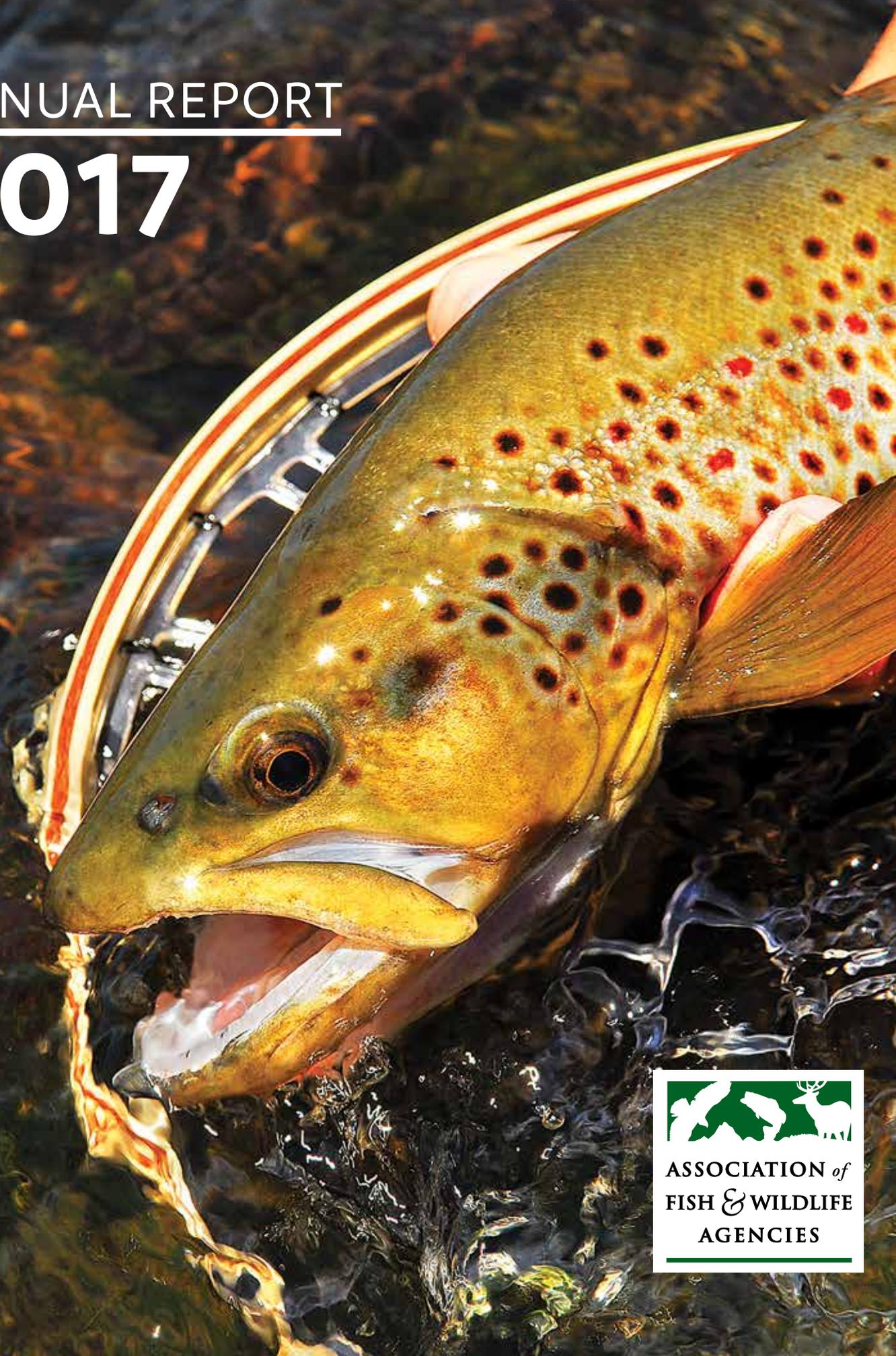


ANNUAL REPORT

2017

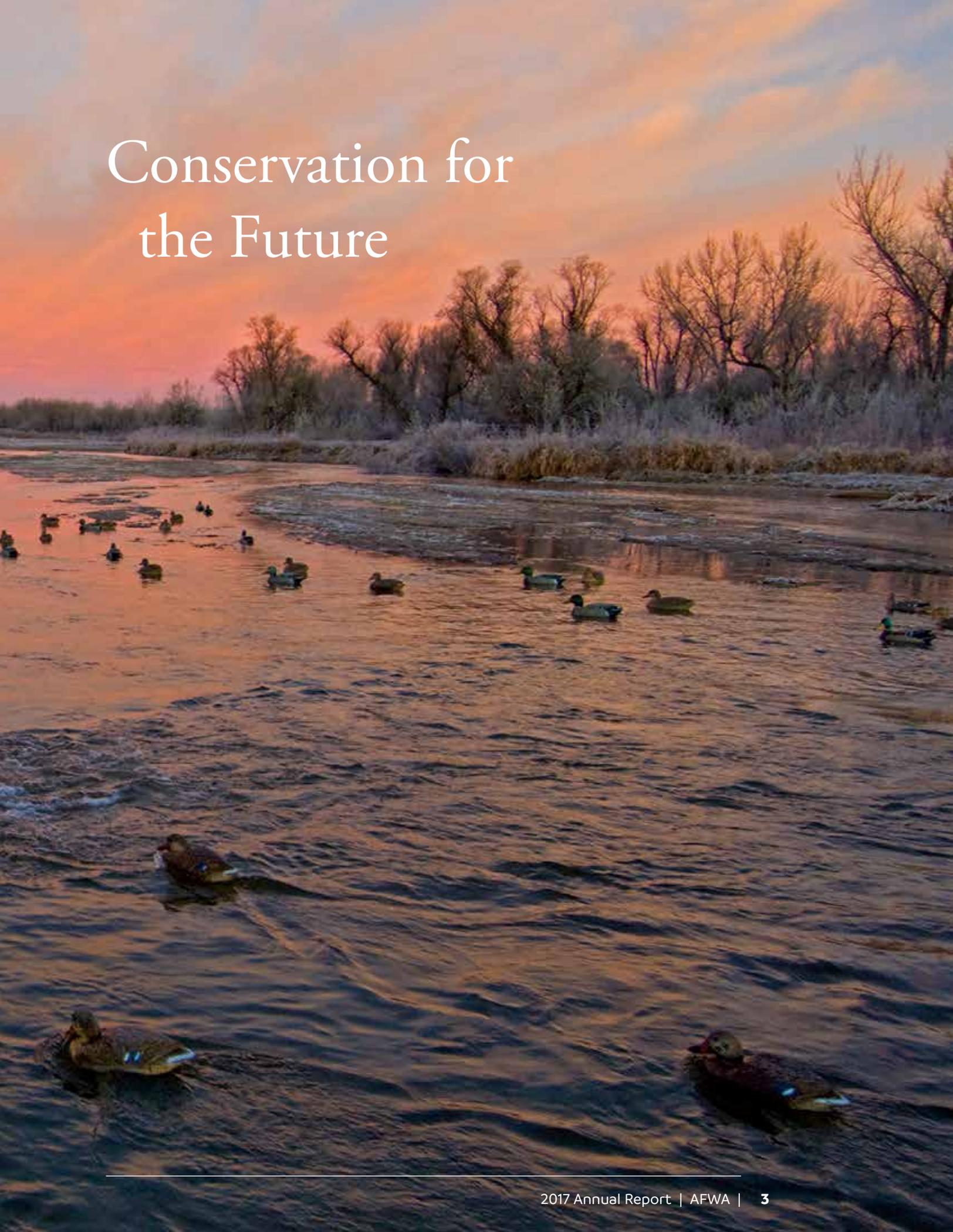


ASSOCIATION of  
FISH & WILDLIFE  
AGENCIES

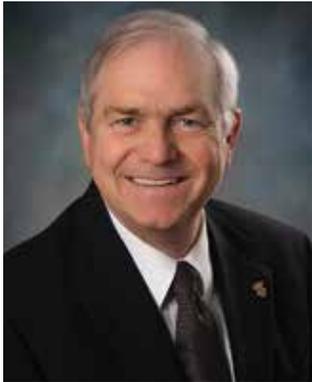
# Develop and Strengthen Conservation Partnerships



# Conservation for the Future



## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



It is my pleasure to serve as President of the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies during 2017-18. I have been a career state employee and served in top administrative posts in two state agencies, Idaho and Oregon, and I can attest to the power of working together through the Association. Now, as President, I see up close and personal just how much is being done on behalf of state, provincial, and territorial agencies to advance conservation for the future in North America.

We have a legacy piece of legislation, before us, that is a game changer for the future — Recovering America's Wildlife Act. It is the Association's highest priority, it is my highest professional priority, and I hope it will be yours as well. This legislation will deliver the financial resources we need to complete our funding model for state trust responsibilities that deliver science-based action for species of greatest conservation need consistent with the North American Model. I can't stress enough how much we will need your active engagement in support of this legislation along with energy, outdoor industry, landowners, and others.

At the same time, we need to ramp up our engagement with our traditional funding partners. I have spent considerable time with industry leaders from the angling, boating, hunting and shooting sports communities and they are facing challenges and change. These businesses have been foundational to conservation and our future will depend on them. I encourage state agency leaders to reach out to and build enduring relationships with such leaders in your respective jurisdictions.

The future also depends on continental scale collaboration. In November 2017 I had the opportunity to attend the second National Conservation Summit in Alberta, Canada. It was an eye-opener for me – coming to a deeper understanding of the funding and policy framework for delivering conservation in that country. There are lots of similarities to our work in the United States, but some distinctions as well. I am so grateful that most of the provinces and territories of Canada are members of the Association, and I have asked Association staff to look for new opportunities to help us all better understand the conservation constructs in Canada.

