

**COMPILATION OF RESOLUTIONS ADOPTED AT THE 115TH ANNUAL MEETING OF THE
ASSOCIATION OF FISH AND WILDLIFE AGENCIES (TUCSON, ARIZONA)**

- | | |
|------------|---|
| 2025-01-05 | Supporting Regulated Predator Hunting, Trapping, and Responsible Predation Management |
| 2025-02-05 | In Support of the <i>Voluntary Best Management Practices (BMPs) for Reducing Unintended Ingestion of Lead Ammunition and Tackle Residues in Wildlife</i> Developed by the Midwest Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies |
| 2025-03-05 | Preserving the Bird Banding Laboratory to Sustain Migratory Bird Populations |
| 2025-04-05 | A Vision for Wildlife Diversity Conservation in the Future |
| 2025-05-05 | Appreciation to the Arizona Game and Fish Department for a Successful 115th Annual Meeting |



RESOLUTION 2025-01-05

SUPPORTING REGULATED PREDATOR HUNTING, TRAPPING, AND RESPONSIBLE PREDATION MANAGEMENT

WHEREAS, balancing ecosystems is crucial for biodiversity and wildlife health; and

WHEREAS, native predators are important components of balanced ecosystems and are managed based on the best available science to achieve desired objectives for all species, ensure sustainable prey and predator populations, and fulfill agency public trust obligations; and

WHEREAS, predation is a natural component of balanced ecosystems, but can become temporally or spatially imbalanced and threaten the viability and sustainability of prey populations, and in some cases may necessitate local predation management guided by scientific principles and a public process; and

WHEREAS, responsible place- and time-specific predation management, guided by scientific principles and a public process, is a vital component of wildlife conservation and management; and

WHEREAS, efforts to mitigate predation may include habitat modification or the relocation or removal of predators; and

WHEREAS, managing predation can protect threatened and endangered species, as well as other native species, during sensitive times such as nesting and birthing seasons or when native prey populations are overexposed to predation risks due to other factors such as habitat degradation and weather-induced population vulnerability (e.g., severe winters, extreme drought); and

WHEREAS, regulated predation management practices include hunting, trapping, and the permitted or authorized removal of predators by professionals to address management objectives for prey species under temporally or geographically limited conditions; and

WHEREAS, state fish and wildlife agencies exercise primary authority for management of species within their borders across all types of land, including those lands owned by the federal government;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (“Association”) reaffirms its commitment to the responsible use and understanding of predation management techniques guided by scientific principles; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Association recognizes the importance of regulated predator hunting and trapping as legitimate and important components of science-based wildlife management under the North American Model of Wildlife Conservation; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Association will continue to prioritize the conservation of wildlife to ensure the sustainability of prey and predator populations, and safeguard biodiversity and the health of ecosystems; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Association encourages U.S. federal agencies to recognize the importance of managing predation and State authority to use these tools, including on federal public lands under appropriate conditions; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that the Association's President, by written communication to the Director of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and other appropriate Federal officials, shall urge all federal land management agencies to take measures to ensure that the jurisdictional authority of the States regarding predation management, as primary managers of wildlife within their borders, is recognized in all applicable federal policies and regulations.

Submitted by the Sustainable Use of Wildlife Committee.

Adopted by the Association on September 24, 2025 in Tucson, Arizona.



RESOLUTION 2025-02-05

IN SUPPORT OF THE *VOLUNTARY BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES (BMPS) FOR REDUCING UNINTENDED INGESTION OF LEAD AMMUNITION AND TACKLE RESIDUES IN WILDLIFE* DEVELOPED BY THE MIDWEST ASSOCIATION OF FISH AND WILDLIFE AGENCIES

WHEREAS, the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies recognizes the infrequent unintentional ingestion of lead ammunition and tackle may cause inadvertent negative health effects, up to and including mortality, in individual animals; and

WHEREAS, the Midwest Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (MAFWA), representing thirteen states and three provinces, engaged in a collaborative process with state, federal, industry, and specific non-profit partners to address the challenges, needs, and opportunities associated with reducing the infrequent unintentional ingestion of lead from spent ammunition and tackle; and

WHEREAS, a collaborative approach prioritizing education, information, and voluntary, informed choice is recognized by state fish and wildlife agencies as an effective way to prevent unnecessary regulatory action on lead ammunition and tackle; and

