

Topic: Recovering America's Wildlife Act

What's the background? The bipartisan Recovering America's Wildlife Act (RAWA) will be the most significant investment in wildlife conservation in a generation. The bill would fund proactive efforts led by the states, territories and Native nations to address the nation's looming wildlife crisis and to prevent species from becoming endangered while also conserving and restoring habitats, fighting invasive species, reintroducing native species and tackling emerging diseases. RAWA would dedicate up to \$1.4 billion annually toward proactive, voluntary conservation efforts for wildlife at-risk.

Why is RAWA needed? Present federal funding is less than 5% of what is necessary to protect the more than 12,000 species state wildlife agencies have identified to need conservation attention. Currently, 80% of the funding for state wildlife agencies comes from state hunting and fishing licenses and permits as well as federal excise taxes on hunting and fishing gear. This funding model has worked for decades but is no longer enough on its own. RAWA would provide the necessary additional funding to protect America's wildlife.

Where will the funding go? \$1.3 billion from this bill would be spent by state fish and wildlife agencies, in partnership with state-based conservation entities to implement congressionally mandated State Wildlife Action Plans. These detailed plans incorporate science and public input and are approved by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The legislation would also dedicate \$97.5 million annually for Native wildlife conservation efforts. Native nations own or have influence on tens of millions of acres of land.

How do we know this will be effective in protecting wildlife? A 2018 report from the National Wildlife Federation, the American Fisheries Society and The Wildlife Society estimated that one-third of all fish and wildlife species in the United States are at an increased risk of extinction. State fish and wildlife agencies have had great success in restoring species that were once on the brink – like bald eagles, peregrine falcons, white-tailed deer, turkey, elk, striped bass and more. With adequate dedicated funding from RAWA, more success stories of healthy and thriving species are possible.

Why is this better for taxpayers? The additional funding from RAWA would allow for conservation efforts to begin before a species needs the protection of the Endangered Species Act. Once a species reaches the point of needing the protection of the Endangered Species Act, recovery becomes significantly more uncertain, difficult and expensive. Proactive efforts taken earlier in a species' decline are better for wildlife, cost less money and are less likely to be controversial.

What are the main benefits? Americans spend \$140 billion dollars on wildlife-focused recreation every year. The Recovering America's Wildlife Act would result in more recreational opportunities for all Americans, as a portion of the funds can be used for increasing public access to the great outdoors. Additionally, protecting fish and wildlife and their habitats can also provide clean water and air, flood prevention, pollination and carbon capture.

[Pass the Recovering America's Wildlife Act \(S. 1149\)](#)

This fact sheet is informed by resources from the [National Wildlife Federation](#).