Thanks for the opportunity to serve you. Please reach out to me at any time with questions, comments, or observations.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Virgil Moore". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name being more prominent.

Virgil Moore  
President

## EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

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*Our Nature. Our Nation. Our Future.* As you have likely observed, this is the brand context for the Alliance for America's Fish and Wildlife. I love its pure simplicity in expressing the value of fish and wildlife conservation to the American people. It is an apt pivot point for looking back at our collective conservation successes and looking ahead to the future of conservation.

For several decades, the Association has been at the fore in its advocacy for broader, sustainable funding for stateside fish and wildlife management. The work of the Blue Ribbon Panel on Sustaining America's Diverse Fish and Wildlife led to the most recent iteration of federal legislation, the Recovering America's Wildlife Act, in December 2017. And now, early in 2018, we find ourselves in full campaign mode for success on Capitol Hill. This is a legacy issue, a legacy moment – it is front and center in our new strategic plan and the Association will put its back to the oars, alongside incredible partners, leaders, and legislative sponsors, to row across the finish line.

*Our Nature. Our Nation. Our Future.* It is also an apt pivot point for telling the story of a good life, a better life because of the wild places and wild things that persist from “sea to shining sea” as a result of proactive conservation. This is at the heart of state fish and wildlife agency relevancy in the 21st century.

These are wonderful times to be part of the work of the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies – times of optimism for shaping an enduring future for the betterment of fish and wildlife resources and public appreciation for them. Thank you for the opportunity to share in such hope as partners, colleagues, and friends.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ronald J. Regan". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Ronald J. Regan  
Executive Director



# Our Nature. Our Nation. Our Future.

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*“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. 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.”*

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*~ Johnny Morris, Founder and CEO of Bass Pro Shops*

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## ALLIANCE FOR AMERICA'S FISH & WILDLIFE CAMPAIGN

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2017 was a big year for the campaign to pass the Recovering America's Wildlife Act. The initiative was rebranded and expanded from the Blue Ribbon Panel on Sustaining America's Diverse Fish and Wildlife Resources to the Alliance for America's Fish & Wildlife (Alliance). The response from Alliance partners and supporters to the new continues to grow daily. Together, the various partners and industries associated with the Alliance represent 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.

Thanks to continued leadership and financial support from the Association of Fish & Wildlife Agencies, and the states, a new campaign logo, website, social media channels, and other branded outreach materials were developed and are now in use to give the Alliance a platform from which to advocate for the legislation. A Steering Committee for the Alliance was also convened (made up of several Blue Ribbon Panelists, State Wildlife Agency Directors and other stakeholders). All of this has been put in place strategically with the goal of advancing the legislation and demonstrating the diverse interests supporting the campaign.

Good things come to those who wait, and the Recovering America's Wildlife Act (H.R.4647) was re-introduced in the House of Representatives on December 14th by Representatives Fortenberry (R-NE-01) and Dingell (D-MI-12). The initial press coverage of the introduction was impressive, with over 100 earned media pieces in outlets across the country in the first week, plus hundreds of thousands of social media impressions. This legislation represents an innovative solution towards addressing the imminent challenges facing America's wildlife, and echoes the recommendations made by the Blue Ribbon Panel. The bill continues to advance through the U.S. House and by the time this report is released will have been heard by the House Natural Resources Subcommittee on Federal Lands and will be continuing to garner support and build momentum toward the ultimate goal of passage.

The future of fish and wildlife conservation may not be as far away as some thought. With the continued leadership of the Association, the state agencies and the Alliance partners unified by a shared vision and a common purpose, this proactive solution is attainable.

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*"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. Today we find ourselves at a critical crossroads and face a challenge that could alter our children's and grandchildren's opportunities to enjoy these resources. By investing in our State Wildlife Action Plans, which serve as a blueprint for restoring and managing the most sensitive imperiled species within our state's borders, we will be ensuring future generations can enjoy our rich wildlife heritage."*

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*~ Virgil Moore, President of the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies and Director of Idaho Fish and Game.*

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# LEGISLATIVE AND GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

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## INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

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### **Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES)**

CITES's aim is to ensure that international trade in wild animals and plants is sustainable. Sustainable trade in wildlife and wildlife products is critical to the conservation of many species. CITES is a tool available to the state fish and wildlife agencies to help them manage wildlife and requires active participation in all aspects of the Convention. Your CITES Technical Work Group (with representatives from each regional association and the Association of Fish & Wildlife Agencies) represented state and when applicable Provincial and Territorial interests at interagency meetings, the 29th meeting of the Animals Committee and the 69th meeting of the Standing Committee on issues such as sustainable use of wildlife; traceability and trade, livelihoods and rural community participation, and the conservation of American eel, paddlefish, turtles/ tortoises, and reptiles, etc.

### **Other International Conventions, Treaties and Initiatives**

The Association participated in the Trilateral Committee for Wildlife and Ecosystem Conservation and Management meeting, the Convention on Migratory Species Conference of the Parties, and the Convention on Biological Diversity's Standing Committee. The Association is also a member and active participant in the newly established IUCN US National Committee and the Sustainable Use and Livelihoods Specialist Group.

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*Sustainable trade in wildlife and wildlife products is critical to the conservation of many species.*

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### **Western Hemisphere Shorebird Reserve Network (WHSRN)**

In 2017, WHSRN designated its 100th site. This brings the network to 100 sites in 15 countries, covering a total of 36.8 million acres, or nearly 15 million hectares. WHSRN sites support the conservation of species such as Red Knot (*Calidris canutus*), American Oystercatcher (*Haematopus palliatus*), Black-bellied Plover (*Pluvialis squatarola*), and Western Snowy Plovers (*Charadrius alexandrinus nivosus*). The Association is a member of the WHSRN Hemispheric Council on behalf of the state fish and wildlife agencies.



Red Knot

## GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS

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### **New Opportunities**

The Trump Administration took the helm of the federal government in 2017, which provided new opportunities to build upon strong partnerships, inform new perspectives, identify common priorities, and strengthen state-federal relationships. These efforts span the Departments of Agriculture, Commerce, and the Interior, and are still a work-in-progress. We look forward to our continued work together to improve the management, restoration, and health of our nation's fish, wildlife and their habitats.

### **Fisheries and Aquatic Resource Policy**

Through the support of the Fisheries and Water Resources Policy Committee and Ocean Resources Policy Committee Association staff engaged on a number of freshwater and marine fisheries and aquatic resource policy issues with the new Administration. Topics of utmost interest ranged from management of Marine Protected Areas to mitigation of bird predation on fish. Furthermore, the Association submitted numerous comments to Administrative agencies including the Environmental Protection Agency and Army Corps of Engineers on the process of rescinding and replacing the definition of the Waters of the United States (WOTUS), the Food and Drug Administration Center for Veterinary Medicine on opportunities to enhance the efficiency of aquatic animal drug approvals, and the US Forest Service on its National Fish and Aquatic Stewardship Strategy.



Snowy Owl

## CONGRESSIONAL ADVOCACY

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The Association brings value to our state agency members by helping to define a national perspective and advocating Capitol Hill on their behalf. We bring value to our partners by building coalitions, identifying shared challenges and advocating for mutually beneficial solutions. Together with our State Directors, their staffs' expertise, and our conservation partners the Association works to enact Congressional legislation that benefits our collective conservation interests and supports states' authority to manage fish and wildlife resources within their borders for current and future generations.

### **Recovering America's Wildlife Act**

While much ground work was laid in the Senate for the introduction of a companion bill, this priority piece of bipartisan conservation legislation was introduced in the House of Representatives on December 14, by Representatives Fortenberry (R-NE-01) and Dingell (D-MI-12). The Recovering America's Wildlife Act, H.R. 4647, provides a few legislative improvements and more certainties to states over the previous version. We will continue working side-by-side with our conservation partners and members of the Alliance for America's Fish and Wildlife to introduce a Senate version and enact this critically important piece of legislation.

### **Farm Bill**

With the 2014 Farm Bill set to expire at the end of September 2018, the House and Senate Agriculture Committees have spent much of this past year preparing to write a new Farm Bill that will govern US farm and food policy for the next five years. This presents an opportunity for the Association to improve the design and implementation of current programs, and we are committed to working with Congress and the Administration to pass a 2018 Farm Bill that delivers strong conservation programs that promote healthy fish, wildlife, and habitats.

In early 2017, AFWA's 2018 Farm Bill Working Group convened for a multi-day meeting to develop policy recommendations for Farm Bill conservation programs and policies.

The efforts of this working group culminated in the adoption of AFWA's Policy Priorities for the 2018 Farm Bill at the AFWA Business Meeting in March. These priorities will continue to guide the Association's advocacy work as Congress moves forward with debating the 2018 Farm Bill. Through the Association, state fish and wildlife agencies are also represented on multiple conservation and agriculture coalitions, many of which have developed policy recommendations that reflect and support the Association's priorities.



Big Horned Sheep in agricultural field

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### **Focusing on Our Nation's Waters and Fisheries**

Congress kicked off the 115th session with a flurry of discussion surrounding legislation that, if enacted, would both directly and indirectly impact the management of aquatic resources across the country. Association staff spent a significant amount of time working with Congressional offices and partners in an effort to ensure legislation advancing through Congress supported state led management of fisheries and the conservation of the habitat on which they depend such as, the National Fish Habitat Conservation Through Partnerships Act of which was reported out of the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee, arresting the forward progression of the Commercial Vessel Incidental Discharge Act, introduction of legislation to support balanced management of marine mammals and imperiled fish, amendments to hydropower legislation, and more.

