



# 2022

ANNUAL REPORT



ASSOCIATION *of*  
FISH & WILDLIFE  
AGENCIES

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## One Health

A unifying approach.  
Linking Humans, Animals,  
and Ecosystem Health



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CURT MELCHER

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

For those of you that know me, you know that I am a man of few words. Yet, I am challenged with brevity, as I write this, in terms of expressing my sincere and deep appreciation for the opportunity to serve the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies as its President, only the second director from Oregon to have that privilege in the Association's 120-year history.

Let me sketch, in broad strokes, a couple of observations about the past year in the life of the Association – the professional staff will embellish with the colorful narratives of work well done.

The theme, if you will, for this Annual Report, could have focused on Recovering America's Wildlife Act (RAWA) or on One Health – two rich and important portfolios for our collective conservation vision – the first, predicated on whether RAWA was enacted into law. The reality is that both merit a few remarks irrespective of the legislative outcome.

We poured our heart and soul into the passage of RAWA, with each of you doing an important part. The support across the conservation community was incredible, even on Capitol Hill and within the Administration, and that is a testament to the value proposition that the work of state fish and wildlife agencies pays dividends. May that simple acknowledgement, alone, be a balm to our RAWA-weary arms and legs, and an encouragement to stay in the race until we prevail.

And, it is important to acknowledge that while we await broader, dedicated conservation funding, we must take up the mantle of new, relevant conservation opportunities such as those offered by One Health dialogues across the globe. We affirmed at our Annual Meeting, in September 2022, that there is a vital, imperative role for state, provincial, and territorial fish and wildlife agencies to more fully lead within the One Health community, both from an ecological perspective as well as to demonstrate how our work promotes the quality of life of all citizens we serve in our jurisdictions.

There is so much to do, and I am pleased to work with you in planning and delivering the Association's work.

Very best regards,



**Curt Melcher**

President

Association of Fish & Wildlife Agencies



## EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

Where to begin? How about with intentionality? This is an impactful word, one that aptly describes much of what we do at the Association, for example, with our work on One Health and conservation funding, both of which President Curt Melcher reflects on in these pages.

Let me share a bit about the intentionality of our commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusivity (DEI) which may not be as obvious to many of you. During the past year, we ramped up our attention to DEI on several fronts. First, under the leadership of Past-President Tony Wasley, we intentionally went to new spaces to meet with new people and to learn about new partnership opportunities, including an Outdoor Recreation Summit in Colorado, the Minority Outdoor Alliance Festival in Alabama, and events hosted by the Congressional Hispanic Leadership Institute in DC. President Melcher is continuing this theme by intentionally attending the upcoming annual meeting of the Native American Fish and Wildlife Society in the months ahead in keeping with our interest in building new relationships with that community.

During 2022 we continued to provide space for conversations about DEI topics through virtual coffee talks hosted by the Diversity Working Group of the Education, Outreach, and Diversity Committee. The Management Assistance Team has identified and developed virtual learning opportunities on like subjects. We have also tried to promote conversations and the inclusion of DEI work within the Association's committees.

In the final quarter of 2022, we secured the services of a consulting team to conduct an organizational DEI assessment for the Association. We have a report in hand, and we will intentionally address the recommendations in the year ahead.

I am personally very much committed to this work on all counts, and I am very appreciative of the Association's Executive Committee and other directors for providing the space, if you will, to take this journey – intentionally together.

All the best,



**Ronald J. Regan**

Executive Director

Association of Fish & Wildlife Agencies



RONALD J. REGAN



## ALLIANCE FOR AMERICA'S FISH & WILDLIFE CAMPAIGN

The Association and our partners were disappointed to learn that in the final hours of negotiation just before the holidays, the Recovering America's Wildlife Act was not included in the final language of the year end 2023 Omnibus package, which was the last hope for passage in the waning days of the Congress. The impasse had little to do with the contents or policy of the legislation, which is widely supported, but the clock just ran out. Despite an unfortunate outcome in the 117th Congress, champions in congress and the coalition of stakeholders including state fish and wildlife agencies, businesses, conservation organizations, industry representatives and many more advanced the legislation within inches of the goal line, amassing incredible momentum and support and garnering the attention of a nation. This will set the tone for early action on this historic bill in the 118th Congress and fortunately our congressional champs are committed to the goal of seeing this vision for wildlife conservation enacted.

