

The Wildlife Society's Conservation Affairs Network

September 2024, Volume 10, Issue 9

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.

On the Horizon

The Conservation Affairs Network Goes to Washington – This year's annual conference in Baltimore (October 19-23) offers members easy access to Washington DC. We've confirmed plans for a field trip for CAN participants to the Capitol on **October 23**. Please keep an eye on your inbox for more details and instructions on how to sign up for the trip. *Staff contact:* [Kelly O'Connor](#)

TWS' 2025-2026 policy priorities – Every other year TWS solicits feedback from unit, working group, and Conservation Affairs Committee (CAC) leaders on the most important policy topics for TWS to engage with during the next session of Congress. The process to develop TWS' policy priorities for 2025 and 2026 will begin in October, making this next month the perfect time to discuss critical legislative and regulatory issues facing wildlife and wildlife professionals. Appropriate TWS policy priorities will directly affect wildlife professionals and their work, have decision-making processes based at the national level, and revolve around issues in which TWS can fill a unique role. More information on identifying and defining policy priorities can be found in [Section 2.3 of the CAN Policy Toolkit](#). Please reach out to Kelly if your unit or working group needs assistance engaging with this process. *Staff contact:* [Kelly O'Connor](#)

CAC Activities

Texas Chapter supports CWD surveillance zones, criticizes Commission's inaction – The [Texas Chapter of The Wildlife Society](#) (TCTWS) recently expressed strong support for the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department's (TPWD) proposed surveillance zones to detect Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD). In her [testimony](#) at the August 22nd [TPWD Commission meeting](#), TCTWS President Mary Pearl Meuth emphasized the importance of these zones for early detection and containment, calling them a necessary step forward. Despite this support, the Commission ultimately decided against establishing surveillance zones in several key counties, a move that contradicts the CWD Management Plan and may lead to reduced testing and increased disease spread. This decision reflects a concerning reluctance to fully address the CWD threat, with the Commission instead focusing on limiting perceived impacts on landowners near breeder facilities. TCTWS remains committed to collaborating with TPWD but urges the Commission to reconsider its approach and prioritize science-based management strategies to protect Texas's wildlife. More information about CWD in Texas, current disease spread, and

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policy actions supported by TCTWS can be found in [this StoryMap](#). CAC contact: [Mary Pearl Meuth](#)

Leadership opportunity in Section Conservation Affairs Committee – The Northwest Section seeks a member interested in serving as Section Conservation Affairs Committee Chair. Section CAC 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. Please reach out to Kelly if you have any questions about this opportunity or are interested in serving as a Section Chair. *Staff contact:* [Kelly O’Connor](#)

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 koconnor@wildlife.org

Federal Updates

BLM announces next steps for implementation of Public Lands Rule – The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) [released](#) several updates related to the implementation of its Public Lands Rule. TWS provided [comments](#) to the BLM to inform the development of the Public Lands Rule in 2023. One announcement was the intent to form a Federal Advisory Committee (FAC) to inform the implementation of the rule. The BLM anticipates publishing a call for nominations to the FAC in the near future.

The BLM also published a series of guidance documents intended to support consistent implementation of the Public Lands Rule across all of its field offices. Those guidance documents cover topics including restoration planning and prioritization, land health standards, and restoration and mitigation leasing.

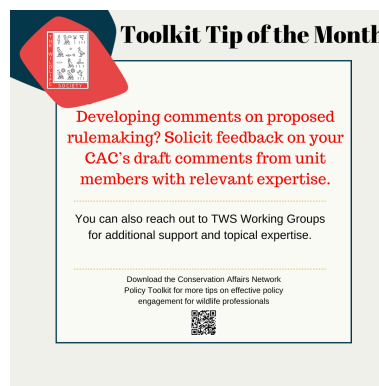
EPA releases final Herbicide Strategy to address and limit potential impacts of herbicides on endangered species – The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) recently [finalized](#) its [Herbicide Strategy](#) (Strategy), the agency’s first major strategy for implementing protections for species listed under the U.S. Endangered Species Act. The Strategy – which applies only to conventional herbicides – introduces a framework by which the EPA will evaluate which protections to apply to reduce herbicide exposure to over 900 federally listed species. The EPA also included measures to minimize impacts to farmers and other pesticide users resulting from implementation of the final Strategy. TWS [supports](#) measures to evaluate the relative costs and benefits of the use of toxic chemical compounds like conventional herbicides, and, where appropriate, reduce their release into the environment.

Markup scheduled for Wildlife Movement Through Partnerships Act – The House Committee on Natural Resources, Subcommittee on Water, Wildlife and Fisheries will meet on September 10th for a hearing on the Wildlife Movement Through Partnerships Act ([H.R. 8836](#)). The legislation is intended to bolster programs established under [Secretarial Order 3362](#),

“Improving Habitat Quality in Western Big Game Winter Range and Migration Corridors”, by codifying the Order and providing additional funding to support collaborative management of critical migration corridors. TWS [supported](#) the proposal for companion legislation in the Senate when it was announced earlier this year.

Proposed final Western Solar Plan will open 31 million acres of public lands across 11 states to utility-scale solar energy development – The BLM [published](#) its proposed Final Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement for Utility-Scale Solar Energy Development (PEIS) at the end of August. TWS [submitted comments](#) on the draft PEIS in collaboration with relevant chapters, sections, and working groups earlier this year, emphasizing the need to minimize negative impacts on wildlife associated with solar energy development. The agency noted the “substantial public input” that informed the final PEIS in its recent [announcement](#), some of which prompted additional measures to protect wildlife habitats and big game migration corridors and to prioritize development near existing transmission structures or on previously disturbed lands.

Questions on any items covered in this month's Federal Updates can be sent to [Kelly O'Connor](#)



Tools & Resources

Big Game Guidelines for Utility Scale Photovoltaic Solar Development – The Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership has released [guidelines](#) on siting solar energy development for western big game species to supplement existing state-specific siting guidelines and best management practices (see [this table](#) from the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies for a list of current state-specific resources on solar energy development). This resource addresses direct and indirect impacts on wildlife resulting from solar development, avoidance and mitigation measures, and future research needs.

Updates from Headquarters

New TWS staff members will support communications and policy engagement – TWS [welcomes](#) staff writer Megan Radke, digital content manager Katie Perkins, and government relations contractor Christy Plumer to the headquarters team. Megan began her new role in August writing web articles and developing content for The Wildlife Professional. Katie and Christy will both begin their work with TWS in early September.

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Register now for TWS' 31st annual conference – Join us in Baltimore for TWS' 31st annual conference from October 19-23. [Registration is now open](#). This year's conference will be held at the [Hilton Baltimore Inner Harbor Inn](#), with closing festivities at the [National Aquarium](#). TWS policy staff will offer a [workshop](#) on strategies for policy engagement on Monday the 21st from 1-5 pm. We hope to see you there!



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