### **Improving Recovery of Fish and Wildlife**

The Endangered Species Act (ESA) is a cornerstone piece of legislation that was enacted in 1973 and last amended in 1988, to facilitate the recovery of federally threatened and endangered species of fish, wildlife, and plants. The Association and our State agency members support this critically important statute but realized that statutory and regulatory improvements are needed to fully realize Congressional intent, capitalize on states member agencies' expertise and community relationships, and most importantly recover more species. The Association transitioned our "General Principles for Improving Implementation of the Endangered Species Act" into a technical guidance document that more fully expounds upon the various perspectives and desired improvements of the States and identifies areas where statutory and rule changes could enhance, improve, and likely expedite the recovery of federally listed species. This document may be used to guide any future legislation and discussions with federal agencies and Congress for improving the recovery of fish and wildlife species through an enhanced role of our State member agencies. Further, the Associated assisted several State Directors with preparations for hearings and briefings on how to improve recovery of our nations' fish and wildlife under the ESA.



Atlantic Salmon eggs



Rainbow Trout

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### **Managing the Health of Our Nation's Wildlife**

Providing our State agency members with the tools they need to manage the health of our nation's fish and wildlife is paramount. To that end, the Association worked with state agency health experts to assess the current status of and challenges for managing the health and welfare of fish and wildlife under the Controlled Substances Act (CSA). While the CSA does not specifically mention fish or wildlife, states and the fish and wildlife they manage as a public trust resource are affected by implementation of the CSA. We developed draft Best Management Practices for state agencies as a reference and to help meet the spirit and intent of the CSA. Further, we began preparing a legislative strategy to enhance states' ability to manage the health and welfare of fish and wildlife under the CSA.

Concerns in Congress continue to rise as new positive detections for Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) appear in new states across the country. To help combat this growing wildlife crisis, the Chronic Wasting Disease Management Act (H.R. 4454) and the Chronic Wasting Disease Support for States Act (S. 2252) were introduced in December. These bills would provide funding to the States and Tribes for surveillance, monitoring and applied research on CWD.

### **Modernizing the Pittman-Robertson Wildlife Fund for Tomorrow's Needs**

It was with great wisdom that the Wallop-Breaux Boating Safety amendment to the Dingell-Johnson Sport Fish Restoration Program included the ability for State fish and wildlife agencies to provide communication, education, and outreach to the public on the importance of fish and fish habitat conservation, the contributions of fishers and boaters to this critical conservation work, and to promote the conservation of these treasured resources. The Modernizing the Pittman-Robertson Wildlife Fund for Tomorrow's Needs Act of 2017 (H.R. 2591, S. 1613) seeks to establish similar capabilities for wildlife and would allow states to communicate with the public to recruit, retain and reactive hunters and recreational target shooters. We will continue to advocate for enactment of this legislation to update and modernize the this conservation law, which represents the lifeblood of States' wildlife conservation work, to meet the different and changing needs of today's citizens.

### **Fixing Wildfire Budget Borrowing**

The Association and our partners continue to advocate for Congress to fix the wildfire budget-borrowing problem and provide forest management reforms. Together, they will provide much needed resources and capabilities for the management and improved health of our national forests, which is vital for managing and meeting the habitat requirements of our nation's fish and wildlife.

## OTHER LEGISLATION & POLICIES

The Association engages with Congress and the Administration to strengthen support for science-based, state fish and wildlife agency led conservation. In 2017, the Association and its members sent letters to Congress; delivered testimony and briefings; participated in coalitions; and provided comments to federal agencies on numerous topics, including:

- Access to public lands for hunting & fishing
- Aquatic and terrestrial invasive species legislation and state authority
- Aquatic Animal Drug Approval Process and Aquaculture Regulations
- Budget sequestration
- Chronic Wasting Disease Legislation and USDA Certification Program
- Clean Water Act and state authority
- Comprehensive energy and hydropower reform legislation
- Controlled Substances Act
- Drought
- Double Crested Cormorant Predation on Fish
- Endangered Species Act
- Farm Bill implementation and reauthorization preparations
- Federal budget and appropriations
- Federal lands management & conservation planning
- Fish Passage and hydroconnectivity
- Fish and Wildlife Health
- Lacey Act
- Land & Water Conservation Fund reauthorization
- Magnuson-Stevens Act reauthorization
- Marine Protected Area Management
- Marine Mammal Protection Act
- Migratory Bird Treaty Act and proposed rules
- National Fish Habitat Conservation Through Partnerships Act
- National Wildlife Refuge System proposed rules and legislation
- Natural resources adaptation
- Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Act
- North American Wetlands Conservation Act
- Partners for Fish and Wildlife Act reauthorization
- Pittman-Robertson Wildlife Restoration Act modernization and marksmanship amendments
- Public lands legislation
- Recovering America's Wildlife Act
- Sage Grouse & Lesser Prairie Chicken legislation
- Sikes Act
- Sportsmen's packages and legislation
- Sport Fish Restoration & Boating Trust Fund
- State fish and wildlife agency management
- Wildfire budget borrowing and forest management reform

## LEGAL STRATEGY PROGRAM

In its fourth year, AFWA's Legal Strategy program has filed amicus briefs in support of state authority to manage wildlife, worked with AFWA's Executive and Legal Committees to clarify the relationship between State and Federal conservation and land management agencies, and responded to issues of national importance revolving around the central aim of furthering state-federal collaboration. The Legal Strategy has raised awareness of the North American Model of Wildlife Conservation and provided legal analysis and support for other key AFWA initiatives such as the Joint Federal/State Task Force on Federal Assistance and the Feral and Free-Ranging Cat Work Group.



Learning to turkey hunt

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### **Legal Counsel and Analysis**

Association counsel tracked a number of judicial, legislative, and regulatory developments in 2017, and continued to offer forums and clearinghouses for emerging issues in state wildlife management, bringing State practitioners together online and in person. With the input of State directors and attorneys, the Association provided comment on an environmental assessment supporting the CITES furbearer export program, analyzed and responded to federal rules affecting national parks and refuges, and provided forums for discussion on emerging topics including interstate enforcement of Lacey Act provisions, treaty rights, and developments in application of the public trust doctrine across discrete areas of natural resource law and policy.

In 2018, AFWA's legal counsel expects to engage in the scholarly legal debate surrounding cooperative federalism in natural resource management, and closely track legislation and rulemaking pertaining to federal aid in wildlife restoration and education, endangered species management, and the role of the judiciary in resolving disputes over authority.

We continue to offer general legal services, including intellectual property protection and corporate governance, to state fish and wildlife agencies, regional associations, flyway councils, and other entities.

### **Law School Outreach, Curriculum Development, and Publications**

Last year, the Association broke ground on a legal search platform tailored for students and practitioners of state fish and wildlife law, and we expect to make this resource available to the public in early 2018.

Also, AFWA's general counsel Carol Frampton taught two law courses at MSU, on wildlife law and energy development. Students in those courses contributed to multiple issues of the Wildlife Law Call, a periodical newsletter containing updates and articles on case law, legislation, and regulation concerning natural resources. A law school in Utah will likely soon begin to offer Carol's curriculum, joining the company of law schools in Michigan, Georgia, and South Carolina. The Association has continued to create opportunities for conservation law internships, hosting one intern in its office last summer, one in Michigan, and two in New York.

We are excited for the opportunities that 2018 will bring, as we endeavor to build out our network of stakeholders in conservation education, increase awareness of state wildlife management authority, and continue to foster a collaborative network of present and future practitioners of wildlife law.

# CONSERVATION INITIATIVES

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PARTNERSHIPS TO CONSERVE OUR NATURAL  
RESOURCES FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS

## BIRD CONSERVATION

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### North American Bird Conservation Initiative

The North American Bird Conservation Initiative (NABCI) plays a key role in bringing federal, state, and non-government bird conservation partners together to collectively address some of the biggest issues in bird conservation. In 2017, NABCI completed a five-year strategic plan which identifies three primary goals: 1) maintain a well-coordinated bird conservation community to achieve strategic conservation across the Western Hemisphere; 2) facilitate science-based conservation efforts that support healthy bird populations; and 3) inform and support effective policy to advance bird conservation.

One key strategy for maintaining a well-coordinated bird community is to produce tools that enable partners to communicate about critical issues on a national level. The Farm Bill is the largest source of funding for conservation on private lands and provides critical support for bird habitat. In August 2017, NABCI released a State of the Birds Farm Bill Special Report; the report focuses on the critical role the Farm Bill plays in supporting farmers, ranchers, and birds and serves as an important tool for bird conservation partners to communicate about the importance of strong conservation programs in this legislation. NABCI partnered with the American Forest Foundation and the Forest Resources Association in October 2017 for a briefing and reception on Capitol Hill to showcase the Farm Bill's broad benefits for private landowners and wildlife.

In 2017, NABCI launched a National Bird Conservation Social Science Coordinator position, pioneered in response to the increasing interest in incorporating social science into bird conservation decisions and practices and administered through Virginia Tech. The Coordinator increases the capacity of NABCI's Human Dimensions (HD) Subcommittee to connect bird conservation professionals with HD tools and resources to more effectively address bird conservation challenges. In 2017, the HD Subcommittee produced a short communication tool that defines Human Dimensions and highlighting HD applications, provided trainings to bird conservation professionals at national conferences on applying HD research to conservation issues, and worked with the North American Waterfowl Management Plan to incorporate a birder/viewer focus to a national study of attitudes and preferences about waterfowl.



