

NEWS RELEASE

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Alliance for America's Fish & Wildlife Brings Together Leaders of Outdoor Recreation, Tribes, Business, Sportsmen/women, Conservation & More to Secure Funding to Address Wildlife Crisis

Alliance praises Recovering America's Wildlife Act introduced in Congress today

WASHINGTON, DC – July 12, 2019 – An unprecedented alliance of business, academic, tribal and conservation leaders have united to provide a solution to one of America's greatest threats—the decline of our fish and wildlife and their natural habitats. Scientists estimate that one-third of wildlife species in the United States are at risk of becoming threatened or endangered without much needed funding for their proactive conservation. Healthy, sustainable fish and wildlife populations not only reduce the regulatory burden and uncertainty for businesses, they drive many sectors of our economy, especially the outdoor recreation industry.

The solution to this wildlife crisis is passage of the bipartisan ***Recovering America's Wildlife Act***, introduced today by Representatives Debbie Dingell (D-MI) and Jeff Fortenberry (R-NE). The bill will dedicate \$1.3 billion annually to state fish and wildlife agencies to implement their science-based wildlife action plans and an additional \$97.5 million for tribal fish and wildlife managers to conserve fish and wildlife on tribal lands and waters. This will provide dedicated funding, so state and tribal wildlife managers can proactively conserve fish and wildlife species of greatest conservation need in a voluntary, non-regulatory manner before federal listing under the Endangered Species Act is warranted. All of this can be done without additional taxes.

The Alliance for America's Fish & Wildlife's purpose is to secure dedicated funding for proactive conservation of our nation's most precious natural resources, our fish and wildlife. This effort has expanded out of the strong partnership and recommendations created by the Blue Ribbon Panel on Sustaining America's Diverse Fish & Wildlife Resources, consisting of members representing the outdoor recreation, retail and manufacturing sector, the energy and automotive industries, private landowners, educational institutions, sportsmen's and other conservation groups and state, tribal and federal fish and wildlife agencies.

"Bold solutions are needed to safeguard our nation's wildlife from further decline," said Congresswoman Dingell. "The Recovering America's Wildlife Act represents a strong commitment to addressing the current biodiversity crisis using innovative, state-based management that will safeguard our nation's environmental heritage for current and future generations."



Congressman Fortenberry added “Recovering America’s Wildlife Act (RAWA) is a smart upstream policy that promotes continuity of habitats and helps prevent the costly downstream emergency room procedures of the *Endangered Species Act*. Through proactive, collaborative, and voluntary partnerships with states, RAWA enhances community recreational opportunity for birders, hikers, hunters, anglers and all who enjoy the beauty of nature.”

“Each of us, as citizens of this country, has the responsibility to ensure diverse fish and wildlife resources are managed for future generations. Fish and wildlife need healthy habitats to thrive—enhancing our lives and providing many other benefits,” stated Johnny Morris, noted conservationist and founder/CEO of Bass Pro Shops. “State fish and wildlife agencies have a solid track record of accomplishing remarkable recovery and restoration successes since the early 1900s. However, enhanced funding is now needed to address today’s fish and wildlife habitat management challenges.”

It currently costs the American public hundreds of millions of dollars each year to restore threatened and endangered species, costs that could be avoided or greatly reduced if proactive conservation measures were implemented first. Proactive conservation is good for wildlife, good for taxpayers, good for business and good for our communities. The *Recovering America’s Wildlife Act* would provide the needed resources for proactive conservation nationwide.

“Our nation’s fish and wildlife are among its most valuable resources, along with clean air, water, healthy forests and agricultural lands that support all of us,” stated Ed Carter, President of the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies and Executive Director of the Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency. “Today we find ourselves facing wildlife species declines that could alter our children’s and grandchildren’s opportunities to enjoy these resources. By investing in our State Wildlife Action Plans, which contain prioritized actions for restoring and managing the most imperiled species within our states’ borders, we will be ensuring future generations can enjoy our rich wildlife heritage. In essence, we are performing preventative maintenance, addressing concerns before they become a crisis. It is by far the most economical way to proceed and the chance of success is exponentially greater.”

Not since enactment of the Pittman-Robertson and Dingell-Johnson acts, that provided critical funding for fish and wildlife on the brink of extinction, have we had an opportunity to pass legislation of such importance to protecting what is every American’s birthright—our great natural heritage. The *Recovering America’s Wildlife Act* is the most important conservation legislation in a generation.

“America’s hunters, anglers, recreational shooters, trappers, and boaters have been the primary funders of state-based conservation efforts to this day,” said Congressional Sportsmen’s Foundation President Jeff Crane. “This bipartisan legislation provides necessary funding to state agencies, allowing them the opportunity to conduct on the ground, large-scale projects, which benefit species that are in the greatest need of conservation efforts.”

“More than one-third of all wildlife species in the United States are at-risk or vulnerable to extinction. If we are serious about saving our wildlife heritage, we must invest in on-the-ground solutions that match the magnitude of the crisis,” said Collin O’Mara, president and CEO of the National Wildlife Federation.



“We can overcome America’s wildlife crisis by restoring and reconnecting habitat, removing invasive species, eradicating wildlife diseases, reducing pollution, and mitigating climate impacts — the future of the natural world depends upon us. “Thank you to Representatives Dingell and Fortenberry for working together to find bipartisan solutions that will accelerate the recovery of America’s wildlife through proactive, collaborative conservation efforts.”

“This nation is blessed with a diverse array of fish and wildlife, many of which are biologically and culturally important to Tribes,” said Elveda Martinez, President of the Native American Fish and Wildlife Society. “The Recovering America’s Wildlife Act would support tribal efforts to protect these species and our cultural ties to them. With the support of this legislation, the Tribes stand ready to ensure that wildlife endures for future generations of Native Americans, and all Americans.”

A lot is at stake if we do not act soon. Every American benefits when we have healthy and accessible fish and wildlife. We need to start down a new path where we invest proactively in conservation rather than reactively.

Please visit OurNatureUSA.com and urge your U.S. Representative to support passage of the *Recovering America’s Wildlife Act* so that future generations may enjoy the same abundant fish, wildlife and outdoor recreation opportunities that we have today.

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About the Alliance for America’s Fish & Wildlife

The Alliance for America’s Fish and Wildlife formed in 2017 to secure funding for much needed conservation of our most precious natural resources, our fish and wildlife. The Alliance was built upon the strong partnership created by the Blue Ribbon Panel on Sustaining America’s Diverse Fish & Wildlife Resources. The Alliance consists of members representing more than a trillion dollars of economic impact, millions of non-exportable jobs, and tens of millions of members and consumers across the country, all who rely on healthy fish and wildlife populations. Our goal is to partner with all Americans to conserve our precious fish and wildlife and natural heritage for future generations. Learn more at OurNatureUSA.com.

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