The Recovering America's Wildlife Act (H.R.2773) passed the House of Representatives with a bipartisan vote of 231-190 in June 2022, and the Senate version (S.2372) had 47 bipartisan Senate cosponsors and was passed out of the Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works with a bipartisan vote last April. The widespread, bipartisan support and high level of direct engagement from members of congress demonstrate the importance of and need for this pivotal piece of legislation that would help expedite the recovery of thousands of at-risk species through proactive, collaborative conservation. There are some new political dynamics to navigate in the split 118th Congress, but nothing this willing partnership hasn't faced before and with the more than 200 returning members of Congress in support of the bill, we stand a good chance of gaining traction early in the session.

A survey conducted by Responsive Management last fall marked one of the first major assessments of public opinion on the Recovering America's Wildlife Act. In the survey, respondents were first read a brief description of the legislation that explained the purpose of the bill and the funding source; they were then asked whether they supported or opposed the Recovering America's Wildlife Act. A total of 70 percent of adult U.S. residents expressed support for the bill (including 42 percent who indicated strong support), compared to only five percent who would oppose the measure. Reflecting the bipartisan support for the bill, the survey found strong support across the political spectrum, with majorities of Democrats (82 percent), Republicans (64 percent), and independents (64 percent) supporting the legislation.

This legislation represents a smart, future focused investment that will also strengthen the economy and create a significant number of jobs that help grow the \$862 billion outdoor economy and bring support to key sectors such as agriculture and forestry – all while supporting the conservation of America's fish, wildlife, and the habitats they depend on. This collaborative approach to conservation

is good for wildlife, good for taxpayers, good for landowners, good for business and good for America. Further, this bill builds on the successful restoration track records of state fish and wildlife agencies which for more than eight decades have successfully managed game species. The need has never been more apparent, now we will just need to build the political will once again to get this bill passed.

Congress passed the Pittman-Robertson Act in 1937 and the Dingell-Johnson Act in 1950 to restore iconic game species such as deer, elk, striped bass, and wild turkey. Passage of the Recovering America's Wildlife Act would complete the safety net so state fish and wildlife agencies and tribes have resources to conserve all fish and wildlife species. This Congress can join the legacy of the 75th and 81st Congress's to ensure our nation's rich fish and wildlife legacy is sustained for future generations.

We look forward to working with our state members and all of the other partners lined up to build support for the bill and get this game changing conservation legislation passed and enacted this Congress.









## LEGISLATIVE AND GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS





## INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the Ramsar Convention and UN Framework Convention for Climate Change conducted their Conference of the Parties (CoP). The Association engaged throughout the year to influence the outcomes. CITES listed U.S. native species managed by the states including alligator and common snapping turtles; map, musk, and soft-shelled turtles; and the desert horned lizard in Appendix II. The Aleutian cackling goose, short-tailed albatross, and Puerto Rican boa were moved from Appendix I to Appendix II.

The Association's recommendations for the text of the Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) were used in negotiations at the CBD CoP. The final GBF includes 23 targets and a monitoring and reporting framework. The targets include the conservation and management of 30% of lands and waters; restoration goals; minimizing the risk phasing out subsidies; reducing the risk of pathogen spill-over from the sustainable use, harvest, and trade of wild species. The importance of a whole of government approach and the inclusion of subnational governments in implementation is critical. The Association engaged with partners across the globe to begin guiding implementation of the outcomes from the CoPs.

## GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS & CONGRESSIONAL ADVOCACY

Even with the majority of efforts in the conservation space focused on passage of Recovering America's Wildlife Act (RAWA), 2022 brought continued success for the states' legislative agenda, in large part thanks to our engaged and active membership. You rallied for action calls, testimony, information requests, and everything in between to secure critical wins across our slate of policy priorities. Whether advancing legislation in Congress or shepherding program implementation with our federal partners, our advocacy ensured states enter 2023 empowered to manage public trust resources for the future.

## Strengthening One Health and Wildlife Disease Management

With One Health serving as the foundation for wildlife disease policy, the Association never ceased efforts to integrate the states' principles into new and ongoing management frameworks. The AFWA-endorsed *Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) Research and Management Act* was enacted with the FY23 Appropriations Omnibus, authorizing \$70 million to be split between research and management programs, with up to \$26.25 million dedicated to state agency efforts. We continued to liaise with the Federal Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) Steering Committee on implementation of the CWD provisions passed in *America's Conservation Enhancement Act*, informing federal policy recommendations and priming establishment of the National CWD Task Force. Building on recommendations we submitted to the House Natural Resources (HNR) Subcommittee on Oversight & Investigations (O&I) for a hearing in April, we worked with Subcommittee staff to craft the AFWA-endorsed *Wildlife Disease Surveillance for Preventing Pandemics Act*, which was introduced as a marker bill in December. The bill would provide a non-grant apportionment of \$15.5 million to state agencies, with full federal cost share, and direct federal assistance and coordination to respond to wildlife disease emergencies.