Red-winged Blackbirds





Cerulean warbler

### Harvest Information Program

AFWA's Bird Conservation Committee (BCC) also brings partners together to collaborate on pressing bird conservation issues, with a state-oriented focus. The Harvest Information Program (HIP) is a cooperative state-federal partnership designed to provide reliable estimates of hunter activity and harvest for all migratory game birds. To address challenges with HIP sample frames and survey design that negatively affect data quality, program costs, and decision-making, in 2017 the BCC's HIP Working Group proposed a voluntary, national program to administer HIP through a single, standardized source, while remaining state-controlled. Based on this recommendation, the Working Group will develop a national HIP pilot program with an anticipated launch in 2019. A standardized HIP system will enable improved data collection at lower costs with benefits to state fish and wildlife agencies, the US Fish and Wildlife Service, and migratory game bird hunters.

### Anthropogenic Threats: Feral and Free-Ranging Cats

Feral and free-ranging cats are recognized as a threat to global biodiversity, and predation by domestic cats is the number one direct, human-caused threat to birds in the US and Canada, with similarly negative impacts to small mammals, amphibians, and reptiles. In 2016, seven AFWA Committees formed an interdisciplinary task group to address some of the challenges of feral and free-ranging cats on state lands managed for wildlife. In 2017, the Feral and Free-Ranging Cat Work Group summarized regulatory language for all 50 states that applies to restrictions on release, feeding, or maintaining feral or free-ranging cats. This summary helps clarify jurisdictional authority over cats in each state. This Work Group also developed a bibliography of ~300 articles focused on issues regarding feral and free-ranging cats and representing a diverse array of perspectives.

### Southern Wings

Thirty state fish and wildlife agencies have contributed over \$2.7 million to conservation partnerships in Guatemala, Nicaragua, the Dominican Republic, Colombia, Costa Rica, Mexico, Ecuador, Bolivia, and Honduras since 2009. These partnerships have implemented strategic conservation actions for priority shared migratory bird species. They are engaging in innovative partnerships in critical locations that work with landowners, help provide socioeconomic benefits, guide restoration opportunities to areas that most benefit our shared species, and more. Southern Wings is one of the tools available to state fish and wildlife agencies to reverse the declines of hundreds of migratory birds throughout the Western Hemisphere through annual life cycle conservation action.



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### **North American Waterfowl Management Plan (NAWMP)**

For over 30 years, the North American Waterfowl Management Plan has been the mainstay of waterfowl conservation and has served as a beacon of success for wildlife conservation worldwide. The Plan has demonstrated how continental-scale conservation can be achieved. Critical to the long-term success of the plan is the collaboration of governments and non-government organizations in Canada, the United States, and Mexico. The plan is visionary and through updates every five years, it identifies the needs and desires of hunters, bird watchers, other outdoor recreationists and the public.

The implementation of the 2012 NAWMP Revision is continuing as a new update is being prepared in 2018. We know from experience that waterfowl populations, habitat, and people must operate in an integrated system, where integration means considering the impact of specific management decisions and incorporating these into conservation decisions such that we evaluate the benefits and trade-offs of alternative decisions. Additionally, experience has revealed that integration of the NAWMP goals may most productively be pursued at the regional level (e.g. state or Joint Venture) and continual learning processes will make the NAWMP a success well into the future.

State fish and wildlife agencies are key to the future of waterfowl habitat projects at local, regional, and international scales. Since the beginning of NAWMP in 1986, state agencies have invested more than \$83 million USD in wetland projects in Canada, and the Association continues to encourage state agencies to invest. The Canadian portion of the Prairie Pothole Region supports an average of 66% of North America's breeding ducks. During 2017, forty states contributed a total of \$3.8 million USD to Canadian projects. The state funds, when matched by Ducks Unlimited, North American Wetlands Conservation Act and Canadian sources, will provide a total annual investment in waterfowl habitat in Canada of approximately \$19 million USD.



Gadwall

## AMPHIBIAN & REPTILE CONSERVATION



Boreal Toad

Formerly a subcommittee of the AFWA Wildlife Resource Policy Committee, AFWA leadership created a full Amphibian & Reptile Conservation Committee in summer of 2017. The Committee recruited 19 new members representing 16 states, 1 Canadian province, and 1 federal agency, bringing the total number of members to 39.

The salamander fungal pathogen, *Batrachochytrium salamandrivorans* (Bsal), is still not detected in the US. Committee leadership successfully secured funding in late 2016 from a private foundation as part of a larger effort on general wildlife health strategies and policies. In 2017, this grant helped assess the susceptibility of nine US native salamander and frog species that are widely distributed or high conservation priorities for states; more species will be assessed in 2018. Research into vaccinations or other treatment and mitigation options was also supported. These findings will help states prioritize response efforts if and when Bsal arrives in the US.

The Committee continues to focus on sustainable use and applying the North American Model to herpetofauna. In particular, the Committee renewed its interest in working with the AFWA Law Enforcement Committee, and with Partners in Amphibian and Reptile Conservation (PARC), toward development of resources to address issues of illegal trade and trafficking in amphibians and reptiles.

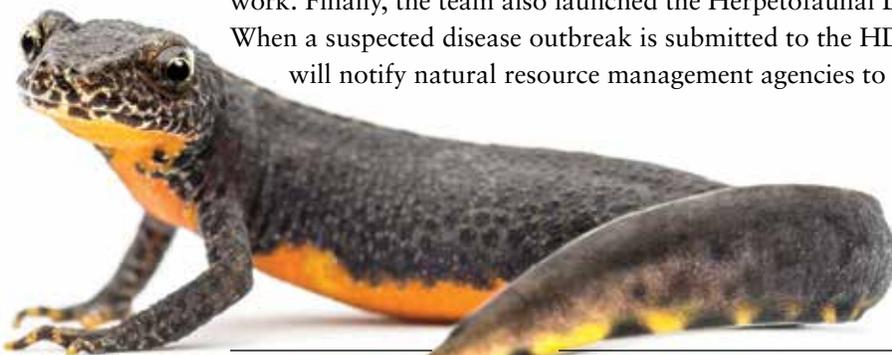
### Partners in Amphibian and Reptile Conservation (PARC)

The PARC Strategic Plan was completed in 2017, with three focal areas: 1) growing the partnership network; 2) proactive species conservation; and 3) habitat conservation.



Priority Amphibian and Reptile Conservation Areas (PARCAs) are geographic areas of particular importance to herpetofauna, designed to encourage voluntary habitat management, restoration, or acquisition, and to contribute to overall ecosystem health. In 2017, candidate PARCAs were identified in three new states (Arkansas, Iowa, and Washington), in partnership with local state fish and wildlife agency personnel, and with funding from U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and U.S. Forest Service. PARCAs will be completed in over half of the continental US by December 2018.

Amphibian and reptile diseases continue to be a major conservation concern. To help those wanting to conduct pathogen surveillance in herpetofaunal populations, the PARC Disease Task Team (DTT) published a paper on standardized approaches to this type of surveillance work. Finally, the team also launched the Herpetofaunal Disease Alert System (HDAS). When a suspected disease outbreak is submitted to the HDAS, and the PARC DTT will notify natural resource management agencies to help facilitate a local response.



Alpine Newt

## INVASIVE SPECIES

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The AFWA Invasive Species Committee continues to pursue interstate and interjurisdictional partnerships to improve invasive species management. For example, the Committee received the Association's endorsement for their *Model Regulation for State Watercraft Inspection and Decontamination Programs* document, supporting efforts of the Western Regional Panel for Aquatic Nuisance Species. Additionally, in a pilot effort to engage in implementation of the Western Invasive Weed Action Plan within ongoing Sagebrush Biome management, the Committee will work to strengthen state-level coordination between departments of agriculture and fish & wildlife agencies.

The Committee tracked the April 2017 DC District Court decision that upheld that the Lacey Act injurious wildlife provision, Title 18, does not prohibit interstate movements within the 49 continental United States. The Committee will work with other AFWA committees to explore both short- and long-term approaches, such as model state language to help improve state authority for invasive species management, to address interstate movement concerns.

The Committee is partnering with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Pet Industry Joint Advisory Council (PIJAC) as part of updating their existing Memorandum of Understanding with the Association, to address risk of species not in trade.

Finally, the Association officially approved an Invasive Species Advisory Committee report on Strengthening Federal and State Coordination, and endorsed its primary recommendation regarding staffing.



Burmese python

## NATIONAL FISH HABITAT PARTNERSHIP

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The National Fish Habitat Partnership has implemented nearly 80 projects across 29 states in 2017. Since 2006, the National Fish Habitat Partnership has implemented over 759 projects in all 50 states through 20 regional partnerships. Many of these projects have been fostered through coordination efforts by state fish and wildlife and natural resource agencies and are making a difference conserving fish habitat and improving angling opportunities across the country.

## 2017 WATERS TO WATCH



The National Fish Habitat Partnership has implemented nearly 80 projects across 29 states in 2017. Since 2006, the National Fish Habitat Partnership has implemented over 759 projects in all 50 states through 20 regional partnerships. Many of these projects have been fostered through coordination efforts by state fish and wildlife and natural resource agencies and are making a difference conserving fish habitat and improving angling opportunities across the country.

### **Benbow Dam Removal, California**

Project Submission by The California Fish Passage Forum

### **Boundary Creek, Oregon**

Project Submission by The Western Native Trout Initiative

### **Crane Lake, Minnesota**

Project Submission by The Midwest Glacial Lakes Partnership

### **Newport Bay, California**

Project Submission by The Pacific Marine and Estuarine Partnership

### **Roosevelt Lake, Arizona**

Project Submission by The Reservoir Fish Habitat Partnership

### **Shelikof Creek, Alaska**

Project Submission by The Southeast Alaska Fish Habitat Partnership

### **Tincup Creek, Idaho**

Project Submission by The Desert Fish Habitat Partnership and Western Native Trout Initiative

For more information on project maps and descriptions of the “Waters to Watch” list for 2017, Visit: <http://www.fishhabitat.org/waters-to-watch/archive/2017>

## **NOAA Funds 2017 National Fish Habitat Partnership Priorities and Projects**

In 2017, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) provided a total of over \$100,000 across four Fish Habitat Partnerships to support prioritization, monitoring, and data analysis projects. These projects support the goals of the National Fish Habitat Action Plan and align with NOAA’s efforts to protect, restore, and promote stewardship of coastal and marine habitat to support our nation’s fisheries for future generations.

