

# ANNUAL REPORT 2019



ASSOCIATION of  
FISH & WILDLIFE  
AGENCIES



A person is crouching on the right side of the frame, holding a fishing rod that extends diagonally across the upper half of the image. The person is wearing a dark jacket and blue jeans. The ground is covered with dry, brown leaves and patches of green grass. In the foreground, there is a calm body of water reflecting the surrounding environment. The background is a soft-focus landscape with trees and a misty atmosphere. The text "Enhanced Conservation through Broader Engagement" is overlaid in white, sans-serif font on the upper left portion of the image.

# Enhanced Conservation through Broader Engagement







# PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



Hunting and fishing have identified who I am from an early age. I still remember sitting in Barney's Barbershop listening in awe to all of the hunting stories being bantered about. My professional goal earlier in my career was to be a conservation officer in South Dakota. It is almost unbelievable after all these years that I am not only the Secretary of the South Dakota Department of Game, Fish and Parks, but also have the extraordinary honor of being the President of the Association of Fish & Wildlife Agencies.

Now, as President, I have pledged to maintain a high level of excellence and a commitment to advance the conservation legacy the Association has established. This is a crucial time for state agencies as we work to maintain relevancy while focusing on the next generation of outdoor enthusiasts, habitat, and being good stewards of fish and wildlife resources.

The relevancy of fish and wildlife conservation is one of the most important challenges our members are facing today. In 2019, in partnership with the Wildlife Management Institute, the Association published the Fish and Wildlife Relevancy Roadmap, a practical guide that state, provincial and territorial fish and wildlife conservation agencies can use to overcome barriers to broader relevance, public engagement and support. The document is a bright star to assist our members in creating broader public support.

In 2019 we overcame a huge milestone with the Recovering America's Wildlife Act passing through the House Committee on Natural Resources. This is the single most impactful conservation bill in a generation, providing needed conservation funding for at-risk species. What an incredible opportunity this would be if made into law!

In the upcoming year, the Association will be updating their Strategic Plan to meet the changing needs of the Association and of our members. This Plan will act as a high-level roadmap to guide the efforts of the Association as we respond to new and on-going issues of the day.

It is an exciting time to be working with the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies. The future holds so many opportunities to enhance conservation through broader engagement. Working together we have a much brighter future.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kelly R Hepler". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Kelly R. Hepler  
President



Mule deer fawn

# EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

It is probably too easy or too tempting for the head of any organization to overdo it when reflecting on accomplishments for, or strategic impacts from, a previous year's work. But here goes — 2019 was big, momentous, and pivotal for national policy and legislative priorities.

The Pittman-Robertson Modernization Act became law. This enables funding for a 21st century toolbox that includes new outreach and marketing funding opportunities for hunting and recreational shooting R3 initiatives. Chronic Wasting Disease was elevated to the vital management issue of our day that it is. There was substantive discussion about the disease within the Nation's Capital and the halls of the Administration.

Recovering America's Wildlife Act (RAWA) was voted out of the House Natural Resources Committee with bi-partisan support. This is the third congress with a RAWA and the first time such a bill has advanced this far in the legislative process. I hope, by the time you read this, there has been affirmative action by the full House and a strong path forward in the Senate. On a related note, it is also no small outcome that the Association adopted a Relevancy Roadmap in the past year. This sets the stage for constructive engagement — telling the story of your work and its benefits to an American's quality of life — with new constituents and customers in states, provinces, and territories.

All of this work comes at the pivotal moment of developing a new strategic plan in the year ahead, coupled with tactical national science and landscape conservation priorities. The Association is poised to lead from the front on such important initiatives.

None of this work... period... would have been possible without the amazing intellectual, political, and financial contributions of a host of member organizations. Thanks to all for that.

Regards,



Ronald J. Regan  
Executive Director



Hunting in Nebraska



# ALLIANCE FOR AMERICA'S FISH & WILDLIFE CAMPAIGN

Several milestones were reached this year in the campaign to advance the Recovering America's Wildlife Act (H.R.3742). From the initial leadership and recommendations of the Blue Ribbon Panel on Sustaining America's Diverse Fish & Wildlife Resources, a committed and formidable national partnership has emerged to build support for the bill. The Alliance for America's Fish & Wildlife has expanded from the original Blue Ribbon Panel membership, totaling over 80 organizations and businesses across the country representing a diversity of stakeholders all united by the commitment to securing dedicated funding for proactive fish and wildlife conservation. See more at [www.OurNatureUSA.com](http://www.OurNatureUSA.com). This partnership led the charge to once again secure our champions Representatives Dingell (D-MI) and Fortenberry (R-NE) to reintroduce the Recovering America's Wildlife Act in July 2019 and has driven the campaign to where it finished the year with 164 bipartisan cosponsors. For the first time this bill includes a tribal title that would secure dedicated funding for tribal fish and wildlife managers to do the important conservation work they oversee in partnership with states and other stakeholders.

Together this fall we navigated a hearing in the Water, Oceans and Wildlife Subcommittee of the House Committee on Natural Resources in October where the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service helpfully went on record in support of the intent of the bill. On Thursday, December 5, the Recovering America's Wildlife Act (H.R.3742) passed through the House Committee on Natural Resources with a vote of 26-6 for passage. The bill passed as an amendment in the nature of a substitute, and a summary of the changes to the bill language is available on the Alliance page of the AFWA website. The same bipartisan spirit that has advanced the campaign to this point was demonstrated in the

vote for committee passage with seven Republicans and 19 Democrats voting "yes." This is a huge milestone for the campaign and a strong signal to Congress that this bill is a priority and has a solid chance of passing this Congress. Now that the bill has been passed out of committee, the stage is set for the final step in the U.S. House for the legislation, a full vote on the House floor sometime in early 2020. This sends a strong signal to the Senate that this bill has momentum and the strong bipartisan support needed to carry it across the finish line.

In another first for the campaign, 27 state Governors went on record submitting letters of support of the Recovering America's Wildlife Act and the many benefits to their states of its implementation. And a 2019 State of the Birds report jointly released by the North American Bird Conservation Initiative and the Alliance for America's Fish & Wildlife focused on the Recovering America's Wildlife Act as a critical part of the solution to stemming the bird species declines that have led to the loss of 3 billion birds since 1970. That can be found at [www.stateofthebirds.org/2019](http://www.stateofthebirds.org/2019).

We would not be where we are today without the impressive and diverse partnership amassed around the concepts of creating a sustainable funding stream to help at-risk fish and wildlife and helping state agencies and partners maintain relevancy to a changing demographic developed by the Blue Ribbon Panel. The momentum is building, and the conditions are right to enter the history books with the passage of this game changing legislation this Congress.





Pictured from left to right: Ed Carter (former AFWA President), Jeff Crane (Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation CEO), Rep. Debbie Dingell (D-MI), Rep. Jeff Fortenberry (R-NE), Colin O'Mara (President/CEO National Wildlife Federation)



Northern diamondback terrapin



# LEGISLATIVE AND GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS



Barred owl



# INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

## Growing our International Impact

The most impactful meeting in 2019 for the sustainable use of wildlife was the 18th meeting of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) Conference of the Parties. The CITES Technical Work Group represented the state fish and wildlife agencies and where applicable the Provinces and Territories. AFWA's International Relations Committee Co-chair, Rick Jacobson served as the state representative on the U.S. Delegation. A record 140 documents proposing new measures and policies on international trade were considered along with 57 proposals to amend the species listed in Appendix I and II. Beyond the extensive agenda and the decisions, serious concerns were raised about the direction CITES is headed regarding declining support for legal and sustainable use and trade. Highlighting this issue, eight African nations stated that they would not be bound by a controversial decision to list giraffes in Appendix II.

The Association became a partner of the Convention on Biological Diversity's Advisory Committee on Subnational Governments (AC). The Convention promotes the conservation of biological diversity and



Florida softshell turtle

its sustainable use. The AC is a permanent structure officially recognized by the Convention that aims to bring the voice of subnational governments to the Convention. The Province of Quebec is a member and coordinates the AC in cooperation with Regions4, a network of subnational governments.

Patuxent hike





# GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS & CONGRESSIONAL ADVOCACY



The 116<sup>th</sup> Congress began 2019 with a bang and set the stage for a productive year in Congress for fish and wildlife conservation legislation. In January, Congress commenced with the Republican Party holding the majority in the Senate and the House of Representatives flipping to a Democratic majority. With new Congressional leadership and new members came changes in committee priorities, composition, staff, and subcommittee organization. The Association and its partners took this opportunity to educate new Hill staff and Members of Congress and help them understand the roles, responsibilities, authorities, and conservation impacts of state fish and wildlife agencies as well as the interests of state constituents and the priorities of our fish and wildlife conservation community. As a result, the relevancy of our issues in Congress was elevated, and we were able to advance key legislative priorities at an unprecedented rate.

