



Recovering America's Wildlife Act



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Washington faces a stewardship challenge

Washingtonians benefit from more than 1,900 species of animals, at least 40 of which are found here and nowhere else in the world.

Conserving Washington's natural heritage is part of WDFW's mission and promotes our quality of life, our outdoor traditions and our economy.

However, efforts to conserve more of Washington's species and ecosystems are limited by the lack of permanent, dedicated revenue to fund the breadth of WDFW's mission.

Proactive funding for wildlife

The Recovering America's Wildlife Act establishes a 21st Century, proactive funding model for the conservation of fish and wildlife. The bill will redirect \$1.3 billion in existing royalties 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.

States would use these funds to implement their congressionally required State Wildlife Action Plans (SWAP) -- proactive, comprehensive conservation strategies tailored to Washington and developed with participation from the public. The SWAP identifies species of greatest conservation need and prioritizes actions to safeguard those species and their habitats. The funds could also be available for wildlife conservation education and up to 10% of the funds could be used to develop opportunities for wildlife-associated recreation.

The Act would provide for 75 percent of the funds required to fund the SWAP, while states will be responsible for a 25 percent non-federal match. Based on a formula of 50 percent proportion of land area and 50 percent proportion of population, each year Washington would receive over \$26 million in federal funds while contributing \$8.8 million in state funds.

Implementation in Washington

In Washington, some examples of the conservation efforts we could invest in include:

- Developing state-based landowner incentive programs for private lands
- Increasing enforcement presence to ensure conservation of our natural resources and opportunities for recreation
- Supporting local conservation with improved tools for assessing and stabilizing priority habitats and species and increasing customer service for local governments
- Partnering with schools and communities to encourage younger generations to learn about fish and wildlife conservation and get outdoors

Who supports the Recovering America's Wildlife Act?

At the national level, an unprecedented partnership represented by the outdoor recreation retail, and manufacturing sectors, the energy and automotive industries, private landowners, educational institutions, conservation organizations, sportsmen's groups, and state fish and wildlife agencies are united by this shared goal.



New study results in delisting

Several rockfish species in Puget Sound have declined significantly since the 1980s. Habitat degradation, pollution, over-fishing, and food web changes are all factors.

Not all rockfish species have suffered dramatic abundance declines, but some populations had become so small that in 2010, canary rockfish were listed under the Endangered Species Act.

Spurred by this listing, WDFW worked with the Puget Sound Anglers, Kitsap Poggie Club, Puget Sound Charterboat Captains Association, Seattle Aquarium, and federal fisheries experts on a study that determined canary rockfish in Puget Sound were genetically identical to those on the outer coast, where they are more abundant. As a result, ESA protection was removed from canary rockfish in January of 2017.

In recognition of recent abundance increases, fishing regulations on Washington's coast were modified in 2017 to allow for canary rockfish retention, and similar changes may be allowed in the future in other marine areas if collaborative research and recovery efforts are funded adequately, and continue to make progress.

Conservation is saving the fisher

Fishers are a member of the weasel family that vanished from Washington's forests more than 70 years ago. Across the country, the fisher's range was dramatically reduced by trapping, predator control, and habitat loss.

WDFW is leading a pro-active effort to re-establish the species in its native habitat with support from private forest landowners, federal agencies, and conservation organizations.

Since 2008, WDFW and partners have reintroduced more than 150 fishers to federal forestlands in Olympic National Park and the southern Cascade Mountains.

In April 2016, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service announced that protection for fishers under the federal Endangered Species Act was unnecessary, due in part to these fisher conservation efforts.

Dedicated funding and related coalition-building would increase the potential for more success stories like this, for threatened species like the fisher, as well as at-risk game animals and bighorn sheep.