More on NOAA’s involvement in the National Fish Habitat Partnership can be found at <http://www.habitat.noaa.gov/protection/nfhap/index.html>.

## **Beyond the Pond**



In 2017, Beyond the Pond, 501c3 non-profit for the National Fish Habitat Partnership partnered with RepYourWater, a Colorado-based angling and hunting gear company. RepYourWater created a Driftless Area 2.0 hat, with 1% of sales going to Beyond the Pond. Sales of the hat will benefit conservation work through the Driftless Area Restoration Effort (DARE), a National Fish Habitat

Partnership Partner. RepYourWater is a leader in providing creative and unique designs on high-quality apparel and merchandise as well as making a difference for wildlife habitat around the country.

In addition to benefitting from 1% of sales of the Driftless 2.0 hat, Beyond the Pond will also receive 1% of all hat sales from Wisconsin, Iowa, and Illinois state hats, as they make up the Driftless Area. RepYourWater state hats can be found here: <http://bit.ly/2gZ9X3u>.

Along with Beyond the Pond, RepYourWater donates 1% of sales of corresponding designs to the Trout Unlimited chapters of Canada, Wyoming, Colorado, Pennsylvania, Southeastern Conservation Project, New Mexico, and Connecticut, Backcountry Hunters and Anglers Chapters in Utah, Alaska and Montana, the Wild Steelhead Coalition, New Mexico Wildlife Federation, Delta Waterfowl Idaho Wildlife Federation, Boundary Waters Trust, the Billfish Foundation, and the Bonefish and Tarpon Trust. RepYourWater also donates 10% of sales from its conservation collection to their conservation partners, which Beyond the Pond is fortunate to be included in. Additional details on the conservation collection can be found here: <http://bit.ly/2lAjG1u>.

## FURBEARER RESOURCES

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### Best Management Practices

Since 2003, Best Management Practices (BMPs) for 22 species of furbearers have been released. Field projects to produce a BMP for trapping wolverine are underway. BMPs are living documents and are continually updated with new trapping devices and techniques. The BMP effort is the largest trap research effort ever conducted with over 450 traps having been tested to date. BMP documents are being widely used among trapper education programs (~85%) as well as among agency and university outreach and research programs. A recent survey by the Association also indicates that the vast majority of trappers across the U.S. are using BMP traps. The ultimate goal of this program is to improve the welfare of furbearers captured in traps and sustain regulated trapping programs.



Wolverine

The Eight Annual JMC (Joint Management Committee for the Agreement on International Humane Trapping Standards) meeting was scheduled to be hosted by the European Union in 2017. However, the meeting was not held. It is expected that the annual meeting of the Committee will resume in 2018. Maintaining the Understanding the U.S. has with the EU is an important part of furbearer management for the states, as the Understanding allows fur harvested here to be imported into the EU.

## WILDLIFE HEALTH AND DISEASE

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### AFWA Steps Up Efforts to Combat Chronic Wasting Disease

Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD), a degenerative neurological disease of deer, elk, moose, and other cervids, continued to make news in 2017. Although clear cases of transmission of CWD to humans have never been found, preliminary findings from an ongoing research study in Canada made headlines around the world in mid-2017 by suggesting that monkeys may contract CWD after feeding on meat from infected deer. The disease is 100% fatal in infected deer, and is similar to bovine spongiform encephalopathy or “Mad Cow Disease” which has resulted in over 200 human deaths in Europe.

AFWA’s Fish and Wildlife Health Committee stepped up its efforts around CWD this year, commissioning a set of Best Management Practices that states and partners can use to manage CWD in wild herds of deer, elk, and moose. The committee’s meetings, conference calls, and webinars have served as an important forum for discussion of CWD and how this insidious disease might be managed more effectively by our state and federal agencies working together.



White-tailed deer

## STATE WILDLIFE ACTION PLANS & STATE AND TRIBAL WILDLIFE GRANTS

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The Association and Georgia Wildlife Resources Division hosted a national meeting on State Wildlife Action Plans in October in Pine Mountain, Georgia. The meeting brought together practitioners to discuss best practices for implementing newly revised State Wildlife Action Plans. Over 120 individuals from state and federal agencies, tribes and private conservation groups participated in the 3-day meeting. An outcome will be publication of a document that will help guide future implementation of the plans. The meeting was partially funded by a multistate conservation grant.

The Association and the US Fish and Wildlife Service signed a joint memo in December updating guidance for the review and revision of State Wildlife Action Plans. The guidance was developed by a working group under the Wildlife Diversity Conservation and Funding Committee and had extensive input from the states and the Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Program. The new guidance is intended to streamline future revisions to the plans.

The Association held a Fly-in in March for states and partners to advocate for the State and Tribal Wildlife Grants Program. Over 200 members of Congress signed a Dear Colleague Letter supporting funding for the program which resulted in a \$1 million proposed increase.

## CLIMATE ADAPTATION

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Amber Pairis receives the 2017 Climate Adaptation Leadership Award for Natural Resources

In 2017, the Association was a core sponsor of the Climate Adaptation Leadership Award for Natural Resources. This annual award recognizes people and organizations for their outstanding work in raising awareness and addressing the impacts of climate change on the nation's living natural resources. Eight organizations and individuals were honored at the National Adaptation Forum in St. Paul, MN. Recipients from the states included Amber Pairis, a former AFWA employee, who started the innovative Climate Science Alliance as a partnership between the California Department of Fish and Wildlife and the California LCC. The other award went to the Massachusetts Wildlife Climate Action Tool which was developed by the Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife and many partners. It was created for decision-makers, conservation practitioners, and managers in Massachusetts, but it offers broadly relevant information and could serve as a model for other regions.

The Association held a symposium at the National Adaptation Forum highlighting ways that State Wildlife Action Plans have incorporated ways to make conservation decisions despite uncertainty about the impacts and time of climate change.

## ENERGY

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In 2017 the Association completed a Needs Assessment that identified wind energy development, solar energy, transmission lines, and pipelines as the core energy issues that require investment in research and information sharing to increase state ability to interact with energy development. To help meet these goals, we organized a Wind-Wildlife Workshop at the National Renewable Energy Lab's Wind Technology Center in partnership with Bat Conservation International and the American Wind Wildlife Institute. Thirty biologists from state agencies, federal agencies, consultants, and the wind industry worked together to learn about current techniques for studying the impacts of wind turbines on bats, grassland birds, and raptors.

The Association was represented by Kansas Parks and Wildlife and the Oklahoma Department of Wildlife in a new forum hosted by the American Wind Wildlife Institute to exchange perspectives on approaches underlying our values related to conservation and wind energy siting, seek better understanding of opportunities and constraints related to wind energy and wildlife, and identify opportunities for potential collaboration.



Wind-Wildlife Workshop participants practice a post-construction fatality survey for bats.

## COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES

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### Conservation Education

Conservation education is one of the most vital tools for enhancing public understanding and appreciation of fish and wildlife management while shaping long-term conservation and enjoyment of natural resources.

Designed by experts from state fish and wildlife agencies, the North American Conservation Education Strategy (CE Strategy) strengthens and unifies the conservation efforts of Association member agencies and partners through research-based Core Concepts and messages about fish and wildlife conservation translated into K-12 academic standards to shape students' environmental literacy, stewardship and outdoor skills.

Conservation Education becomes an effective, dynamic means for the Association, its members and partners to achieve AFWA's Strategic Plan through an informed and involved citizenry that: understands the value of our fish and wildlife resources as a public trust; appreciates that conservation and management of terrestrial and water resources are essential to sustaining fish and wildlife, the outdoor landscape and the quality of our lives; understands and actively participates in the stewardship and support of our natural resources; understands, accepts and/or lawfully participates in hunting, fishing, trapping, boating, wildlife watching, shooting sports and other types of resource related outdoor recreation; and understands the need for and actively supports funding for fish and wildlife conservation.



Monarch butterflies

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The Conservation Education Strategy Tool Kit contains resources developed by the Association to support conservation educators who offer fish and wildlife based programs. The newest resources developed as part of AFWA's Conservation Education Strategy is the Teaching about the Magnificent Monarch: Resource Recommendations for Conservation Educators Guide. This guide is designed for classroom teachers and non-formal wildlife educators to support high-quality conservation education efforts that align with academic standards as well as the AFWA Conservation Education Core Concepts and Framework. The resources included in this guide represent the best-available resources for educators to use when teaching about monarch butterflies.

### Project WILD



The Association took over management of Project WILD, a pre-K-12 conservation education curriculum on wildlife management and ecology on March 1st, 2017, officially acquiring Project WILD and 'hiring' two existing Project WILD staff located in Houston and Austin, Kelly Reynolds and Marc LeFebre. Subsequently, Elena Takaki was hired as the Project WILD Director. Most of their effort in 2017 was on operations, strategic planning and business planning.

The Project WILD team has also accomplished the following:

- Held an Annual Meeting for state coordinators
- Completed work on the final stages of the new terrestrial Project WILD teacher's guide, which will be ready by March 2018
- Developed letters of agreement with four new state coordinators and one national coordinator
- Held the first subcommittee meeting at the AFWA annual meeting in Utah
- Built a strong and growing social media presence

### An Experimental Partnership with the U.S. Forest Service

The Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies and the U.S. Forest Service entered into a unique partnership in 2017 to jointly fund a liaison position. The intent of this position is to build collaborative relationships, foster communication, resolve problems, and work on specific projects between the partners. Over the course of the past year, the liaison tackled several projects including developing a steering committee of Forest Service, Association, and state fish and wildlife agency members to oversee the work of the liaison; an in-depth look at Memorandums of Understanding between state fish and wildlife agencies and the Forest Service; connecting the Forest Service planning staff with the SWAP Coordinators; exploring opportunities to address wilderness-associated policy and implementation considerations; and fostering a variety of communications between the Association and the Forest Service. By all accounts this shared liaison partnership has been successful, with both parties agreeing to extend the arrangement for another year (through 2018).