## Empowering States to Reconnect People with Hunting, Nature and Reach New Constituents

After just falling short of passage in previous sessions, the *Modernizing the Pittman-Robertson Fund for Tomorrow's Needs Act* (H.R.877/S.2092, P.L. 116-94) was signed into law on December 20 as part of the FY2020 federal appropriations omnibus. The permanent enactment of this legislation fulfilled a longstanding legislative priority for the Association and was made possible by working collaboratively with our partners in the sportsmen's conservation community. Together, we strategically educated members of Congress and their staff, helping them understand the need, value, and public service benefits that could be derived from this bill. This represents a crucial update to the current statute, clarifying that a state's basic and advanced hunter education funds may be used for recruitment, retention, and reactivation (R3) of hunters

and recreational target shooters, including public relations efforts and range construction. Additionally, up to \$5 million is provided to the Multistate Conservation Grant Program beginning FY2020 for R3 activities. This will enable states to forge connections with new segments of the public while reconnecting enthusiasts with the outdoors through new recreation and hunting opportunities. The enhanced ability to communicate and educate hunters, recreational target shooters, and the public will help drive home the relevancy and benefits of states' wildlife management actions to all Americans and help inform them of important issues such as chronic wasting disease, new hunting and outdoor recreation opportunities, and more.





## Working to Grow Funding for Key Conservation Programs

While Congress twice passed continuing resolutions to maintain funding for government operations, the final omnibus packages for FY2020 were signed by President Trump on December 20. We were pleased to see the new budget represents a \$437 million increase from the previous year for the Interior Department and related agencies, under which many programs vital to state conservation efforts are funded. Many appropriations provisions that the Association successfully lobbied for, included but is not limited to, \$24 million for U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) Fish and Wildlife Cooperative Research Units (23% increase from FY2019), \$67.57 million for State and Tribal Wildlife Grants, \$46 million for the North American Wetlands Conservation Fund, \$1.2 million to the Aquatic Animal Drug Approval Partnership, and \$9 million for chronic wasting disease of which \$5 million is for state departments of wildlife and agriculture, just to name a few. The Association hopes to continue this positive funding trend and will be working with our state agency members as well as regional and non-governmental organization (NGO) partners to educate Congress on our communities' federal appropriations priorities.

## Positioning National Fish Habitat Partnerships and North American Wetlands for Success

Two of the Association's long-running, bipartisan legislative priorities, the *National Fish Habitat Conservation Through Partnerships Act* (H.R.1747, H.R.925, S.3051) and the *North American Wetlands Conservation Extension Act* (H.R.925, S.261) are poised for enactment early in 2020. Each piece of legislation passed the House first before being rolled into the *America's Conservation Enhancement Act* (S.3051), which passed the Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works (EPW) by unanimous consent in mid-December. The *ACE Act* also includes many other fish and wildlife conservation provisions that are important to state agencies and our partners. Codification of the National Fish Habitat Partnership program would represent the culmination of 13 years of legislative



effort since its inception in 2006. Both programs are partnership-based conservation programs that restore and enhance fish and wildlife populations and their habitats.

## Fighting Chronic Wasting Disease

Before adjourning for the holidays, the Senate Committee on EPW passed by unanimous consent the *ACE Act* (S.3051), which included provisions for a new Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) Task Force (TF) led by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service). The TF will collaborate with foreign governments; develop recommendations on prevention practices, research priorities, and management strategies for the disease; and provide opportunities to leverage non-federal resources. The TF would include representatives of the Service, USGS, U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), Tribes, NGOs, and up to two Governor-appointed representatives from each state that has detected CWD as well as those that have not detected CWD and have taken prevention measures. The legislation provides opportunities for cooperative agreements with the states and includes the CWD Transmission in Cervidae Resource Study language from the *CWD Transmission Study in Cervidae Act* (S.382, H.R.837). The Association played a key role in crafting these pieces of CWD legislation, and we will press the House to expedite passage of the *ACE Act* in 2020.





## Reauthorizing the Motorboat Fuel Tax to Fund the Sport Fish Restoration Program

Every five years in conjunction with reauthorization of the Transportation bill comes the need to reauthorize Wallop-Breaux, otherwise known as the Sport Fish Restoration and Boating Safety Trust Fund (Trust Fund), which captures the federal fuel taxes associated with recreational motorboats and small engines, directing it to the Trust Fund to be apportioned to states via the Sport Fish Restoration Program and the U.S. Coast Guard's Recreational Boating Safety Program. Together, these fuel taxes equate to about 67% of the FY2018 receipts to the Trust Fund. The Association led and worked with members of the Angling and Boating Alliance (ABA) to develop a consensus reauthorization position, which is reflected in the bipartisan *Sport Fish Restoration and Recreational Boating Safety Act of 2019* (H.R.4828), introduced on October 23. The ABA will shepherd the bill through the reauthorization process in 2020 as it becomes part of the larger reauthorization effort for the Transportation law (P.L. 114-94) that expires on September 30, 2020.

## Enhancing Wildlife Migration Corridor Connectivity Through Transportation Legislation

As step one of the Transportation law reauthorization effort in the Senate, the *America's Transportation Infrastructure Act of 2019* (S.2302) passed the Committee on EPW by unanimous consent in August. The bill includes a title on climate change, funding for Forest Service Legacy Roads and Trails, provisions for wildlife-vehicle collision research, a new voluntary data integration pilot program, an invasive plant elimination program, and a wildlife crossing safety pilot program. The Association co-hosted a webinar with the National Wildlife Federation for our committees to provide an opportunity to review and discuss these potentially beneficial and game-changing provisions, which could have landscape level benefits to maintaining, enhancing, and reestablishing aquatic and terrestrial habitat connectivity.

## Improving Farm Bill Implementation

Throughout 2019, AFWA's Agricultural Conservation Committee and its working groups worked in cooperation with our nongovernment conservation partners and USDA to begin implementation of the *Agriculture Improvement Act of 2018* (P.L. 115-334). The 2018 Farm Bill allocates \$29.2 billion to voluntary conservation programs that provide state fish and wildlife agencies and the broader conservation community with an opportunity to work with farmers, ranchers, and partners to improve fish and wildlife habitat and increase public access on private lands. Through the rulemaking process, USDA is implementing substantive changes to each conservation program and providing new opportunities and challenges for state agencies as partners in program delivery.

Beginning in the fall of 2019, USDA began releasing rules and regulations to implement changes in the 2018 Farm Bill. At each step of the way, the Agricultural Conservation Committee and its working groups have worked to engage USDA through meetings and formal letters to encourage the Department to align program delivery with state agencies' priorities and on-the-ground expertise.



Maryland farm at sunset

## Increasing Relevancy of Fish & Wildlife in Clean Water Act Implementation

Over the last year the Association weighed in on two separate proposals from the Administration that seek to amend the implementation and scope of the Clean Water Act (CWA). In response to the proposed rulemaking to redefine the scope of "Waters of the United States" (WOTUS) then AFWA President Ed Carter selected a working group of state agency experts representing a geographically diverse cross section of



states to discuss the proposed rule and its potential effects on state fish and wildlife agency operations and the resources they are entrusted to manage. This group had multiple detailed discussions surrounding the proposed rule, individual state commentary and analyses, and ultimately identified areas of agreement among the state agencies. A draft document was developed by the group, shared with the Directors for their review, and on April 15 the Association submitted a detailed letter to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Army Corps of Engineers. The Administration is expected to publish the final rule in early 2020.

In addition to the proposal to redefine the scope of the CWA through WOTUS, the Administration also published a proposed rule seeking to amend the implementation of Section 401 of the CWA – a critical section to the conservation of aquatic resources. Section 401 authorizes states to certify applications for federal project licenses or permits that may affect water quality, and attach conditions to those certifications, many of which seek to protect aquatic resources. At the Annual Meeting, the Directors moved for the Association to submit public comments on the EPA's proposal to amend the regulations for section 401 of the CWA. The Association's comments discussed the proposed rule's potential effects on states' ability to collect information and make certification decisions as well as uncertainty to the scope of allowable conditions. The AFWA Fisheries & Water Resources Policy, Legal, and Executive Committees collaborated on this letter, which the Association submitted on October 21.

### Increasing Management Opportunities for Double Crested Cormorants

In 2019, Association staff and state agency members of the AFWA Bird and Fish Related Conflict Working Group participated in numerous discussions with our federal agency partners regarding the cross-disciplinary management challenge present between fisheries resources and double crested cormorants. Leadership of the working group attended a workshop in Virginia with federal agency staff to investigate these challenges further and discuss the variables that influence the management of these resources, which includes the current legal framework. In response to these discussions and those with the aquaculture community, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service increased take limits for depredation permits in the central and eastern United States. The working group will continue to collaborate with federal agency partners to identify and address additional cross-disciplinary management challenges nationwide.



