

RECOVERING AMERICA'S WILDLIFE ACT

June 2022

H.R. 2773, the bipartisan Recovering America's Wildlife Act (RAWA), introduced by Rep. Debbie Dingell (D-Mich.) on April 22, 2021, will amend the Pittman-Robertson Wildlife Act to provide states, territories, and Tribes with additional federal funding to manage wildlife species of greatest conservation need.

THE WORLD IS FACING AN UNPRECEDENTED LOSS OF WILDLIFE.

Roughly one-third of America's wildlife are at an increased risk of extinction. Wildlife populations face numerous threats, including habitat loss and fragmentation, climate change, invasive species, and emerging diseases.

Healthy and diverse wildlife populations provide many environmental benefits, including improved water quality, pest control, fire mitigation, and shoreline protection. Wildlife are also crucial to outdoor recreation, hunting, and angling. Many communities rely on wildlife for food or cultural value.

State, territorial, and Tribal governments carry out most wildlife management and conservation through their State Wildlife Action Plans, but these plans depend on consistent, reliable federal funding. Currently, federal funding sources, like the Pittman-Robertson Wildlife Act, are exceedingly inadequate.

AMERICA'S WILDLIFE CRISIS BY THE NUMBERS:

- Bird populations have declined almost 30% in the U.S. and Canada since 1970.
- Over 40% of America's freshwater fish are at risk of extinction.
- State agencies have identified 12,000 species of wildlife in need of conservation assistance.

HOW WILL RECOVERING AMERICA'S WILDLIFE ACT HELP PROTECT AND CONSERVE WILDLIFE?

RAWA will amend the Pittman-Robertson Wildlife Act to provide an additional **\$1.3 billion per year** to assist states, territories, and Tribes in conserving, restoring, and protecting wildlife and their habitats. The bill also establishes a **\$97.5 million** annual noncompetitive Tribal Wildlife Conservation and Restoration grant program to assist Tribes in carrying out wildlife conservation and habitat restoration activities.

This much-needed funding will support the implementation of State Wildlife Action Plans and other wildlife management efforts. Supporting these efforts has several benefits:

- **Protect threatened and endangered species.** At least 15% of RAWA funding must be spent on species that are listed under the Endangered Species Act or are considered threatened or endangered under tribal law.
- **Make wildlife conservation more effective and cost-efficient.** RAWA funding will help states, territories, and Tribes put conservation measures in place for species before they become threatened or endangered, making species protection less difficult and less costly. RAWA will also provide much-needed funding for non-hunted species.
- **Address climate change by building more resilient ecosystems.** State Wildlife Action Plans often include habitat restoration projects (e.g., removing invasive species, fighting wildlife disease) that simultaneously benefit forest, watershed, and coastal health. These improvements help make ecosystems more resilient to severe weather events caused by climate change, including wildfires, hurricanes, and drought.
- **Boost the outdoor economy.** By supporting wildlife conservation, RAWA funds will boost our \$887 billion outdoor economy, which already supports over 7.6 million jobs and is fueled by more than 100 million American wildlife enthusiasts, hunters, anglers, birders, and hikers. A small portion of the funds will also support wildlife education.