## AFWA FISH AND WILDLIFE TRAFFICKING ILLEGAL COMMERCIALIZATION INTELLIGENCE SUMMIT

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During the Law Enforcement Sub-Committee meeting at the 2016 Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies Annual Meeting in Philadelphia, members discussed a lack of intelligence sharing among conservation law enforcement agencies. The 2017 AFWA Fish and Wildlife Trafficking Illegal Commercialization Intelligence Summit was the first step at addressing this issue. The summit was held August 15-17, 2017 in Denver, Colorado and proved to be a vital step in developing intelligence on inter-state wildlife issues, sharing best practices, identifying emerging trends and considering solutions to the illegal commercialization of fish and wildlife.

Working closely with AFWA leadership, the summit increased communication and information sharing between state and federal conservation law enforcement agencies and enhanced professional networks. The summit also highlighted the need to strengthen internal and external relationships to build upon the existing information network. Attendees developed a common vision of the intelligence and investigations framework that promotes inter-agency communication, information sharing and collaboration to support the North American conservation model. Participants also explored the creation, expansion or enhancement of a database or other electronic framework for communication between agencies to effectively disseminate high priority intelligence/investigative information. For the future, summit organizers fully anticipate an increase in the number of joint operations combatting the illegal commercialization and trafficking of fish and wildlife resources.



Gila Monster

# FINANCIAL & BUSINESS STRATEGIES

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A WEALTH AND DIVERSITY OF COLLABORATIVE  
WORK FOR THE BENEFIT OF FISH & WILDLIFE  
ACROSS NORTH AMERICA



## MULTISTATE CONSERVATION GRANT PROGRAM

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Since 2000, the Multistate Conservation Grant Program has dedicated \$102 million to critical national and regional level conservation priorities.

Multistate Conservation Grant Program projects implemented in 2017 include:

- **Increasing leadership capacity at all levels within state fish and wildlife agencies** — Management and delivery of the National Conservation Leadership Institute (NCLI) program targeted executive level leadership and provided inter-organizational networking opportunities, while agency employees at all levels benefited from access to training in the form of online courses, webinars, and face-to-face offerings. Management Assistance Team (MAT) staff consulted with a total of fifteen individual state fish and wildlife agencies, and worked specifically with the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission to develop and assist with the delivery of the North Carolina Wildlife Leadership Development Program, an internal leadership and professional development program in that state. Partnership work with organizations such as U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Wildlife Management Institute, and Recreational Boating & Fishing Foundation supported ongoing dialogue about significant issues facing natural resource management in North America.
- **Implementation of the National Hunting and Shooting Sports Action Plan** – The Council to Advance Hunting and the Shooting Sports planned and hosted more than 8 state agency R3 workshops (Virginia, Utah, Kentucky, Iowa, Missouri, Florida, Texas, Maine) aimed at implementing state level plans of the National Hunting and Shooting Sports Action Plan. The Council also continued to develop and enhance the communication of its website, social media and the National R3 Community – a professional online website with over 1,300 R3 professionals that allows for online program sharing, creative development and R3 education among state wildlife agencies, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and industry members

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*Since 2000, the Multistate Conservation Grant Program has dedicated \$102 million to critical national and regional level conservation priorities.*

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## PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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### National Conservation Leadership Institute

What began 12 years ago with a need to expand leadership capacity in natural resource management, continues to experience tremendous growth and ongoing evolution with each new Cohort. Members of the National Conservation Leadership Institute (NCLI) Board met with staff to review the significant growth experienced by the program in recent years, and to discuss ways to maximize the potential of both the NCLI and its expanding network. Members of this group engaged in dialogue about future vision and developed new strategies to harness the momentum that continued in 2017. Staff partnered with Board members to develop and administer a comprehensive Alumni community survey aimed at gauging the effectiveness of the NCLI program.



Cohort 12

In 2017 the NCLI community also saw the graduation of the Institute's 11th Cohort, and welcomed the 36 Fellows of Cohort 12, bringing the total number of NCLI graduates to 389. Diversity amongst participants continued to grow and financial support for the program was

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strong, with Alumni donations increasing by 33%. Alumni community engagement also grew, with graduates planning the first alumni-funded and managed continuing education event, Unleashing the Power: NCLI 2.0. This event will take place in early 2018 at the National Conservation Training Center in Shepherdstown, WV.

*The NCLI welcomes direct donations to help prepare the next generation of conservation leaders. Visit [www.conservationleadership.org](http://www.conservationleadership.org) for more information about the NCLI and how to become a Fellow or supporter. The NCLI is staffed by AFWA's Management Assistance Team.*

### **Management Assistance Team**

AFWA's Management Assistance Team (MAT) acts as an internal consulting and training resource for all fifty-one state fish and wildlife agencies. MAT's work helps to advance natural resource management goals through organizational, leadership, and professional development opportunities. MAT's products and services concentrate on agency administration—the people part of the equation.

In 2017, MAT's work continued to support the growth of leadership capacity at all levels in state fish and wildlife agencies through continued access to face-to-face and online training, as well as consulting and support services. MAT staff conducted presentations and offered workshops at several national and regional conferences, and worked directly with North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission to develop and deliver an internal leadership development program for that state. MAT also developed and implemented a new six-week online course, Reflections on Agency Management, based on the recently published book *Beyond the Critters*, by Dr. Dwight Guynn.

### **2017 Breakdown**

MAT conducted 17 online courses, 5 webinars and 3 face-to-face workshops with training hours totaling 6,387. Of MAT's online offerings, 5 webinars and 1 online course were new to the catalogue and 1 online course was revised. MAT also provided leadership and organizational management consulting to 15 individual state agencies, serving a total of 31 states in 2017.

## 2017 ANNUAL MEETING

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The Association held its 107<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting September 10-13, 2017 at the Snowbird Resort located in Little Cottonwood Canyon, Sandy, Utah. Leading off the conference, the 2017 plenary “Through the Looking Glass” focused on fish and wildlife conservation perspectives from the outside looking in by respected business leaders. The Panel Discussion delved into unique observations and perspectives from national business leaders, and members of the Blue Ribbon Panel on Sustaining America’s Diverse Fish & Wildlife Resources, regarding the future of fish and wildlife conservation in our nation.

The Association thanks plenary panelists Richard Childress, CEO & Chairman, Richard Childress Racing; Bruce Culpepper, Shell U.S. Country Chair, President, Shell Oil Company; and Jennifer Mull, Former CEO, Backwoods Adventures and former Chair of the Outdoor Industry Association, current board member of the National Fish and Wildlife foundation for their insights.

### 2017 Annual Meeting Resolutions

State agency directors passed four resolutions during AFWA’s Business Meeting held on September 13. Resolutions are developed within AFWA committees to express formal opinion for adoption by the Association.

1. Support for the Wildlife Conservation Restoration Program Funding and the Alliance for America’s Fish and Wildlife Campaign
2. Support for Grassland Bird Conservation, Research, Evaluation, and Monitoring
3. In Support of Funding and Resources for Fish and Wildlife Disease Prevention, Detection and Management
4. In Appreciation of the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources, Utah Department of Natural Resources for Hosting the AFWA Annual Meeting in Snowbird, Utah

To view the full text of the resolutions, visit [www.fishwildlife.org](http://www.fishwildlife.org).

### ANNUAL MEETING SPONSORS

The Association extends its appreciation to the 107<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting Sponsors, exhibitors and, most especially, the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources.

**Sustaining Partners:** Recreational Boating & Fishing Foundation

**Platinum:** Bass Pro Shops, NOAA/ NMFS, Sportsman’s Warehouse, USDA APHIS Wildlife Services

**Gold:** Bureau of Land Management, Fresh Air Educators, National Shooting Sports Foundation, Pheasants Forever, Sovereign Sportsman Solutions, USDA APHIS Veterinary Service, USDA Forest Service, USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service

**Silver:** Archery Trade Association, National Park Service, Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, Swarovski Optik, Systems Consultants, The Wildlife Society

**Bronze:** American Sportfishing Association, Boone and Crockett Club, Dallas Safari Club, DJ Case & Associates, Granicus, National Rifle Association, National Wild Turkey Federation, Recreational Boating & Fishing Foundation, The Nature Conservancy

**Directors’ Retreat Sponsors:** Brandt Information Services, Inc., Ducks Unlimited

## 2017 ANNUAL AWARDS



The Association of Fish & Wildlife Agencies (AFWA) recognized nine individuals, one state agency and one private landowner for their dedication to advancing fish and wildlife conservation at the Association's Annual Awards Ceremony held on September 12, 2017 in Snowbird, Utah.

Recipients Include:

**Seth Gordon Award**

Larry Voyles (Arizona Game and Fish Department)

**John L. Morris Award**

John Doerr, Pure Fishing Family Foundation

**Ernest Thompson Seton Award**

Brad Carner and Keith Stephens (Arkansas Game and Fish Commission)

**Boone and Crockett Club Award**

Keith Warnke (Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources)

**Mark J. Reeff Memorial Award**

Tasha Bauman (Wyoming Game and Fish Department)

**Conservation Law Enforcement Award**

The New Mexico Department of Game and Fish- Field Operations Division

**Private Lands Fish & Wildlife Stewardship Award**

Louise Klarr and the Maggie Creek Ranch

**Special Recognition Awards**

Chris Segal (AFWA Legal Strategy Advisor) and Dr. Steve Kellert (Yale University School of Forestry and Environmental Studies)

## PLANNING

### Strategic Planning

AFWA's Strategic Plan is our high-level road map, intended to guide the efforts of the Association as we respond to on-going issues as well as the pressing issues of the day. Our last strategic plan ended in 2017 and AFWA staff and leadership worked throughout the year to develop a new plan for 2018-2020.