### Expanding the Toolbox for Aquatic Animal Health Needs

The Drug Approval Working Group (DAWG) administered a survey to gain a better understanding of aquatic animal health needs across the country. This survey was completed by all 50 state fish and wildlife agencies and was also distributed to U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) hatcheries and members of the National Aquaculture Association. The survey results were analyzed in 2019 and presented at the World Aquaculture Society Conference and the Aquatic Animal Drug Approval Program Partnership Workshop. These data are informing discussions with drug sponsors and the Food & Drug Administration (FDA) on priority drug needs for aquaculture. Further, the DAWG continued its focus on advocating for the implementation of more streamlined guidance from FDA to promote more efficient drug approval processes. In December, the DAWG, FDA leadership, Service, and industry partners conducted its first-ever formal meeting to discuss these priorities. These meetings will be conducted on a quarterly basis going forward.



# LEGAL STRATEGY

AFWA's Legal Strategy, having completed its sixth year, continues to raise awareness of the North American Model of Wildlife Conservation, develop education opportunities for students and attorneys, and provide analysis and support for key Association outlets like the Joint Federal/State Task Force on Federal Assistance (JTF) and Legal Strategy Advisory Council ("Think Tank").

We continue to offer general legal services, including intellectual property protection, contract review, and corporate governance, to state fish and wildlife agencies, regional associations, flyway councils, and related organizations.



Gray wolf



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## Legal analysis and committee support

The Association moved the ball forward on several emerging issues in state wildlife management. With the critical input of State directors and attorneys, AFWA counsel:

- Prepared academic and legal research products including a law review article on state management authority to be published in 2020.
- Produced background research documents and model legislative and regulatory language for the Fish & Wildlife Health Committee on chronic wasting disease, and for the Bird Conservation Committee on state regulation of incidental take of migratory birds.
- Analyzed and commented on federal rules affecting the administration of federal funds, waters of the United States, and clean water permitting.
- Provided support for AFWA members' work on topics including Native American treaty interpretation, excise tax collection, and implementation of the Relevancy Roadmap.

In 2020, AFWA counsel will support our government affairs team by closely tracking federal legislation and rulemaking pertaining to federal aid in wildlife restoration and education, National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) reform, and endangered species and habitat management. In addition, recent arguments before the U.S. Supreme Court and decisions from the appellate courts include cases on management of gray wolves, Clean Water Act permitting, bear baiting in national forests, agency authority over captive cervids, and park regulation under the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA)—a wide variety of topics important to wildlife management.

## Law school outreach and curricular development

In 2019, the Association continued to build on a strong foundation for the State Wildlife Law Project, a legal search platform for students and practitioners of state fish and wildlife law. Research to support the Project will continue into 2020, and the platform will be updated with legislation passed in recent state sessions nationwide. We have also used research from the Project to respond rapidly to queries from conservation partners working on hot-button issues like conservation of imperiled plants and state legislation on hunting contests.

The Association's former general counsel Carol Frampton, now Chief of Legal Services for the National Wild Turkey Federation, taught two law courses at Michigan State University (MSU) School of Law, on wildlife law and energy development, and will continue to teach these courses at MSU. Students in those courses contributed to multiple issues of the *Wildlife Law Call*, a periodical newsletter containing updates and articles on case law, legislation, and regulation concerning natural resources. The Association has continued to create opportunities for conservation law internships, hosting one intern in its Washington, D.C. office as well as one in South Carolina and one in Michigan. The Association and the National Wild Turkey Federation will continue this vital work together in the year ahead, including through presentation of continuing legal education for practicing attorneys.

Whether it is assisting with implementation of the Relevancy Roadmap, engaging with other AFWA committees on the work of the coming decade, or keeping members informed of the rapidly changing field of conservation law, we are excited for the opportunities that 2020 will bring.



# CONSERVATION INITIATIVES



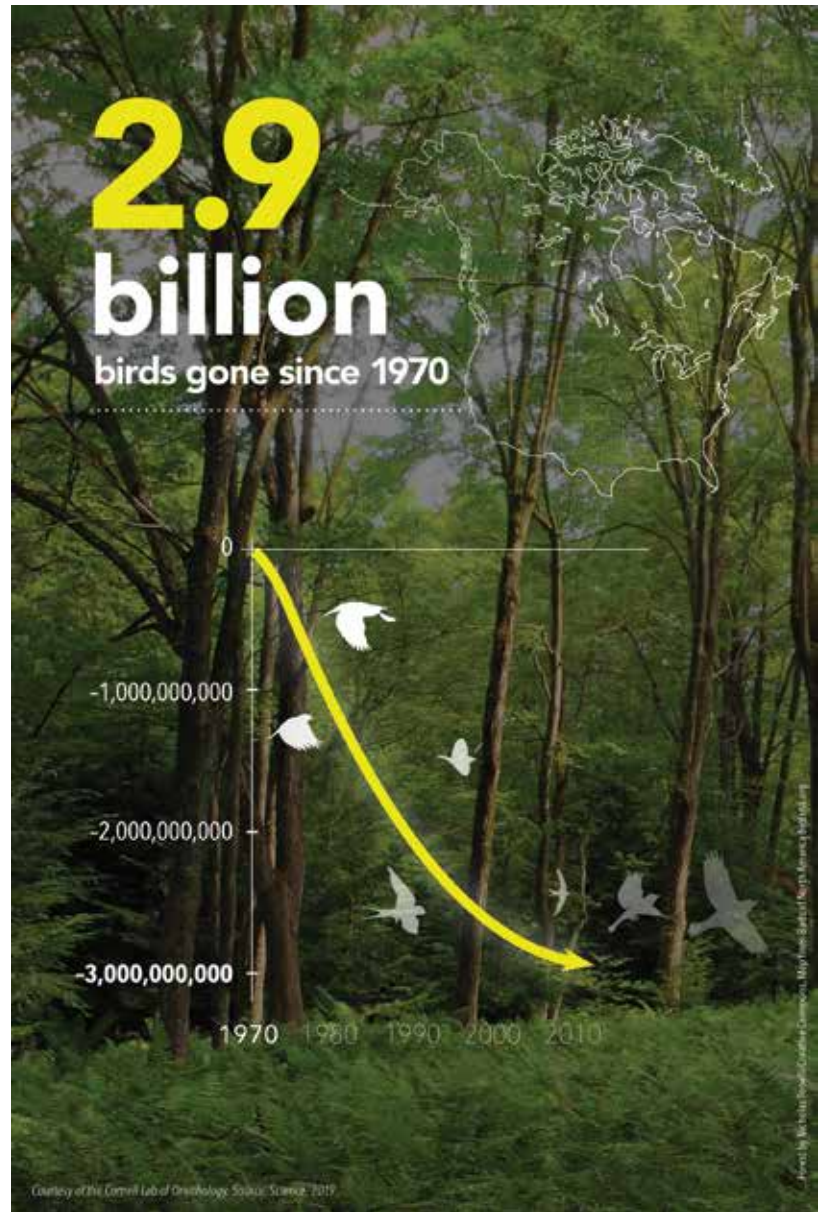
Green tree frog



# BIRD CONSERVATION



The North American Bird Conservation Initiative (NABCI) brings federal, state, and non-government bird conservation partners together to provide a forum for coordinated, landscape-level bird conservation, and to create a unified voice for conservation. In the U.S., NABCI focuses on key bird conservation needs including human dimensions, monitoring, international issues, bird conservation on private and working lands, communication, and promoting the relevance of bird conservation. In 2019, NABCI released a State of the Birds report highlighting the loss of almost 3 billion birds in the U.S. since 1970, reflecting an analysis published in the journal *Science* in September 2019. This State of the Birds used this alarming science to highlight the critical role of state wildlife agencies in addressing the bird and wildlife crisis in America, and supplemental material produced by the Alliance for America's Fish and Wildlife connects these bird declines with a state-led solution through the Recovering America's Wildlife Act. In September 2019, the Association passed a resolution recognizing the urgency of this loss of bird abundance and committing to joining in the response by a unified wildlife conservation community. Together, these documents provide powerful tools to support and emphasize state-led bird conservation efforts.





Greater sandhill cranes



### Bird Conservation Committee

AFWA's Bird Conservation Committee (BCC) also brings partners together to collaborate on pressing bird conservation issues, with a state-oriented focus. This Committee's broad breadth of focus includes landbirds, shorebirds, waterbirds, and waterfowl, addressing issues related to all-bird conservation, including game bird management and non-game issues. In 2019, this Committee tackled challenges ranging from grassland habitat conservation, to feral and free-ranging cats and their impacts on birds and other wildlife, to improving harvest-related reporting and data collection through the Harvest Information Program. Additionally, the BCC released a series of products designed to help states address incidental take of migratory birds: a report detailing state-identified needs for addressing incidental take, a repository for Best Management Practices for 11 threats to migratory birds, and model language for states wishing to clarify their legal jurisdiction to regulate incidental take.