The continued outbreak of High Path Avian Influenza elevated and highlighted the critical role of state agencies in the One Health paradigm. In September, a unilateral decision by the U.S. Department of Agriculture Animal Health and Plant Inspection Service suddenly restricted the importation of hunter-harvested birds from Canada. Thankfully, this decision was quickly revisited, thanks to significant concerns raised by the conservation community. When federal decision makers were presented with overwhelming scientific evidence a more rational approach was implemented. We are grateful to our partners at Ducks Unlimited and in the Canadian Wildlife Service for being instrumental in securing sound policy. The Association engaged with partners across the globe to begin guiding implementation of the outcomes from the CoPs.



## Securing Conservation Funding in Annual and One-Time Appropriations

Cutbacks to conservation funding in the FY23 Omnibus were anticipated due to large funds provided by the *Bipartisan Infrastructure Law* (BIL) and the *Inflation Reduction Act* (IRA) but we were pleased to see core programs increased or maintained at similar funding levels. This included almost \$74 million for State and Tribal Wildlife Grants (+1.6%), \$50 million for the North American Wetlands Conservation Fund (+3.1%), and a \$2.2 million increase over FY22 to the U.S. Geological Survey Cooperative Research Units (CRU) Program, including report language that signals the intent to place a new CRU at Purdue University. Additionally, the *STREAM Act* was included, re-establishing states' ability to place up to 30% of funds from the Abandoned Mine Land Trust Fund into set-aside accounts for Acid Mine Drainage treatment.

The passage of IRA, a significantly pared down version of the *Build Back Better Act*, provided additional funds including \$121.25 million to the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service to address invasive species, resiliency, and capacity of habitats for the National Wildlife Refuge System (NWRS) and State Wildlife Management Areas, and \$2.6 billion to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) for conservation, restoration, and protection of coastal and marine habitats. The bill also included \$1 billion in funding for Conservation Technical Assistance and nearly \$20 billion for key National Resource Conservation Service programs over the next several years.

## Implementing Billions in Conservation Funding through the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL)

The generational funding for conservation provided by the *Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act* (Bipartisan Infrastructure Law/BIL) predictably presented challenges for implementation. With over \$2 billion to be distributed for aquatic organism passage across 9 federal agencies, much of the Association's efforts were dedicated to effective implementation of fish passage provisions. In July, we cohosted a workshop at the National Conservation Training Center with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and National Fish Habitat Partnership (NFHP) that brought state, non-governmental organizations (NGO), tribal partners, and all applicable federal agencies to identify and propose ways to address these challenges. The final product of the workshop was a detailed synthesis used to develop recommendations for federal agency leadership. While these efforts are ongoing, we most recently saw fruit with the USFWS' FY23 BIL Fish Passage Notice of Funding Opportunity, which includes consideration of State Wildlife Action Plans in the application criteria.

The Department of the Interior (DOI) continued development of the American Conservation and Stewardship Atlas, for which the Association submitted comments encouraging DOI to maximize utility of the platform as a tool to enhance resource management and tell the story of conservation success. Permitting challenges remain a critical priority, and the Association joined 38 other conservation organizations on a letter supporting a legislative fix to the 2015 *Cottonwood* decision. We also submitted comments to the Federal Highways Administration on implementation of BIL provisions, particularly the Wildlife Crossings Pilot Program, and the Department of Energy on implementation of hydropower incentives.