As with the previous plan, the 2018-2020 strategic plan focuses the Association's efforts on four key initiatives:

- Policy & Legislative Advocacy
- Fish & Wildlife Funding
- Coordinated Conservation Initiatives
- Member Support & Coordination

While the focus of the new plan is the same, strategic changes have been made to reflect the Recovering America's Wildlife Act (RAWA) as a priority and to clarify and streamline language throughout the plan.

As part of the process the Association's Mission and Vision were also slightly tweaked with the objective of making them clearer and more concise:

**MISSION:** To support and advocate for State, Provincial, and Territorial responsibility for science-based fish and wildlife conservation.

**VISION:** Sustainable fish and wildlife populations and habitat managed in trust for, and supported by, the public.

The Strategic Plan, combined with the Association's existing Business Plan, will be used to guide the association through the next three years as we strive to respond to the needs of our members.

AFWA's Strategic Plan can be found at [www.fishwildlife.org](http://www.fishwildlife.org).

## AFWA Values

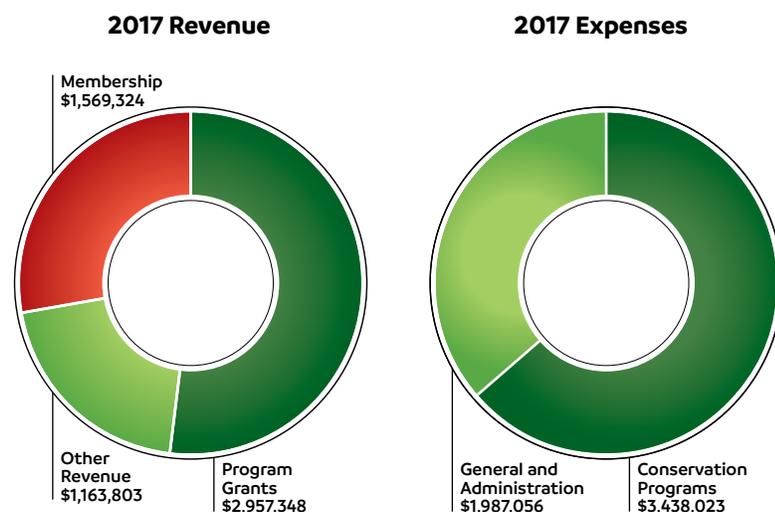
AFWA's Strategic and Business Plans are critical documents that inform AFWA staff of their priorities and create focus for the organization. Equally important, but never articulated until recently, are the values that define our organizational culture through which staff achieve their goals. In 2017 the Association stood up a team to develop the AFWA Core Values:

- Collaboration
- Community
- Excellence
- Respect
- Responsiveness

Having invested the time and energy into developing core values we believe best create a productive organizational culture at the Association, we want to make sure they aren't just 'paper-values.' To that end AFWA staff will work throughout 2018 to find ways to leverage these values and make them real in a way that enhances the workplace environment and makes us more effective as an organization.

## 2017 FINANCIALS

The funds entrusted to the Association enable us to provide coordinated services; support national and international programs, projects and coalitions; promote wildlife-associated recreation; and help members continue to address the most pressing conservation challenges of the day.



MEMBERSHIP DUES	
State	26.04%
Federal	<1%
Provincial	<1%
Associate	<1%
Affiliate	<1%
Contributing	<1%
GRANT REVENUE	
Federal	14.77%
Multistate	23.10%
Foundation	1.32%
International	4.16%
OTHER REVENUE	
Annual Meeting	7.78%
Misc. State Contributions	8.11%
Overhead	7.78%
<b>TOTAL REVENUE</b>	<b>\$5,690,475</b>
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>\$5,425,079</b>

*The Association's independently audited financial statements and IRS 990 are available upon request.*

# ASSOCIATION COMMITTEES, SUBCOMMITTEES & WORKING GROUPS

Almost without exception, the accomplishments of which the Association are most proud started within our 70+ committees by our 1,000+ committee members. Without a doubt, the Association's success in advancing positions that further our collective capacity to manage resources will only continue thanks to the enduring personal contributions of the greater Association membership.

## **Agricultural Conservation**

Bioenergy Working Group  
 Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) Working Group  
 Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) and Conservation Stewardship Program Joint Working Group  
 Farm Bill Easements Working Group  
 Forestry Working Group  
 Public Access Working Group

## **Amphibian & Reptile Conservation**

### **Angler & Boating Participation**

### **Annual Meeting/Awards/Nominating Audit**

## **Bird Conservation**

Feral and Free-Ranging Cat Work Group  
 Grassland Work Group  
 Harvest Information Program Review Work Group  
 Migratory Shore and Upland Game Bird Working Group  
 Partners in Flight/Shorebird/Waterbird Working Group  
 Resident Game Bird Working Group  
 Waterfowl Working Group

## **Climate Change**

## **Education, Outreach & Diversity**

Conservation Education Strategy Working Group  
 Diversity & Inclusion Working Group  
 Outreach Working Group  
 Project WILD Subcommittee  
 Wildlife Viewing and Nature Tourism Working Group

## **Energy & Wildlife Policy**

### **Executive**

### **Federal & Tribal Relations**

### **Finance**

### **Fish & Wildlife Health**

Controlled Substances Act Task Force  
 Lead and Fish and Wildlife Health Working Group

### **Fish & Wildlife Trust Funds**

Federal Assistance Coordinators Subcommittee  
 Trust Fund Collection Working Group

### **Fisheries & Water Resources Policy**

Drug Approval Working Group  
 Water Subcommittee

### **Hunting & Shooting Sports Participation**

### **International Relations**

CITES Technical Work Group

### **Invasive Species**

### **Law Enforcement**

Interstate Wildlife Violator Compact

## **Leadership & Professional Development**

### **Legal**

### **Legislative & Federal Budget**

### **Budget Working Group**

### **National Grants**

### **Ocean Resources Policy**

### **Resolutions**

### **Science & Research**

ESA/Climate Change Working Group

### **Sustainable Use of Wildlife**

Furbearer Conservation Technical Working Group

### **Technology and Data**

### **Threatened & Endangered Species Policy**

ESA and Climate Change Working Group

### **Wildlife Diversity Conservation & Funding**

State Wildlife Action Plan Review and Revision Guidance Working Group  
 State Wildlife Action Plan Best Practices Working Group

### **Wildlife Resource Policy**

Human/Wildlife Conflict Working Group  
 Landscape Conservation Working Group

### **Task Forces**

National Survey Technical Workgroup

## **Photographers**

**Cover Photo:** George Andrejko, Arizona Game & Fish Department

**Inside Cover Spread:** Nebraska Game & Parks

**Back Cover:** Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation

**Additional featured images by:** Shutterstock (pg 6-7); Erick Kilby (pg 8); NJ Division of Fish & Wildlife (pg 9); Nebraska Game & Parks (pg 10, 11); USFWS (pg 12); Arizona Game & Fish Department (pg 12, 26); Florida Fish & Wildlife Commission (pg 14, 21); Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation (16, 23, 28); Jesse Lee Varnado (pg 17); Tessa Nickels (pg 18); Oregon Dept Fish & Wildlife (pg 19); Jennie Lay (pg 20); Eric Isselee (pg 20); Pacific Marine & Estuarine Partnership (pg 22); Utah Division of Wildlife Resources (pg 23); Texas Parks & Wildlife Dept (pg 25); Bree McGhee (pg 27); Andrea Westmoreland (pg 38-39).

## STAFF

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**Ron Regan**, Executive Director

**Patricia Allen**, Director of Marketing & Communications

**Carol Bambery**, General Counsel

**John Bloom**, Accounting Manager

**Devin DeMario**, Government Affairs Associate

**Bettina Fiery**, MAT Professional Development Program Manager

**Tiffany Fritts**, MAT Communications Coordinator

**Tim Gray**, MAT Administrative Assistant

**Estelle Green**, Administrative Assistant

**Deb Hahn**, Director of International Programs

**Mary Hughes**, MAT Training Specialist

**Mark Humpert**, Director of Conservation Initiatives

**Lane Kisonak**, Staff Attorney

**Marc LeFebre**, Project WILD Program Manager

**John Lord**, Director of Operations

**Gina Main**, MAT Director of Professional Development

**Dr. Jonathan Mawdsley**, Science Advisor

**Chris Moyer**, Forest Service Liaison to AFWA

**Amanda Myers**, MAT Training & Information Service Administrator

**Priya Nanjappa**, Amphibian & Reptile, and Invasive Species Program Manager

**Angela Rivas Nelson**, Executive Assistant

**Davia Palmeri**, Energy and Adaptation Program Manager

**Kelly Reynolds**, Project WILD Program Manager

**Ryan Roberts**, National Fish Habitat Partnership Program Manager

**Sean Saville**, Alliance for America's Fish and Wildlife Campaign Manager

**Dr. Judith Scarl**, Bird Conservation Program Manager

**Jen Mock Schaeffer**, Director of Government Affairs

**Andrew Schmidt**, Agriculture Policy Program Manager

**Dean Smith**, North American Waterfowl Management Plan Director/ Wildlife Liaison

**Elena Takaki**, Director, Project WILD

**Bryant White**, Trapping Policy Program Manager

**Silvana Yaroschuk**, Multistate Conservation Grants Program Manager

## OFFICERS & EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE\*

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### President:

Virgil Moore, Idaho Fish & Game Department

### Vice President:

Glenn Normandeau, New Hampshire Fish & Game Department

### Secretary/Treasurer:

Gordon Myers, North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission

### EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

#### Chair:

John Arway, Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission

#### Vice Chair:

Bob Broscheid, Colorado Division of Parks & Wildlife

### MEMBERS

Ed Carter, Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency

Jim Douglas, Nebraska Game & Parks Commission

Kelly Hepler, South Dakota Game, Fish & Parks

Carter Smith, Texas Parks & Wildlife Department

Catherine Sparks, Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management

Tony Wasley, Nevada Department of Wildlife

### EX OFFICIO VOTING MEMBERS

#### Canada:

Travis Ripley, Alberta Environment and Parks

#### Midwest:

Terry Steinwand, North Dakota Game and Fish Department

#### Northeast:

Jim Connolly, Maine Department of Inland Fisheries & Wildlife

#### Southeast:

Alvin Taylor, South Carolina Department of Natural Resources

#### Western:

Curt Melcher, Oregon Department of Fish & Wildlife

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\*Current slate 2017-2018 Officers & Executive Committee Members

# MEMBERS OF THE ASSOCIATION OF FISH & WILDLIFE AGENCIES

Why is the Association relevant? It's because of the active involvement of a great assembly of member agencies and organizations to achieve a great vision of sound fish and wildlife resource management throughout North America for long-term public benefit, use and support.

## U.S. State & Territorial Agency Members

Alabama Division of Wildlife & Freshwater Fisheries  
Alaska Dept. of Fish & Game  
Arizona Game & Fish Dept.  
Arkansas Game & Fish Commission  
California Dept. of Fish & Wildlife  
Colorado Division of Parks & Wildlife  
Connecticut Bureau of Natural Resources  
Delaware Division of Fish & Wildlife  
DC Department of the Environment, Fisheries and Wildlife Division  
Florida Fish & Wildlife Conservation Commission  
Georgia Wildlife Resources Division  
Hawaii Dept. of Land & Natural Resources  
Idaho Dept. of Fish & Game  
Illinois Dept. of Natural Resources  
Indiana Division of Fish & Wildlife  
Iowa Dept. of Natural Resources  
Kansas Dept. of Wildlife, Parks & Tourism  
Kentucky Dept. of Fish & Wildlife Resources  
Louisiana Dept. of Wildlife & Fisheries  
Maine Dept. of Inland Fisheries & Wildlife  
Maryland Wildlife & Heritage Service  
Massachusetts Division of Fisheries & Wildlife  
Michigan Dept. of Natural Resources  
Minnesota Division of Fish & Wildlife  
Mississippi Dept. of Wildlife, Fisheries & Parks  
Missouri Dept. of Conservation  
Montana Dept. of Fish, Wildlife & Parks  
Nebraska Game & Parks Commission  
Nevada Dept. of Wildlife  
New Hampshire Fish & Game Dept.  
New Jersey Division of Fish & Wildlife  
New Mexico Game & Fish Dept.  
New York Division of Fish and Wildlife  
North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission  
North Dakota Game & Fish Dept.  
Ohio Division of Wildlife  
Oklahoma Dept. of Wildlife Conservation  
Oregon Dept. of Fish & Wildlife  
Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission  
Pennsylvania Game Commission  
Rhode Island Dept. of Environmental Management  
South Carolina Dept. of Natural Resources  
South Dakota Game, Fish & Parks Dept.

Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency  
Texas Parks & Wildlife Dept.  
Utah Division of Wildlife Resources  
Vermont Dept. of Fish & Wildlife  
Virginia Dept. of Game & Inland Fisheries  
Washington Dept. of Fish & Wildlife  
West Virginia Division of Natural Resources  
Wisconsin Dept. of Natural Resources  
Wyoming Game & Fish Dept.

## U.S. Federal Agency Members

Bureau of Land Management  
National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration Fisheries Service  
National Park Service  
U.S. Dept. of Agriculture - APHIS/Veterinary Services  
U.S. Dept. of Agriculture - APHIS/Wildlife Services  
U.S. Dept. of Agriculture - Forest Service  
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service  
U.S. Geological Survey

## Canadian Government Members

Alberta Environment and Parks  
Canadian Wildlife Service  
New Brunswick Dept. of Natural Resources  
Newfoundland Dept. of Environment & Conservation  
Northwest Territories Dept. of Environment & Natural Resources  
Nova Scotia Dept. of Natural Resources  
Nunavut Department of Environment  
Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry  
Prince Edward Island Forests, Fish and Wildlife Division  
Saskatchewan Ministry of Environment  
Yukon Department of Environment

## Affiliate Members

Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission  
College of Natural Resources (Univ. of Wisconsin-Stevens Pt.)  
Great Lakes Fishery Commission  
Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission  
International Hunter Education Association-USA  
National Association of State Boating Law Administrators

Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission  
States Organization for Boating Access  
Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council  
Wildlife Disease Association

## Contributing Members

American Bird Conservancy  
American Eagle Foundation  
American Fisheries Society  
American Sportfishing Association  
Americas Fur Resource Council  
Archery Trade Association  
B.A.S.S. LLC  
Boone & Crockett Club  
Canadian Wildlife Federation  
Delta Waterfowl Foundation  
Ducks Unlimited Canada  
Ducks Unlimited, Inc.  
Fur Institute of Canada  
Fur Takers of America, Inc.  
Hunting Heritage Trust  
National Audubon Society  
National Bowhunter Education Foundation  
National Marine Manufacturers Association  
National Rifle Association - Conservation, Wildlife & Natural Resources Division  
National Shooting Sports Foundation, Inc.  
National Trappers Association  
National Wild Turkey Federation  
National Wildlife Federation  
Nature Conservancy  
NatureServe  
North American Falconers Association  
North Dakota Natural Resources Trust  
Pheasants Forever  
Pope & Young Club  
Recreational Boating & Fishing Foundation  
Resource Management Service, LLC  
Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation  
Ruffed Grouse Society  
Safari Club International  
Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership  
Wild Sheep Foundation  
Wildlife Management Institute  
Wildlife Society



# **JOIN US IN FLORIDA FOR THE 2018 ASSOCIATION OF FISH & WILDLIFE AGENCIES ANNUAL MEETING**

**SEPTEMBER 9-12, 2018  
TAMPA MARRIOTT WATERSIDE HOTEL • TAMPA, FL**

**[afwaannualmeeting.org](http://afwaannualmeeting.org)**



## RECOVERING AMERICA'S WILDLIFE ACT

This funding will aid in conserving the full array of fish and wildlife and their associated habitats, particularly those that are declining and have little or no other source of conservation funding.

Check out some of the species of greatest conservation need that would benefit from the passage of the Recovering America's Wildlife Act.

<b>State</b>	<b>Species of Greatest Conservation Need</b>	<b>State</b>	<b>Species of Greatest Conservation Need</b>
Alabama	<i>Green Sea Turtle</i>	Montana	<i>Harlequin Duck</i>
Alaska	<i>Cook Inlet Beluga Whale</i>	Nebraska	<i>River Otter</i>
Arizona	<i>Sonoran Desert Tortoise</i>	Nevada	<i>Golden Eagle</i>
Arkansas	<i>Northern Bobwhite Quail</i>	New Hampshire	<i>Brook Trout</i>
California	<i>Tule Elk</i>	New Jersey	<i>Red Knot</i>
Colorado	<i>Canada Lynx</i>	New Mexico	<i>Gray Vireo</i>
Connecticut	<i>Tri-colored Bat</i>	New York	<i>Northern Long-eared Bat</i>
Delaware	<i>Bald Eagle</i>	North Carolina	<i>Atlantic Sturgeon</i>
Florida	<i>Burrowing Owl</i>	North Dakota	<i>Long-billed Curlew</i>
Georgia	<i>Gopher Tortoise</i>	Ohio	<i>Monarch Butterfly</i>
Hawaii	<i>Kamehameha butterfly</i>	Oklahoma	<i>Painted Bunting</i>
Idaho	<i>Wolverine</i>	Oregon	<i>Pacific Fisher</i>
Illinois	<i>Illinois Chorus Frog</i>	Pennsylvania	<i>Wood Turtle</i>
Indiana	<i>Indiana Bat</i>	Rhode Island	<i>Spotted Sandpiper</i>
Iowa	<i>Regal Fritillary</i>	South Carolina	<i>Flatwoods Salamander</i>
Kansas	<i>Northern Pintail</i>	South Dakota	<i>Osprey</i>
Kentucky	<i>Barn Owl</i>	Tennessee	<i>Whooping Crane</i>
Louisiana	<i>Louisiana Black Bear</i>	Texas	<i>Texas Horned Lizard</i>
Maine	<i>New England Cottontail</i>	Utah	<i>Bonneville Cutthroat Trout</i>
Maryland	<i>Black Skimmer</i>	Vermont	<i>Bicknell's Thrush</i>
Massachusetts	<i>Bog Turtle</i>	Virginia	<i>American Oystercatcher</i>
Michigan	<i>Kirtland's Warbler</i>	Washington	<i>Washington Ground Squirrel</i>
Minnesota	<i>Moose</i>	West Virginia	<i>Green Salamander</i>
Mississippi	<i>Mississippi Sandhill Crane</i>	Wisconsin	<i>Golden-winged Warbler</i>
Missouri	<i>Greater Prairie-Chicken</i>	Wyoming	<i>Swift Fox</i>

# ANNUAL REPORT

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# 2017



ASSOCIATION *of*  
FISH & WILDLIFE  
AGENCIES

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## THE VOICE OF FISH AND WILDLIFE AGENCIES

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