### Southern Wings Celebrates 10 Years of Conservation Impact

Over 50% of U.S. bird species spend over half the year outside of the U.S. Since the 1970s, 2.9 billion birds have been lost. Since 2009, Southern Wings has helped reverse the bird crisis. Thirty-two state fish and wildlife agencies have contributed over \$2.9 million to conservation of priority species through 24 projects in 11 countries with countless partners. They have leveraged over \$6 million in partner funds. Over 1 million acres have been conserved, restored, or managed and over 800,000 trees have been planted. Eighty-one Species of Greatest Conservation Need have been positively impacted.



North American Waterfowl  
Management Plan  
Plan nord-américain de  
gestion de la sauvagine  
Plan de Manejo de Aves  
Acuáticas de Norteamérica

### North American Waterfowl Management Plan

The North American Waterfowl Management Plan (NAWMP) is visionary as it considers the intersection of waterfowl, habitat, and people in wildlife management decisions. Critical to the long-term achievements of the Plan is the collaboration of governments and non-government organizations in Canada, the United States, and Mexico. Also critical to the success of NAWMP, is the North American Wetlands Conservation Act (NAWCA) which over the past 30 years has grown into one of the most significant conservation programs in history.

More than 3,000 NAWCA-funded projects have conserved over 30 million acres of wetlands and related habitats. The projects span nearly every state, territory, and province in Canada, the U.S., and Mexico. The goal of the multibillion-dollar grant program is to guarantee waterfowl and other wetland-dependent species success across the continent, from breeding to wintering grounds. Since the signing of NAWCA on December 13, 1989 by President George H.W. Bush, federal NAWCA grants totaling \$1.7 billion have leveraged \$3.6 billion in contributions from more than 6200 partners. The abundance of wildlife supported by wetlands, including many species of waterfowl, other migratory birds, fish and mammals, translates into an abundant array of opportunities for Americans who enjoy hunting, fishing, wildlife viewing and photography.

State fish and wildlife agencies, through the Flyway Councils, NAWMP Joint Ventures, and private-public partnerships are instrumental in the conservation of wetlands and their associated upland habitats. State fish and wildlife agency involvement in wetland projects on public and private lands provides more than just duck habitat as many other plant and animal species benefit from healthy wetlands. Wetlands also store water and recharge aquifers, securing safe and abundant drinking water that all people need, and wetlands reduce soil erosion in the event of floods.

State fish and wildlife agency leadership in international conservation is exemplified by the Association's program recently branded as "Fall Flights." The



program, established in conjunction with NAWCA, encourages State investments in wetland conservation on the waterfowl breeding grounds in Canada. Forty-three states contributed \$3.9 million (USD) to Canadian waterfowl habitat projects during 2018-19. The Association encourages agencies to continue investing through this program because when matched by Ducks Unlimited, NAWCA, and Canadian sources, the State funds leverage a total annual investment in waterfowl habitat in Canada of almost five times the State investment.



## NATIONAL FISH HABITAT PARTNERSHIP

The National Fish Habitat Partnership has implemented nearly 83 projects across 34 states in 2019. Since 2006, the National Fish Habitat Partnership has implemented over 935 projects in all 50 states through 20 regional partnerships. Many of these projects have been fostered through coordination efforts by state fish and wildlife and natural resource agencies and are making a difference conserving fish habitat and improving angling opportunities across the country.

# 2019 WATERS TO WATCH



States were a key partner in implementing the National Fish Habitat Partnership's list of "Waters to Watch" in 2019, which represent a snapshot of voluntary, locally driven freshwater, estuarine and marine habitat conservation efforts implemented across the country.

### Alexander Creek, Alaska

Mat-Su Basin Salmon Habitat Partnership

### Amargo Creek, New Mexico

Desert Fish Habitat Partnership

### Coal Creek, Wyoming

Western Native Trout Initiative

### Crews Creek, Georgia

Southeast Aquatic Resources Partnership

### Elephant Butte Reservoir, New Mexico

Reservoir Fish Habitat Partnership

### Megler Creek, Washington

Pacific Marine and Estuarine Partnership

### Spasski River and Hoonah Native Forest Partnership, Alaska

Southeast Alaska Fish Habitat Partnership

### Sullivan Gulch, Oregon

Pacific Marine and Estuarine Partnership

### Tainter Creek, Wisconsin

Fishers and Farmers Partnership/Driftless Area Restoration Effort

### Upper Green Valley Creek, California

California Fish Passage Forum

For more information on project maps and descriptions of the "Waters to Watch" list for 2019, visit:

[www.fishhabitat.org/waters-to-watch/archive/2019](http://www.fishhabitat.org/waters-to-watch/archive/2019)



## National Fish Habitat Partnership Hosts Film Festival at 2019 AFS/TWS Conference



The National Fish Habitat Partnership and American Fisheries Society's Fish Habitat Section teamed up to host a film festival for the American Fisheries Society (AFS)/The Wildlife Society (TWS) Joint Meeting in Reno, Nevada in 2019. The festival spanned the entirety of the conference and included over 80 films shown during 14 showing sessions, which brought in over 500 attendees.

Films showcased examples where resource practitioners and others come together to protect, restore, and enhance freshwater, coastal, and terrestrial habitats that support the needs of fish and wildlife. Film categories included habitat conservation projects, on-the-ground restoration examples, including other films that captured the dynamic landscapes and unique habitats that are home to our fish and wildlife. Each session included time for available filmmakers and colleagues to share additional information about their films. The films shown are available on the YouTube channel for the partnership.

## FURBEARER RESOURCES



Male wolf pup

### New Trapping and Furbearer Communication Strategy

The Association released a new communications strategy for agencies to use to help sustain regulated trapping. The strategy provides the tools and techniques agencies can use to build effective communications programs to help gain understanding and support for regulated trapping activities.

### Best Management Practices

Trapping is an important wildlife management technique that helps state agencies to collect information about wildlife and to sustain healthy and diverse populations and habitats. To improve the welfare of animals captured in traps and modernize trapping technology, AFWA's furbearer resources program has developed 22 Best Management Practices (BMPs) for Trapping in the U.S. documents. The species-specific documents are available on our website.

### Trapping Matters Workshops

In 2003, the Association began offering the Trapping Matters Workshop to help wildlife professionals understand the role of trapping in wildlife management and to learn how to better communicate effectively about trapping. The Association hosted 14 Trapping Matters Workshops and Wildlife Fur Schools across the country for state and federal wildlife agencies and other professional wildlife groups in 2019. Since the workshops started in 2003, the Association has educated some 6,000 wildlife professionals on trapping.

## WILDLIFE HEALTH AND DISEASE



Buck mule deer

### New Best Practices Help Prevent, Manage Chronic Wasting Disease

Chronic wasting disease, or CWD, is a 100% fatal neurological disease of deer, elk, moose, and other species of the family Cervidae. This disease continues to spread in both wild and captive cervid populations and is now found in 26 states and three Canadian provinces. AFWA's Fish and Wildlife Health Committee has been on the forefront of efforts to manage this disease, including releasing the first-ever set of "Best Management Practices for the Prevention, Surveillance, and Management of Chronic Wasting Disease" in 2018. In 2019, the Fish and Wildlife Health Committee assembled a team of over 30 wildlife biologists and disease experts to develop four additional best practices, in the areas of taxidermy and meat processing, quarantine of infected facilities, inter-state/province communication of positive CWD test results, and agency response to hunter inquiries regarding CWD testing. Together, these four additional practices provide state, federal, provincial, and territorial governments with practical tools for managing this disease in cervid populations.

### Promoting Coordinated Responses to Fish and Wildlife Disease Crises

With chronic wasting disease ravaging North American cervid populations, white-nose syndrome decimating North American bat species, and the prospect of the introduction of frightening new wildlife diseases such as the salamander fungus Bsal, the Association's leadership has taken strong steps to revitalize the National Fish and Wildlife Health Initiative in 2019. Under the able leadership of new Initiative Chair Paul Johansen (WV), the Initiative is already serving as a valuable forum for high-level interagency dialogue on fish and wildlife disease management and prevention. Planned activities for 2020 include revisions to the Initiative's toolkit for state and federal agency leadership as well as the sponsoring of a national forum on fish and wildlife health and disease.



Bat conservation work in Alabama

### Innovative Wildlife Science

In recent years, AFWA staff have been at the forefront of communicating major advances in fish and wildlife science, whether it be defending the North American Model of Wildlife Conservation in the pages of "Science Advances," articulating the case for pollinator conservation in a letter in "Science," or highlighting state efforts to conserve aquatic biodiversity in the pages of "Fisheries." In 2019, the Association expanded its efforts to develop and promote high-quality wildlife science by working with partners at Michigan State University and the University of Wisconsin to help launch the Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) Research Consortium, an innovative partnership of land-grant universities, federal and state research organizations, and state fish and wildlife agencies. The Consortium is actively working on several high-priority research projects that will directly benefit state fish and wildlife agencies as they work to address impacts of CWD on North American deer, elk, moose, and other cervids.





