

11 April, 2024

The Honorable Richard Durbin
711 Hart Senate Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Durbin,

The Illinois Chapter of The Wildlife Society 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.

The Illinois Chapter of The Wildlife Society is an organization of over 100 wildlife professionals throughout Illinois who actively work to study, manage, and conserve wildlife and their habitats through science-based management and conservation.

Illinois alone has 421 Species in Greatest Conservation Need identified by the Illinois Department of Natural Resources in the State Wildlife Action Plan. This includes species like the Northern Bobwhite. While it was once common to see and hear these small quail throughout much of Illinois, populations have declined significantly over the last several decades due to habitat loss.

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 Illinois Chapter of The Wildlife Society's support for this legislation, please feel free to reach out to Claire Johnson, our chapter's Conservation Affairs Representative, at 217-979-6343.

Sincerely,



Kirk Stodola, President
Illinois Chapter of The Wildlife Society

Members of the Illinois Chapter of The Wildlife Society who serve as professional staff of the Illinois Department of Natural Resources are recommended to recuse themselves from participating in this manner.