## Enhancing Collaboration and Partnerships

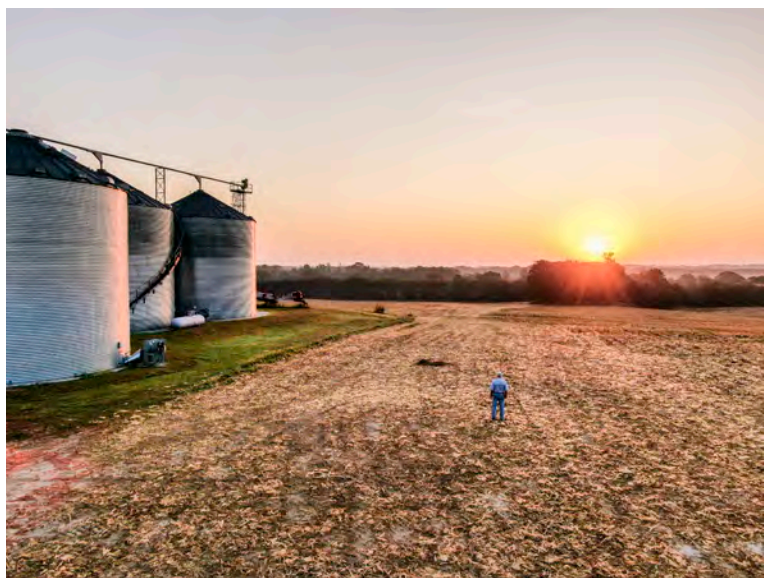
The Association capitalized on avenues for increased collaboration in 2022 beyond Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) implementation, through formal and informal efforts, particularly with USFWS. In September, the re-chartered Hunting and Wildlife Conservation Council was formed as a Federal Advisory Committee (FAC) to the Administration. Currently the states are represented by AFWA past-President Tony Wasley and Association Executive Director, Ron Regan, who serves as an ex-officio member. With Director Wesley's retirement, the Association has advanced a name to fill Tony's vacant seat for 2023. Meanwhile, the USFWS' 2022-2023 Station Specific Hunting and Fishing Rule ignited the need to address cooperative management of the National Wildlife Refuge System, and the use of lead ammunition and fishing tackle in particular. This led to the creation of a USFWS/AFWA working group which will focus efforts on establishing a framework for collaborative development of future Hunt/Fish rules and address the challenges of the lead issue.

## Protecting State Authority and Trust Fund Integrity

While pushing forward to enact new legislation, we remained vigilant to defeat harmful bills that would encroach on state authority or disrupt the American System of Conservation Funding. One such bill, the *RETURN Act*, attempted to repeal the excise tax on firearms and ammunition that forms the backbone of conservation, effectively repealing Pittman-Robertson. The conservation community rallied to resoundingly destroy any momentum the bill had upon introduction, resulting in multiple cosponsors pulling their support and committing to work against the bill should it be reintroduced in the 118<sup>th</sup> Congress. A repeat effort to ban trapping on the National Wildlife Refuge System received a hearing in the HNR Subcommittee on Water, Oceans, and Wildlife, where NEAFWA Executive Director, Gordon Batcheller, testified on behalf of the Association in opposition to the bill – which did not proceed. Another repeat effort to ban the transport of bear products was nearly cleared via hotline but was beaten back thanks to our partners and State Directors. Other legislation we opposed included the *Prohibit Wildlife Killing Contests Act of 2022*, which did not make it through Committee.

## Farm Bill Implementation and Preparation

In 2022, the Agricultural Conservation Committee (ACC) began planning for the reauthorization of the 2023 Farm Bill. The ad-hoc Farm Bill Working Group, composed of ACC Working Group chairs, regional fish and wildlife association representatives, and NGO partners, drafted a consensus policy platform that was approved at the 2022 North American Meeting. The recently launched Private Lands Working Group has been very active and completed a flyer on the importance of private lands in wildlife conservation. The Association and its members have remained engaged at the federal, state, and local level to ensure that fish and wildlife habitat needs are incorporated into Farm Bill programs. The ACC has spent the year sharing and advocating the adopted platform, participating in partner coalitions, and participating in conversations on new legislation. The Association has provided comments on ways to integrate landscape-scale conservation and habitat management principles into the Climate-Smart Agriculture and Forestry (CSAF) strategy to deliver co-benefits for fish and wildlife. Notably, upon introduction of the Inflation Reduction Act, the Association submitted a letter for recommendations on implementation.



## LEGAL STRATEGY

AFWA's Legal Strategy program has always thrived outside the courtroom, and its ninth year was no exception. In 2022 we formed a team of experts and advanced a foundational dialogue among stakeholders about the continuing relevance and significance of the North American Model of Wildlife Conservation for states, tribes, nongovernmental organizations, hunters, and non-hunters, which will culminate in 2023 with a final special session and companion publications.