## STATE AND TRIBAL WILDLIFE GRANTS

On March 27, the Association held its annual Fly-in to support State and Tribal Wildlife Grants. Agency staff and partners representing over a dozen states visited nearly 100 congressional offices to communicate how they are using the program to benefit species of greatest conservation need identified in State Wildlife Action Plans. Staff encouraged their congressional offices to sign on to two bipartisan Dear Colleague Letters supporting funding for the program. A letter in the U.S. House of Representatives was signed by 167 members and a letter in the U.S. Senate by 44 members. The final FY2020 budget passed in December and included a \$3 million increase for the program, raising funding to \$67.57 million, the highest level in 10 years.

## FISH AND WILDLIFE RELEVANCY ROADMAP

The Association adopted the Fish and Wildlife Relevancy Roadmap at the Association's Annual Meeting in St. Paul, Minnesota. The Roadmap fulfills the second recommendation of the Blue Ribbon Panel on Sustaining America's Diverse Fish and Wildlife Resources. Development of the Roadmap was led by Tony Wasley, Director of the Nevada Department of Wildlife and Steve Williams, President of the Wildlife



Management Institute and included over 60 professionals from state and federal agencies and private organizations. The Roadmap includes over 100 strategies and tactics to overcome 19 barriers to engaging broader constituencies. The Roadmap will be a living document that will be updated periodically as new information and tools become available. The Roadmap was dedicated to the memory of Dr. Steve Kellert who inspired much of this work while a member of the Blue Ribbon Panel. Dr. Kellert was leading a working group on implementation of the Panel's recommendation on relevancy up until the time of his death.

## ENERGY AND WILDLIFE

AFWA's Energy and Wildlife Policy Committee conducted a wind siting survey of state fish and wildlife agencies. The survey was completed by 39 states representing 93% of the total megawatts of wind capacity currently installed, under construction, or in advanced stages of development in the U.S. The findings, compiled into a final report, provides the committee with current information on agency perceptions of the risks of wind development on wildlife, the availability of science, the level of coordination and communication with wind energy developers and authorities and mechanisms available to states to encourage consultation on potential wind-wildlife impacts. One surprising

Wind energy



finding was that only about half of the responding states are very familiar with federal Wind Energy Guidelines. The working group that developed the survey will continue under a modified charge to implement recommendations made in the report.

## CLIMATE ADAPTATION

In 2019, the Association stood up the National Fish, Wildlife, and Plants Climate Adaptation Network, a collaborative group working to advance the 2012 Strategy. The Network is made up of a diverse set of federal, state, tribal, and nonprofit partners, picking up where the Joint Implementation Working Group left off in 2017. Over the past year, the Network has undergone a strategic planning exercise, sponsored a session at the National Adaptation Forum, and charged a working group with developing a white paper. The white paper will assess how far the conservation community has come since the initial publication of the Strategy, what remains to be done, and charts the course for climate adaptation in the new decade. The white paper is slated to be completed by summer 2020.



Eastern fox squirrel

The Association continued to be a core sponsor of the Climate Adaptation Leadership Awards for Natural Resources. This annual award recognizes people and organizations for their outstanding work in raising awareness and addressing the impacts of climate change on the nation's living natural resources. Seven were honored this year at the AFWA Annual Meeting in St. Paul, Minnesota. The Pennsylvania Department of Conservation was recognized for their work to develop a Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation Plan for their state, working across a variety of sectors and agencies. In addition, Beth Stys of the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission was given an Honorable Mention for her long-standing commitment to advancing adaptation strategies for the fish, wildlife, and plants of the state.

At the 84th North American Wildlife and Natural Resources Conference in Denver, Colorado, the Association co-sponsored a workshop entitled "Extreme Weather Events: How to protect native fish and wildlife in a changing urban environment" with the U.S. Forest Service, Texas Parks and Wildlife and the National Wildlife Federation. The purpose of the workshop was to provide managers with case studies of how others have planned, responded to, or recovered from extreme weather events.

## OUTREACH STRATEGIES

### Conservation Education- Natural Pathways

The Natural Pathways Project was built on the significant in-roads made by the Association's North American Conservation Education Strategy in unifying and strengthening state fish and wildlife agencies' conservation education efforts—specifically in terms of outdoors skills development—that effectively advance the North American Model of Wildlife Conservation. This work informs the degree to which specific conservation education programs can achieve state agency recruitment, retention, and reactivation objectives. The final report can be found on the AFWA website.

Family hunting







ASSOCIATION of  
FISH & WILDLIFE  
AGENCIES

## Project WILD®

### Project WILD

Project WILD continues to find new ways to meet needs of educators and support Project WILD state coordinators. Accomplishments in 2019 include distributing over 25,000 Project WILD publications to partners, piloting an online Growing Up WILD course, providing special topic webinars, such as “WILD About Bats” and “WILD About Insects,” and providing online professional development to state coordinators.

Our 2019 Project WILD Annual Meeting focused on hunting/angling recruitment, retention and reactivation (R3) and learning in the outdoors. Participants explored ways to better align WILD programming with R3 coordinators, to integrate education and outreach across the agency, the use of wildlife forensics in STEM-based programming, and wildlife management efforts among ranchers. Special thanks for a successful meeting goes out to Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks, Boone and Crockett Club, and Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation.

In 2020 we look forward to renewed collaborations and stronger partnerships with other national conservation education programs. Work with Conservation Leaders for Tomorrow (CLfT) on a multi-state grant will involve revising elk and deer lessons. Our Annual Project WILD Coordinator Meeting in Springfield, Missouri, will be held in conjunction with Project WET, with a focus on the water and wildlife connection. We will also work on updating the Flying WILD, Growing Up WILD, and Projecto WILD curricula.



### Making It Last Toolkit

This national conservation outreach strategy is an opportunity for each state agency to significantly increase awareness of its role in protecting and conserving wildlife among target audiences. The Making It Last campaign toolkit, updated January 2019, makes specific recommendations on how states can approach and implement this effort using both nonpaid and paid media and includes a flexible creative approach, allowing states to use their own imagery and messaging relevant to specific goals.

In 2019, the Making It Last toolkit was implemented in 5 states, covering 2 regions (Western and Midwest). These pilot states have just wrapped up with the final report being available in early 2020. The best practices learned from these introductory projects will be used to finetune the Making It Last toolkit and used in the implementation in the next set of pilot states in the Northeast and Southeast regions. Learn more about this toolkit at [www.MakingItLast.org](http://www.MakingItLast.org).



## Recruitment, Retention and Reactivation Update

Participation rates in outdoor activities – including hunting, angling, boating, and target shooting – continue to change, presenting some unique challenges for state and federal fish and wildlife agencies, non-government agencies and industry partners to overcome in the coming decade. The initiative to recruit, retain, and reactivate (R3) new and current participants in outdoor recreation has evolved through the last decade. With 2020 in view, the conservation community is focused on increasing participation and support for hunting, angling, boating, and target shooting. More than 50 conservation organizations, including many state agencies, have hired dedicated positions to enhance R3 efforts. As part of these enhanced efforts, agencies are hosting state and regional level meetings and writing strategic R3 plans. The next national R3 challenges were identified in 2019 with the work of the National R3 Implementation Workgroup and states and partners will begin development of solutions to address many of those challenges in 2020. Building on those efforts, states and their partners will focus on communication, marketing and target shooting, all due to the important legislative wins of 2019, and national attention will expand on these topics at the 2020 National R3 Symposium. The conservation community continues to evolve their R3 strategies and 2020 presents new and exciting opportunities to ensure that outdoor recreation participants continue to play a key role in the future of conservation.

## AFWA Fish and Wildlife Trafficking Illegal Commercialization Intelligence Summit

The third annual AFWA Investigations and Intelligence (I&I) Summit brought together nearly 90 attendees from over 35 state and federal agencies to continue their successful work on combatting the illegal trafficking of fish and wildlife on both a national and international level. The Utah Division of Wildlife Resources hosted the event on August 12-16, 2019 in Park City, Utah. Directors Ron Regan, Pat Fitts and Mike Fowlks joined the group to provide support, input and listen to the progress and accomplishments from around the country.

The illegal commercialization of wildlife ranks fourth behind guns, drugs and human trafficking — all of which are trafficked in similar fashion, routes and in some instances, together. Independent studies have shown that earnings in illegal wildlife trade are estimated as high as \$23 billion annually. The summit showcased a wide variety of case studies on investigations throughout the country, such as the reptile and turtle trade, black bears and ivory. Multiple vendors were also present to demonstrate the most advanced technologies in combatting this illegal trade. On the last day of the summit, attendees broke into groups and discussed follow-up efforts along with lessons learned. During these breakout groups, topics discussed included: intelligence methods, investigations tactics, new technologies utilized, species of concern, new markets and demands, case studies and illegal trends.



