



# Recovering America's Wildlife Act (H.R. 4647)

## What the bill does

- The Recovering America's Wildlife Act establishes a 21<sup>st</sup> Century, proactive funding model for the conservation of fish and wildlife. It provides \$1.3 billion per year for the state wildlife agencies to do proactive, non-regulatory fish and wildlife conservation. It provides for a modern enhancement in how we finance the full array of diverse fish and wildlife conservation for current and future generations before they become more rare and costly to protect. States would be responsible for a 25% non-federal match (\$440 million) that would spur voluntary, incentive-based and on-the-ground partnerships to implement the needed proactive conservation work by state fish and wildlife agencies.
- The bill will redirect \$1.3 billion in existing revenues annually from the development of energy and mineral resources on federal lands and waters to be dedicated to the Wildlife Conservation Restoration Program, an authorized subaccount under the Pittman-Robertson Wildlife Restoration Program, to conserve the full array of fish and wildlife. Funds would come from the federal share of the revenues, and nothing in the bill would alter the timing, method or process for the collection of revenues. Funds would be apportioned annually to the state fish and wildlife agencies based on a formula of 50% proportion of land area and 50% proportion of population.
- States would use these funds to effectively implement their congressionally required State Wildlife Action Plans (SWAP) – these are proactive, comprehensive wildlife conservation strategies unique to each state and developed with participation from the public which examine the health of and recommend actions to conserve fish, wildlife and vital habitats. States identify species of greatest conservation need and prioritize species, habitats, state-led projects and expenditures under the program. States could also use these funds on wildlife conservation education and up to 10% of the funds on wildlife-associated recreation. If a state chooses, they may also use funds to help recover federally listed species under the Endangered Species Act of 1973.
- States may use funds to manage, control and prevent invasive species and nuisance species as well as other threats to state species of greatest conservation need; on private lands and waters without any requirement for access by the public; and allow private land easements to be eligible for non-federal match. It clarifies in current law that academic institutions and Tribes may partner with the states on the implementation of projects and provides some technical corrections to the current statute.

## How Can State Fish and Wildlife Agencies Use These Funds?

Funds **shall** be used to:

- Conserve and manage on state and private lands the full array of diverse fish and wildlife species that are identified as state species of greatest conservation need, and their habitats, as determined by each State fish and wildlife agency.
- Work with private landowners to implement voluntary conservation and management actions without requiring public access.
- Conduct research, monitoring, restoration, and management actions needed to understand and reverse population declines.
- Develop, revise, and implement a wildlife conservation strategy of a state, otherwise known as State Wildlife Action Plans and Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategies.
- Carry-out, revise, or enhance exiting wildlife conservation and restoration programs and to develop and implement new programs to manage fish and wildlife species of greatest conservation need.
- Create and implement wildlife conservation education programs and projects, including public outreach intended to foster natural resource stewardship:
  - Nature centers and educational displays, programs for children and the public, community-based engagement and collaboration, etc.
- Advance wildlife-associated recreation projects, using up to 10% of a state's apportionment, intended to meet the demand for outdoor activities associated with wildlife including but not limited to:
  - Hunting, fishing, and wildlife observation and photography
  - Wildlife viewing areas, observation towers, blinds, and platforms
  - Water trails, water access, trails, trail heads and access for such projects

Funds **may** be used to:

- Address identified threats and risks to state species of greatest conservation need like invasive species, nuisance species, pathogens, and diseases.
- Assist in the recovery of a species listed as threatened or endangered under the Endangered Species Act of 1973.
- Manage a species of greatest conservation need whose range is shared with a foreign government and the habitat of such species.
- Protect and conserve a species of greatest conservation need and the habitat of such species through directly related law enforcement activities.

Funds are **prohibited** from being used for education efforts, projects, or programs that promote or encourage opposition to the regulated taking of fish and wildlife.