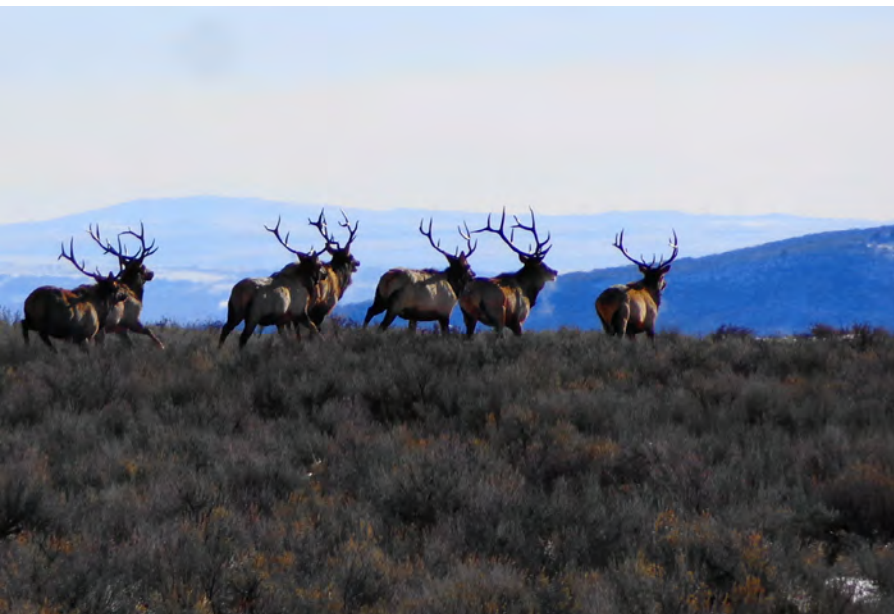
Through our network of committees, programs, and partnerships, we also continued to educate current and aspiring wildlife professionals about state wildlife law, Supreme Court opinions regarding environmental law and tribal reservations, the latest in federal lawmaking and regulation, and the Association initiatives relevant to attorneys and non-attorneys alike.

In 2023, AFWA counsel will continue to support our government affairs team by closely tracking federal legislation and rulemaking pertaining to federal aid in wildlife restoration and education, endangered species listings, incidental take permits for migratory birds, and other issues identified by our community. We will also provide key support to the work of the Legal Strategy Advisory Council (a.k.a. Think Tank), which will conclude its three-year workplan (2021-2023) this year.

Whether by tracking new court opinions, legislation, or regulations, engaging with other AFWA committees on the work of the Think Tank or AFWA's Strategic Plan, or keeping our members informed of the rapidly changing field of conservation law, our network continues to provide legal and educational support to the Association's membership.

With the critical input of directors and partner committees, AFWA counsel and the Legal Committee contributed to comments on federal legislative and regulatory proposals for the Endangered Species Act, Clean Water Act, hunt/fish rules on refuges, zoonotic disease surveillance, and more. We also provided research and coordination for AFWA committees' work on topics including One Health, state/tribal collaboration, combatting illegal trade in turtles, and modernization of E-duck stamps. All of these lines of work are expected to continue into 2023.

Finally, we will continue to offer general legal services, including intellectual property protection, contract review, and corporate governance, to state fish and wildlife agencies, regional associations, flyway councils, and related organizations.





## CONSERVATION INITIATIVES





## BIRD CONSERVATION

The Association assisted with the development and distribution of the 2022 State of the Birds Report. The report identified 70 tipping point species that may be headed for future endangered species listing and three major priorities for action to help birds recover. The North American Bird Conservation Initiative (NABCI) approved a new strategic plan. The Association started recruitment for the AFWA Bird Conservation Program Manager and NABCI coordinator position following Susana Mateos departure.



### Implementing SWAPs through Southern Wings

Through fifteen projects in 11 countries Southern Wings implemented conservation action to achieve State Wildlife Action Plan (SWAP) objectives for tens of priority birds. Southern Wings partners confirmed connections for wood thrush between conservation action in Nicaragua with Texas, Louisiana, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Maryland demonstrating the importance of work in key locations south of the U.S. In Colombia, partners planted a total of 135,414 trees creating 1,072 acres of forest. Another 378 acres of riparian forests were protected. Partners in Guatemala protected and managed almost 12,000 acres for shore migratory bird conservation. In Chihuahua, Mexico, another 28,702 hectares (70,894 acres) were enrolled into the Sustainable Grazing Network, protecting them against cropland development. This is also a first step to enhance grazing management and conduct grassland restoration. Cerulean warblers benefited from the creation of two reserves totaling over 17,000 acres in Ecuador. To date, 40 state fish and wildlife agencies have contributed almost 3.6 million to annual life-cycle conservation of migratory birds.