# FINANCIAL & BUSINESS STRATEGIES



Yellow-rumped warbler





Kid fishing

## MULTISTATE CONSERVATION GRANT PROGRAM

Since 2000, the Multistate Conservation Grant Program has dedicated more than \$100 million to national and regional level conservation priorities.

Multistate Conservation Grant Program projects implemented in 2019 include:

- Getting Families Fishing Educational Initiative – Future Angler Foundation**  
 The Future Angler Foundation produced and aired four, half-hour family fishing TV shows which aired on the Emmy-winning syndicated Into the Outdoors Television Network in 22 markets in seven states. Each show will be aired a minimum of three times over two years, reaching well over a million household viewers.  
  
 Early feedback indicates that people really love the kids fishing and that they are effective in recruiting anglers, from lapsed dads, to interested moms, to excited kids, to adults who have never fished.
- Quantify and Communicate the Benefits from WSFR Excise Tax Payments to Strengthen State-Federal-Industry Relations – National Shooting Sports Foundation**  
 Industry's Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Program (WSFR) contributions exceed \$1 billion annually. As more manufacturers are acquired by parent companies with no connection to the outdoors, attempts to seek exemption from excise tax payments are expected. Many executives don't

understand how their sales depend on outdoor opportunities created by WSFR. Targeted communications will be developed to communicate to industry in their language – sales and customers – with messages delivered from within their ranks.

The goal of this project is to document historical license and industry growth and correlate these with WSFR investments to show how resource management efforts and industry are co-dependent by sharing case studies that quantify the sales generated per WSFR dollar spent to help executives' questions regarding the return on investment from their WSFR payments. Results are expected by Summer 2020.

## PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

### Management Assistance Team

The Management Assistance Team (MAT) work is funded by a Multistate Conservation Grant. MAT is charged with increasing the leadership capacity and agency effectiveness within state fish and wildlife agencies and the conservation community through leadership and organizational development initiatives, training, consulting, and support of the National Conservation Leadership Institute (NCLI). MAT's vision to "further the conservation goals of state fish and wildlife agencies through organizational and leadership development of agency staff at all levels" is achieved by MAT's products and services which concentrate on agency administration—the people part of the equation.

In 2019, MAT conducted nine on-line courses, six webinars and nine face-to-face workshops reaching 542 participants. MAT also provided leadership and organizational development consulting to five state fish and wildlife agencies bringing the total number of state fish and wildlife agencies served in 2019 to 21. For more information on MAT's products and services visit our page on the AFWA website.

Red fox pups





## National Conservation Leadership Institute

Our world is changing, socially, politically, and—yes—environmentally. Across conservation we are facing unprecedented challenges—difficult questions of sustainability and organizational relevancy, funding shifts, and climate change. At the heart of all of these, we find ourselves wrestling not only with the science-based issues our organizations possess the knowledge to resolve, but also with the increasingly complex human element. The National Conservation Leadership Institute (NCLI) was established in 2005 to help develop future conservation leadership to address these daunting challenges. 2019 saw the graduation of the NCLI's 13th Cohort...bringing the total NCLI Alumni to 460 strong... as well as the beginning of the journey for 36 Fellows in Cohort 14. To date, the NCLI program has served 100 different organizations... 45 State Fish and Wildlife Agencies, eight Federal, 31 NGO, six Tribal, and 10 Industry organizations/agencies/tribes. New industry representation for NCLI Cohort 14 included Resource Management Service, The Westervelt Company, and Nestle/Nestle Purina. For more information on the NCLI, please visit [www.conservationleadership.org](http://www.conservationleadership.org).

## 2019 ANNUAL MEETING

The Association held its 109th Annual Meeting, September 22-25, 2019 at the InterContinental Saint Paul Riverfront Hotel, Saint Paul, Minnesota. Leading off the conference, the 2019 plenary “Moving Mountains: Advancing Relevancy One Stone at a Time” focused on the Association’s commitment to a relevant vision for both the resource and those who work to enhance and sustain it daily.

The Association thanks our plenary speakers Margaret Everson, Principal Deputy Director/U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Dr. J. Drew Lanham, Professor/Clemson University, and Courtney L. Schultz, PhD Research Associate/Park Rx America for their insights.

## 2019 Annual Meeting Resolutions

The voting membership of the Association of Fish & Wildlife Agencies passed 10 resolutions during its Business Meeting held on September 12, 2019. Resolutions are developed within AFWA Committees to express formal opinion for adoption by the Association.

1. Promoting a Coordinated Response to the Pervasive Loss of North American Birds
2. Recognizing the 30th Anniversary of the North American Wetlands Conservation Act
3. Promoting the American System of Conservation Funding
4. Demonstrating Support and Need for the Passage of the Modernizing the Pittman-Robertson Fund for Tomorrow’s Needs Act
5. Addressing the Long-Term Decline in Small Game Hunter Participation in the United States and Mitigating Its Effects on Habitat Conservation Delivery
6. Reaffirming Support for Sustainable Use and Regulated Trade
7. Western Invasive Plant Management: An Action Plan for the Sagebrush Biome
8. Support for the Wildlife Conservation Restoration Program Funding and the Alliance for America’s Fish and Wildlife Campaign
9. Fish and Wildlife Relevancy Roadmap
10. Appreciation to the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources

To view the full text of the resolutions, visit [www.fishwildlife.org](http://www.fishwildlife.org)

# Annual Meeting Sponsors

The Association extends its appreciation to the 109th Annual Meeting Sponsors, exhibitors and most especially the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources.

**Sustaining Partner Level:** U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

**Platinum Level Sponsors:** Bass Pro Shops, National Audubon Society, NOAA/NMFS, USDA APHIS-Wildlife Services

**Gold Level Sponsors:** National Shooting Sports Foundation, Pheasants Forever, Inc., and Quail Forever, USDA Forest Service

**Silver Level Sponsors:** Archery Trade Association, Aspira, Gordon-Darby, Inc., Guidefitter, Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, Swarovski Optik, USDA-NRCS, US Geological Survey

**Bronze Level Sponsors:** Airgun Sporting Association, Boone and Crockett Club, DJ Case & Associates, National Park Service, National Rifle Association, National Wild Turkey Federation, Recreational Boating & Fishing Foundation, The Nature Conservancy, The Wildlife Society, USDA NRCS

**Directors' Retreat Sponsors:** Brandt Information Services, Ducks Unlimited, Kalkomey Enterprises LLC, Vista Outdoors/Federal/Bushnell

# 2019 Annual Awards



The Association of Fish & Wildlife Agencies recognized eight individuals, two state agencies and one private landowner for their dedication to advancing

fish and wildlife conservation at the Association's Annual Awards Ceremony held on September 24, 2019 in St. Paul, Minnesota.

Recipients include:

## **Seth Gordon Award**

Ed Carter (Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency)

## **John L. Morris Award**

Pete Cimellaro

## **Ernest Thompson Seton Award**

Idaho Department of Fish and Game's Air Exposure Research and Outreach (AERO) Team

## **Boone and Crockett Award**

Doug Burt and the Arizona Game & Fish Department

## **Mark Reeff Award**

Samantha Pedder (Council to Advance Hunting and the Shooting Sports)

## **Private Lands Fish & Wildlife Stewardship Award**

Nelson J. Roach and the Couch Mountain Ranch

## **Stephen Kellert Award**

Crystal Egli (Colorado Parks and Wildlife)

## **Gary Taylor Award**

Anna Seidman (Safari Club International)

## **Conservation Law Enforcement Award**

Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission Division of Law Enforcement Port Investigations Team

## **Special Recognition Awards**

Stephanie Hussey (Recreational Boating and Fishing Foundation)  
Chris Parish (The Peregrine Fund)



# STRATEGIC PLAN UPDATE



Woman archery hunting

2019 was a busy year for strategic planning as we evaluated our current plan, which expires at the end of 2020, and began planning for our next Strategic Plan beginning in 2021. Under the leadership of President Hepler, the Association hired a strategic planning consultant to help evaluate how the current plan would stand up to the challenges of the next five years. To the surprise of many, after evaluating future threats to conservation and our members, it was determined that the current Mission, Vision and Goals were largely appropriate. Rather than starting from scratch, the Executive Committee chose to focus on improving the strategic goals in the next plan, making them more focused and more strategic. They also voted to add organizational values to the next plan.

The Executive Committee then approved a project timeline to develop a new Strategic plan in 2020. Key points in the process are: the next plan will continue to focus on how the Association can best serve the needs of our member agencies; teams of Executive Committee members and staff will work throughout the year to develop specific components of the new plan; there will be multiple opportunities for the membership and our partners to provide input into the new plan, including presentations at regional association meetings including our Canadian members, online collaboration and formal presentations at Association meetings.

Look for your chances to provide input and for the unveiling of a new strategic plan at the Annual Meeting in Sacramento.