WHEREAS, MAFWA has taken the initiative to develop and provide options and tools for hunters and anglers seeking to voluntarily minimize the infrequent unintended ingestion of lead by individual animals in their pursuits; and

WHEREAS, these BMPs provide information to hunters and anglers about lead-free ammunition or tackle or, when using lead, incorporating voluntary actions to reduce ingestion of lead residues by wildlife; and

WHEREAS, the Northeast Association of Fish & Wildlife Agencies (NEAFWA) has instituted a series of in-service training workshops throughout the northeast to inform agency personnel about non-lead and lead ammunition, and NEAFWA has verified through these workshops that a voluntary approach to the use of non-lead hunting ammunition is widely accepted and valued by state agency personnel and their conservation partners; and

WHEREAS, the BMPs outline specific actions and alternatives that AFWA recognizes as effective and efficient in mitigating the risks of lead ingestion from ammunition and tackle; and

WHEREAS, the practices described in the BMPs are related to hunting and angling activities only and are not meant to provide guidance on the use of lead use in other recreational activities; and

WHEREAS, in 2024, MAFWA resolved to promote the Voluntary Best Management Practices (BMPs) for Reducing Unintended Ingestion of Lead Ammunition and Tackle Residues in Wildlife;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies recognizes a need to provide best practices on the use of lead ammunition and tackle, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies adopts the Voluntary Best Management Practices (BMPs) for Reducing Unintended Ingestion of Lead Ammunition and Tackle Residues in Wildlife developed by MAFWA.

Submitted by the Fish and Wildlife Health Committee, Hunting and Shooting Sports Participation Committee, Angler and Boater R3 Committee, and One Health Committee.

Adopted by the Association on September 24, 2025 in Tucson, Arizona.



RESOLUTION 2025-03-05

PRESERVING THE BIRD BANDING LABORATORY TO SUSTAIN MIGRATORY BIRD POPULATIONS

WHEREAS, the Bird Banding Lab (BBL) was established in 1920 under the U.S. Bureau of Biological Survey, following the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA) of 1918, and was relocated to Patuxent Wildlife Research Refuge in 1942 under the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), where it operates today; and

WHEREAS, since its transfer to the U.S. Geological Survey in 1996, the Bird Banding Laboratory (BBL) has evolved from a primarily permitting office into a globally recognized scientific enterprise—stewarding the world’s largest bird-banding and encounter database, advancing cutting-edge marking and tracking technologies, and integrating avian data at national and international scales—functions that align directly with USGS’s mission and leadership in earth and natural resource sciences; and

WHEREAS, the USGS has provided critical support to build and maintain the infrastructure and expertise necessary to deliver BBL services and science for nearly three decades, including advancing significant modernization in how permits, data, and bands are managed to better serve bird banders and those dependent upon bird banding data; and

WHEREAS, the BBL works in cooperation with the Canadian Wildlife Service to jointly manage banding data from Canada and maintain a shared North American banding database that supports international collaboration on migratory bird management and conservation; and

WHEREAS, the BBL maintains tens of millions of banding records and receives reports from hunters and bird watchers, playing a key role in outdoor recreation, citizen science, and habitat conservation; and

WHEREAS, data from band recoveries are vital for estimating harvest and survival rates, tracking population sizes, and setting hunting seasons for migratory game bird species (doves, ducks, geese, etc.); and

WHEREAS, the BBL authorizes the use of emerging marking technologies, such as GPS tracking devices, promoting scientific advancement and improved data collection; and

WHEREAS, bird banding activities provide unique public education opportunities that inspire conservation values and connect people with migratory bird life cycles; and

WHEREAS, without the BBL, all banding and tracking of wild game and non-game migratory birds would cease, public reporting of recovered bands would halt, and essential data would no longer be available to inform scientific discovery, management, or assess avian health and migration, with no comparable alternative program in place; and

WHEREAS, elimination of the BBL would disrupt critical data flows, modeling techniques, scientific research, and decision-making frameworks that are globally recognized for excellence in migratory bird management; and

WHEREAS, administering the BBL within USGS ensures continuity of its Gold-Standard Science, consistent with the President’s Executive Order on re-establishing public trust in science, by sustaining independent, transparent, and data-driven avian research under a bureau already recognized worldwide for rigorous, policy-neutral science leadership and that has no regulatory or management responsibilities; and

