Thompson. The Caucus has 7 co-chairs and currently has 39 total members. The Caucus can be a great avenue for promoting beneficial legislation, including funding, and discussions to address the challenges facing the USFWS National Wildlife Refuge System.

- If your representative is already a member of the caucus, consider sending them a thank you letter using this [TWS template](#).
- If your representative has not already joined the caucus, you can use this [TWS template](#) to request their consideration.

Staff Contact: Policy@wildlife.org

Remind members of Congress to support dedicated funding to conserve at-risk wildlife in the New Year – The Recovering America's Wildlife Act ([S. 1149](#)) needs more cosponsors to help build momentum toward time on the Senate floor. Any new or reinforced support is beneficial, and outreach to Republican offices is especially valuable at this time.

- If your Senators have **already signed-on** as [cosponsors](#), consider sending them a thank-you letter using this [TWS template](#). If you don't see one of your Senator(s) on the official cosponsor roster, check their level of support on this [targeting spreadsheet](#); some Democratic Senators have already committed to cosponsoring the legislation once more Republicans have signed on; if that is the case, 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 to thank any Senators who have [cosponsored](#) the legislation.

Increasing the Society's effectiveness through communication and collaboration

- Encourage members to write to their Senators directly using this [Alliance for America's Fish and Wildlife action center](#).

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

CAC Activities

Southwest Section submits written testimony to the Wild Horse and Burro Advisory Board – [The Southwest Section](#) of The Wildlife Society submitted [written testimony](#) to the National Wild Horse and Burro Advisory Board, a Federal Advisory Committee serving the Bureau of Land Management and U.S. Forest Service. The letter emphasized the negative effects of feral horse populations on native wildlife populations in the region. The arid nature of the southwest makes the region increasingly vulnerable to feral horses degrading the landscape. The Southwest Section recommended that populations be reduced to the appropriate management level. *CAC Contact:* [John Kinsey](#) & [Nicole Tatman](#)

Alaska Chapter provides comments to the Bureau of Land Management on The Ambler Road Project – [The Alaska Chapter](#) of The Wildlife Society submitted [written comments](#) to the Bureau of Land Management Fairbanks District Office regarding the draft supplemental environmental impact statement for the Ambler Road Project. The letter highlights the potential negative impacts the project will have on native birds and bats such as the gray-headed chickadee and little brown bat. The potential impacts for moose and caribou are also discussed, particularly the lack of best available science used in the draft supplemental environmental impact statement. Lastly, the Alaska Chapter argues that the economic advantages of the project do not outweigh the environmental impacts, and that the externalities would negatively affect wildlife, Indigenous people's subsistence, and public outdoor recreation. *CAC Contact:* [Cyndi Wardlow](#)

Federal Updates

TWS Supports the Migratory Birds of the Americas Conservation Enhancement Act – In a [letter](#) to Representatives María Elvira Salazar (R-FL), Rick Larsen (D-WA), Dave Joyce (R-OH), and Mary Peltola (D-AK), the original sponsors of the bill, TWS joined partners to express support for the Migratory Birds of the Americas Conservation Enhancements Act of 2023 ([H. R. 4389](#)). This bill would increase authorized funding for the [Neotropical Migratory Birds Conservation Act](#) (NMBCA) from \$5.1M to \$10M by fiscal year 2028. TWS [previously requested](#) \$9.9M for the NMBCA for fiscal year 2024, aligning with the administration's request, and supports efforts to increase appropriations for this program. *Staff Contact:* Policy@wildlife.org

TWS submits oral and written testimony to the Wild Horse & Burro Advisory Board – The Wildlife Society submitted written testimony to the [National Wild Horse and Burro Advisory Board](#), which is a federal advisory committee that provides recommendations to the U.S. Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management on managing legally designated "wild" horses and

burros on federal rangelands. The [written testimony](#) was submitted to be considered at the advisory board meeting in Phoenix last December. The letter emphasizes the need to aggressively reduce on-range populations through roundups, and the complete removal of free-roaming horses from refuges, parks and all natural areas where they are not permitted to be under federal law. Regarding off-range pastures, TWS advocates to limit their growth in order to protect native grasslands. TWS also expresses concern in the testimony about short-term fertility control being prioritized over roundups, as the effort is not achieving timely reductions of on-range populations. TWS Government Affairs Associate Tom Klein reaffirmed these points through oral testimony at the advisory board meeting. *Staff Contact:* [Tom Klein](#)

Biden signs the bipartisan Duck Stamp Modernization Act of 2023 into law – The [bill](#) allows the federal government and states to issue fully electronic stamps for the entirety of a waterfowl hunting season. Electronic duck stamps have the potential to streamline purchase, and make duck hunting more accessible. Physical duck stamps will still be available. More than 8 million acres of wetland habitat has been conserved through the [Federal Duck Stamp](#) program. *Staff Contact:* Policy@Wildlife.org

Colorado Releases ten wolves in first phase of reintroduction – Colorado Parks and Wildlife [released](#) two batches of five wolves west of the Continental Divide. The wolves were captured in Oregon and translocated to Colorado. The state's wildlife agency met its December 31 deadline to kick-off a voter-approved [ballot measure](#) from 2020 to release 30-50 wolves in the state over the next five years. Colorado Parks and Wildlife announced continued efforts to obtain animals for a total of 15 wolves to be reintroduced by March 2024. *Staff Contact:* Policy@wildlife.org

Updates from Headquarters

Joe Burns Memorial Wildlife Policy Internship transition – We're pleased to welcome our Spring 2024 Policy Intern Hannah Henry. Hannah was the 2023 recipient of the Ronald F. Labisky Graduate Fellowship in Wildlife Policy, and is currently concluding her master's work at Auburn University. Our Fall 2023 Policy Intern Tom Klein remains on the policy team in a temporary role as TWS' Government Affairs Associate.

CAN communications and TWS policy assistance through January – Please note that Kelly O'Connor will be on extended leave 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 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.

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.