## Photographers:

**Cover Photo:** Gary Wise

**Inside Cover:** Oregon Department of Fish & Wildlife

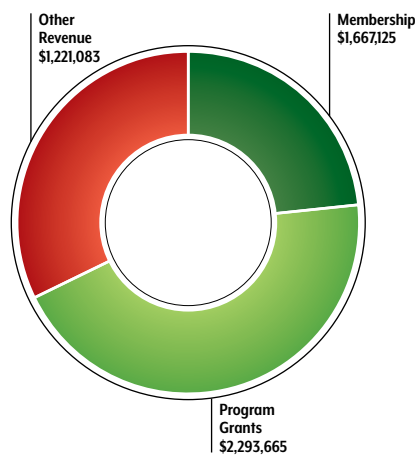
**Back Cover:** Mark Watson

**Additional featured images by:** Utah Division of Wildlife Resources (pg 4, 21); Nebraska Game and Parks Commission (pg 5); Stephen Tallabac (pg 6-7); Becky Gregory (pg. 7); North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission (pg 8, 13, 23); Florida Fish & Wildlife Conservation Commission (pg 9, 22); Jessica Human (pg 9); New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (pg 10 11, 30); California Department of Fish & Wildlife (pg 12, 18, 25); Joseph Halpin (pg 120); U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (pg 14); Julia Bartosh (pg 16); Desert Fish Habitat Partnership (pg 19); Oregon Department of Fish & Wildlife (pg 20); Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (pg 21); Larry Kruckenberg (pg 22); Connecticut Department of Energy & Environmental Protection (pg 24); Mark Watson (pg 26); Arizona Game & Fish Department (pg 27); Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (pg 27).

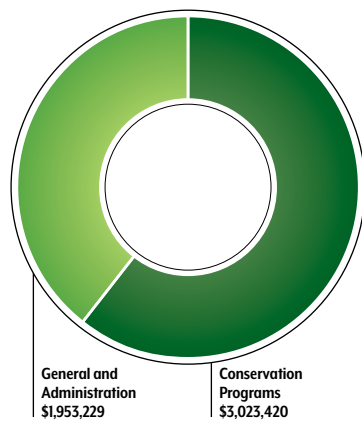
# 2019 FINANCIALS

The funds entrusted to the Association enable us to provide coordinated services; support international programs, projects and coalitions; promote wildlife-associated recreation; and help members continue to address the most pressing conservation challenges of the day.

## 2019 Revenue



## 2019 Expenses



The Association's independently audited financial statements and IRS 990 are available upon request.

# MEMBERSHIP DUES

State	30.82%
Federal	<1%
Provincial	<1%
Associate	<1%
Contributing	1.00%

## GRANT REVENUE

Federal	14.90%
Multistate	18.51%
Foundation	2.98%
International	4.53%

## OTHER REVENUE

Annual Meeting	8.78%
Misc. State Contributions	3.45%
Overhead	7.81%
Miscellaneous	6.98%

TOTAL REVENUE	\$5,181,873
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$4,976,649



# THE ASSOCIATION COMMITTEES, SUBCOMMITTEES & WORKING GROUPS

Almost without exception, the accomplishments of which the Association are most proud started within our 70+ committees, subcommittees and working groups, and our 1,000+ committee members. Without a doubt, the Association's success in advancing positions that further our collective capacity to manage resources will only continue thanks to the enduring personal contributions of the greater Association membership.

## **Agricultural Conservation**

Bioenergy Working Group  
Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) Working Group  
Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) and Conservation Stewardship Program Joint Working Group  
Farm Bill Easements Working Group  
Forestry Working Group  
Public Access Working Group  
Regional Conservation Partnership Program Working Group

## **Amphibian & Reptile Conservation**

## **Angler & Boater R3**

## **Annual Meeting/Awards**

## **Audit**

## **Bird Conservation**

Bird & Fish Related Conflict Working Group  
Feral and Free-Ranging Cat Work Group  
Grassland Work Group  
Harvest Information Program Work Group  
Migratory Shore and Upland Game Bird Working Group  
Partners in Flight/Shorebird/Waterbird Working Group  
Resident Game Bird Working Group  
Waterfowl Working Group

## **Climate Adaptation**

**Education, Outreach & Diversity**  
Diversity & Inclusion Working Group  
Education Working Group

## **Outreach Working Group**

Project WILD Subcommittee  
Wildlife Viewing and Nature Tourism Working Group

## **Energy & Wildlife Policy**

Wind-Wildlife Working Group

## **Executive**

## **Federal & Tribal Relations**

## **Finance**

## **Fish & Wildlife Health**

Lead and Fish and Wildlife Health Working Group

## **Fish & Wildlife Trust Funds**

Federal Aid Coordinators Working Group  
Trust Fund Collection Working Group

## **Fisheries & Water Resources Policy**

Bird & Fish Related Conflict Working Group  
Drug Approval Working Group  
Water Subcommittee

## **Hunting & Shooting Sports Participation**

## **International Relations**

CITES Technical Work Group

## **Invasive Species**

## **Law Enforcement**

Interstate Wildlife Violator Compact

## **Leadership & Professional Development**

State-Based Leadership Development Working Group

## **Legal**

## **Legislative & Federal Budget**

Budget Working Group

## **National Grants**

## **Nominating**

## **Ocean Resources Policy**

## **Resolutions**

## **Science & Research**

Human Dimensions and Social Science Subcommittee

## **Sustainable Use of Wildlife**

Furbearer Conservation Technical Working Group

## **Technology and Data**

## **Threatened & Endangered Species Policy**

ESA and Climate Change Working Group

## **Wildlife Diversity Conservation & Funding**

EOD-WDCF Joint Working Group  
State Wildlife Action Plan Best Practices Working Group

## **Wildlife Resource Policy**

Human/Wildlife Conflict Working Group  
Landscape Conservation Working Group

## **Task Forces**

National Survey Technical Workgroup  
President's Task Force on the Multistate Conservation Grants Program  
President's Task Force on Shared Science and Landscape Conservation Priorities

## Staff

**Ron Regan**, Executive Director  
**Patricia Allen**, Director of Communications  
**John Bloom**, Senior Accounting Manager  
**Devin DeMario**, Government Affairs Manager, Fisheries and Aquatic Resources Policy  
**Bettina Fiery**, Program Manager, Professional Development, Management Assistance Team  
**Estelle Green**, Administrative Assistant  
**Deb Hahn**, Director of International Programs  
**Mark Humpert**, Director of Conservation Initiatives  
**Gina Jackson**, Program Manager, Communications and Learning Development, Management Assistance Team  
**Maggie Ernest Johnson**, Program Manager, Climate Adaptation  
**Lane Kisonak**, Legal Affairs Manager  
**Marc LeFebvre**, Program Manager, Project WILD  
**David Lind**, Coordinator, Government Affairs  
**John Lord**, Chief Operating Officer  
**Dr. Jonathan Mawdsley**, Science Advisor  
**Amanda Myers**, Program Manager, Training & Information Services, Management Assistance Team  
**Angela Rivas Nelson**, Executive Assistant  
**Gregory Pilchak**, Program Coordinator, Agriculture Policy  
**Kelly Reynolds**, Program Manager, Project WILD  
**Ryan Roberts**, Program Manager, National Fish Habitat Partnership  
**Sean Saville**, Campaign Manager, Alliance for America's Fish & Wildlife  
**Dr. Judith Scarl**, Program Manager, Bird Conservation  
**Jen Mock Schaeffer**, Director of Government Affairs  
**Dean Smith**, North American Waterfowl Management Plan Director/Wildlife Liaison  
**Elena Takaki**, Director, Project WILD  
**Bryant White**, Program Manager, Trapping Policy  
**Silvana Yaroschuk**, Program Manager, Multistate Conservation Grants/Accounting Assistant

\*2019 staff list for the Association of Fish & Wildlife Agencies

## OFFICERS & EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

### President:

**Kelly Hepler**, South Dakota Game, Fish & Parks Department

### Vice President:

**Sara Parker Pauley**, Missouri Department of Conservation

### Past President:

**Ed Carter**, Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency

### Secretary/Treasurer:

**Gordon Myers**, North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission

## EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

### Chair:

Tony Wasley, Nevada Department of Wildlife

### Vice Chair:

**Cathy Sparks**, Rhode Island Dept. of Environmental Management

## MEMBERS

**Jim Douglas**, Nebraska Game & Parks Commission

**Rick Jacobson**, Connecticut Dept. of Energy and Environmental Protection

**Curt Melcher**, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife

**Carter Smith**, Texas Parks & Wildlife Department

**Eric Sutton**, Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission

**Chuck Sykes**, Alabama Division of Wildlife & Freshwater Fisheries

## EX OFFICIO VOTING MEMBERS

### Canada:

**Travis Ripley**, Alberta Environment & Parks

### Midwest:

**Dan Eichinger**, Michigan Department of Natural Resources

### Northeast:

**Paul Johansen**, West Virginia Division of Natural Resources

### Southeast:

**Rusty Garrison**, Georgia DNR Wildlife Resources Division

### Western:

**Mike Fowlks**, Utah Division of Wildlife Resources

\*Current slate 2019-2020 Officers & Executive Committee Members



# MEMBERS OF THE ASSOCIATION OF FISH & WILDLIFE AGENCIES

Why is the Association relevant? It's because of the active involvement of a great assembly of member agencies and organizations to achieve a great vision of sound fish and wildlife resource management throughout North America for long-term public benefit, use and support.