WHEREAS, loss of banding data would undermine the foundation upon which current migratory bird harvest regulations are based and jeopardize science-based harvest management in the U.S. and Canada; and

WHEREAS, the scientific basis of hunting regulations would be weakened, increasing the legal vulnerability of regulated migratory bird hunting to opposition from anti-hunting groups; and

WHEREAS, the future of migratory bird hunting, an activity supported by 2.8 million Americans and contributing \$14 billion annually to the U.S. economy; would be at risk; and

WHEREAS, the BBL’s FY25 budget was \$2.2 million, but an additional \$3.6 million over the next three years is needed to ensure the BBL’s effective operation and complete ongoing technological improvements;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (Association) strongly urges that the U.S. Geological Survey’s Eastern Ecological Science Center retain the Bird Banding Laboratory and its critical functions, and provide sufficient staffing, funding, and modernization resources to sustain its role as the nation’s and the world’s premier bird-banding science program; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Association supports continued operation of the Bird Banding Laboratory within USGS to ensure the continuity, independence, and excellence of its Gold-Standard Science in keeping with the President’s Executive Order on re-establishing public trust in science.

Submitted by the Bird Conservation Committee.

Adopted by the Association on September 24, 2025 in Tucson, Arizona.



RESOLUTION 2025-04-05

A VISION FOR FISH AND WILDLIFE CONSERVATION IN THE FUTURE

WHEREAS, many populations of native reptiles, amphibians, fishes, insects, mussels, birds, mammals, plants and other taxa are declining, as documented in the State of the Birds Report, State of the Bats Report, and other reports including a National Wildlife Federation publication that estimated $\frac{1}{3}$ of all U.S. species are facing an increased risk of extinction; and

WHEREAS, State fish and wildlife agencies (“agencies”) play a leading role in conserving the nation’s fish and wildlife resources, which are intertwined with the health and well-being of the Nation’s communities and economy; and

WHEREAS, this year marks the 25th anniversary of the State and Tribal Wildlife Grants program, which provides agencies with critical funding to proactively conserve a wide variety of species, address declining species, eliminate the need for additional listings under the Endangered Species Act (ESA), and aid in the recovery of ESA-listed species; and

WHEREAS, this year marks the 20th anniversary of the launch of the first science-based and collaboratively developed State Wildlife Action Plans (SWAPs) that are blueprints for conserving over 12,000 species of greatest conservation need (SGCN) nationwide; and

WHEREAS, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and other partners have been crucial in supporting and collaborating with state fish and wildlife agencies to develop and support implementation of SWAPs; and

WHEREAS, a lack of dedicated and sustained funding for agencies remains the largest obstacle to conserving thousands of SGCN identified in SWAPs; and

WHEREAS, agencies work to achieve a future where wildlife and the natural world are cherished as vital national treasures and flourish through well-funded collaborative conservation ;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies shall lead efforts to raise awareness of, promote the use of, and secure funding for implementation of the third generation of State Wildlife Action Plans.

Submitted by the Wildlife Diversity Conservation and Funding Committee.

Adopted by the Association on September 24, 2025 in Tucson, Arizona.



RESOLUTION 2025-05-05

APPRECIATION TO THE ARIZONA GAME AND FISH DEPARTMENT FOR A SUCCESSFUL 115TH ANNUAL MEETING

WHEREAS, the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (“Association”) convened its 115th Annual Meeting on Sept. 21-24, 2025 in Tucson, Arizona; and

WHEREAS, state, provincial, and territorial directors began this Meeting by touring the nearby Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum, observing many of its 242 animal species and plants from 1,200 taxa, and learning about the Museum’s educational, research, and coordination programs that drive the active, citizen-supported conservation of the treasured Sonoran Desert ecosystem; and

WHEREAS, this year’s Plenary Session, “Crossing Boundaries: Coordinating Wildlife Movement and Species Recovery Across Jurisdictions,” reflected on the continuing importance of cross-border collaboration to managing and recovering species, highlighted successful case-studies, and drew attendees’ attention to the growing threat of illegal trade in wildlife; and

WHEREAS, Tom Finley, Director of the AZGFD, and his highly capable staff, contributed in countless ways to the success of this year’s Meeting;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, the Association offers its deep gratitude to AZGFD and to all Association members for a successful Annual Meeting.

Adopted by the Association on September 24, 2025 in Tucson, Arizona.