## U.S. State & Territorial Agency Members

Alabama Division of Wildlife & Freshwater Fisheries  
Alaska Dept. of Fish & Game  
Arizona Game & Fish Dept.  
Arkansas Game & Fish Commission  
California Dept. of Fish & Wildlife  
Colorado Division of Parks & Wildlife  
Connecticut Bureau of Natural Resources  
Delaware Division of Fish & Wildlife  
DC Department of the Environment, Fisheries and Wildlife Division  
Florida Fish & Wildlife Conservation Commission  
Georgia Wildlife Resources Division  
Hawaii Dept. of Land & Natural Resources  
Idaho Dept. of Fish & Game  
Illinois Dept. of Natural Resources  
Indiana Division of Fish & Wildlife  
Iowa Dept. of Natural Resources  
Kansas Dept. of Wildlife, Parks & Tourism  
Kentucky Dept. of Fish & Wildlife Resources  
Louisiana Dept. of Wildlife & Fisheries  
Maine Dept. of Inland Fisheries & Wildlife  
Maryland Wildlife & Heritage Service  
Massachusetts Division of Fisheries & Wildlife  
Michigan Dept. of Natural Resources  
Minnesota Division of Fish & Wildlife  
Mississippi Dept. of Wildlife, Fisheries & Parks  
Missouri Dept. of Conservation  
Montana Dept. of Fish, Wildlife & Parks  
Nebraska Game & Parks Commission  
Nevada Dept. of Wildlife  
New Hampshire Fish & Game Dept.  
New Jersey Division of Fish & Wildlife  
New Mexico Game & Fish Dept.  
New York Division of Fish and Wildlife  
North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission  
North Dakota Game & Fish Dept.  
Ohio Division of Wildlife  
Oklahoma Dept. of Wildlife Conservation  
Oregon Dept. of Fish & Wildlife  
Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission  
Pennsylvania Game Commission  
Rhode Island Dept. of Environmental Management  
South Carolina Dept. of Natural Resources  
South Dakota Game, Fish & Parks Dept.  
Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency  
Texas Parks & Wildlife Dept.

Utah Division of Wildlife Resources  
Vermont Dept. of Fish & Wildlife  
Virginia Dept. of Game & Inland Fisheries  
Washington Dept. of Fish & Wildlife  
West Virginia Division of Natural Resources  
Wisconsin Dept. of Natural Resources  
Wyoming Game & Fish Dept.

## U.S. Federal Agency Members

Bureau of Land Management  
National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration Fisheries Service  
U.S. Dept. of Agriculture - APHIS/Wildlife Services  
U.S. Dept. of Agriculture - Forest Service  
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency  
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

## Canadian Government Members

Alberta Environment and Parks  
British Columbia Ministry of Forests, Lands & Natural Resource Operations  
Canadian Wildlife Service  
Manitoba Department of Sustainable Development  
New Brunswick Dept. of Natural Resources  
Northwest Territories Dept. of Environment & Natural Resources  
Nova Scotia Dept. of Natural Resources  
Nunavut Department of Environment  
Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry  
Prince Edward Island Forests, Fish and Wildlife Division  
Saskatchewan Ministry of Environment  
Yukon Department of Environment

## Affiliate Members

Aquatic Resources Education Association  
Association for Conservation Information  
Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission  
College of Natural Resources (Univ. of Wisconsin-Stevens Pt.)  
Great Lakes Fishery Commission  
Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission  
International Hunter Education Association-USA  
National Association of State Boating Law Administrators  
National Association of University Fisheries and Wildlife Programs  
Organization of Fish and Wildlife Information Managers  
Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission  
Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council  
Wildlife Disease Association

## Contributing Members

American Bird Conservancy  
American Eagle Foundation  
American Fisheries Society  
American Sportfishing Association  
American Wind Wildlife Institute  
Americas Fur Resource Council  
Archery Trade Association  
B.A.S.S. LLC  
Bat Conservation International  
Boone & Crockett Club  
Canadian Wildlife Federation  
Delta Waterfowl Foundation  
Ducks Unlimited Canada  
Ducks Unlimited, Inc.  
Fur Institute of Canada  
Fur Takers of America, Inc.  
Jack H. Berryman Institute  
Kalkomey Enterprises  
Manomet  
Mule Deer Foundation  
National Audubon Society  
National Bowhunter Education Foundation  
National Marine Manufacturers Association  
National Rifle Association - Conservation, Wildlife & Natural Resources Division  
National Shooting Sports Foundation, Inc.  
National Trappers Association  
National Wild Turkey Federation  
National Wildlife Federation  
The Nature Conservancy  
NatureServe  
North Dakota Natural Resources Trust  
Pheasants Forever  
Pope & Young Club  
Recreational Boating & Fishing Foundation  
Resource Management Service, LLC  
Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation  
The Ruffed Grouse Society  
Safari Club International  
Sportsmen's Alliance  
Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership  
Wild Sheep Foundation  
Wildlife Control Helpline, LLC  
Wildlife Management Institute  
The Wildlife Society

# Association of Fish & Wildlife Agencies *110<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting*

September 13-17, 2020 • Sacramento, CA  
Hyatt Regency and Sheraton Grand  
Sacramento Hotel

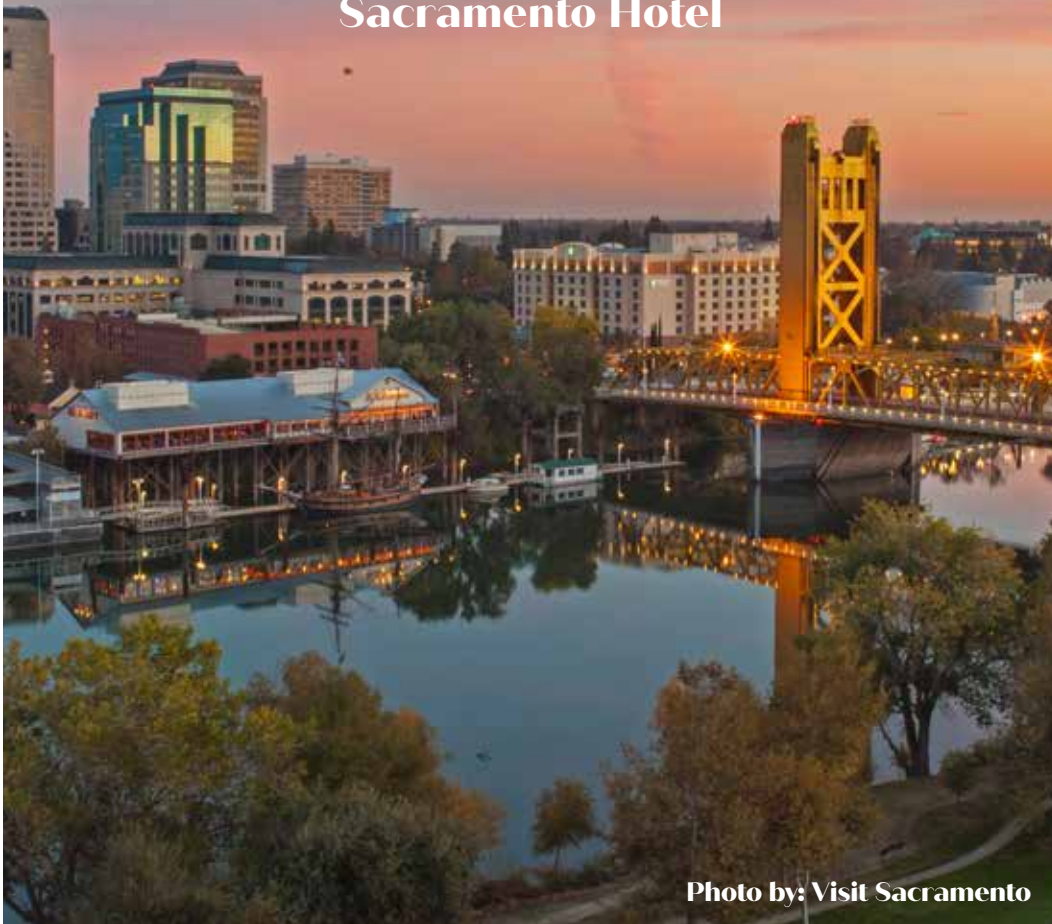


Photo by: Visit Sacramento





# ANNUAL REPORT 2019



**ASSOCIATION of  
FISH & WILDLIFE  
AGENCIES**

## The Voice of Fish and Wildlife Agencies

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