### Fall Flights and North American Waterfowl Management Plan (NAWMP)

State fish and wildlife agencies are critical partners of the *North American Waterfowl Management Plan* (NAWMP) and leaders in the conservation of waterfowl habitats. The NAWMP is one of the most influential and ambitious wildlife conservation initiatives in North America. The NAWMP encourages collaboration between governments and non-government organizations in Canada, the United States, and Mexico and establishes goals for waterfowl populations, habitat, and hunter and wildlife viewer use of these resources.

The *North American Wetlands Conservation Act* (NAWCA) provides federal funding to implement NAWMP which must be matched at least 1:1 by non-federal partners. The goal of the NAWCA program is to guarantee waterfowl and other wetland-dependent species success across the continent—from breeding to wintering grounds. In November 2022, the North American Wetland Conservation Council (NAWCC) increased the funding cap for U.S. Small Grants from \$100,000 to \$250,000, and the U.S. Standard Grant cap was set at \$3 million. The NAWCC also streamlined the application process for [U.S. Standard Grants](#).

State fish and wildlife agencies are leaders in waterfowl conservation through the Association's program known as *Fall Flights—Giving Wings to Cross-Border Waterfowl Conservation*. Fall Flights inspires State investments in the waterfowl breeding grounds in Canada to ensure a bountiful annual fall migration. Forty-three states contributed a total of \$4.17 million to Canadian waterfowl habitat projects in 2021-2022. The combined investment by all state agencies and funds leveraged from other sources (e.g., NAWCA grants and Canadian partner funds) will result in a total investment in the Canadian breeding grounds of almost \$22 million.

In 2022, the Association established the Fall Flights Advisory Committee, chaired by JD Strong (OK) to enhance the strategic management of the program and to grow the State investments in Canadian waterfowl habitat. The Association's goal of \$10 million annually for Fall Flights is ambitious but it is soundly based on the habitat need in the Canadian breeding grounds.



## NATIONAL FISH HABITAT PARTNERSHIP

The National Fish Habitat Partnership ([www.fishhabitat.org](http://www.fishhabitat.org)), implemented 78 fish habitat conservation projects across 37 states in 2022. \$5.4 million was contributed from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, with partners contributing more than \$53.2 million. These projects represent a 9-to-1 leveraged funding match for federal funding with partnership project funding from other sources.

Since 2006, the National Fish Habitat Partnership has supported 1,299 projects benefiting fish habitat in all 50 states. The National Fish Habitat Partnership works to conserve fish habitat nationwide, leveraging federal, state, tribal, and private funding resources to achieve the greatest impact on fish populations through priority conservation projects of 20 regionally-based Fish Habitat Partnerships.

Through project tracking, National Fish Habitat Partnership projects have reconnected 4,711 miles of rivers and streams, restored/rehabilitated 1,124 miles of rivers and streams, protected 11 miles of streams and rivers, protected 13,261 acres of habitat, and restored/rehabilitated 43,170 acres of river, lake, riparian, upland, estuary, and wetland habitat from 2006-2021.

Many of these projects have been fostered through state fish and wildlife and natural resource agencies' coordination efforts. These projects are making a difference in conserving fish habitat and improving angling opportunities across the country.



## 2022 WATERS TO WATCH

Annually, the National Fish Habitat Partnership highlights some of the best conservation projects implemented through our 20 partnerships across the country. These voluntary, locally-driven projects represent some of the top conservation activities completed or in progress. These projects are carried out under the goals and objectives of the National Fish Habitat Action Plan. These conservation projects conserve freshwater, estuarine, and marine habitats essential to many fish and wildlife species. Projects like the ones represented on this list are fundamental to the overall success of the National Fish Habitat Partnership.

The below 10 projects were included in the Waters to Watch list in 2022:

- **Deshka River, AK** – Mat-Su Basin Salmon Habitat Partnership
- **Grandpa's Farm Road Bridge, AK** – SE Alaska FHP
- **Huzzah, Curtis, Shoal Creek Wetlands, MO** – Fishers and Farmers Partnership
- **Neskowin Fish Passage Improvement Project, OR** – Pacific Marine and Estuarine Partnership
- **Raystown Lake, PA** - Reservoir Fish Habitat Partnership
- **Susitna River, AK** – Pacific Lamprey Conservation Initiative
- **Tin Cup Creek, ID** – Western Native Trout Initiative/Desert Fish Habitat Partnership (Retrospective)
- **White River, VT** – Eastern Brook Trout Joint Venture (Retrospective)
- **Wildcat Creek, CA** – California Fish Passage Forum
- **Williamsburg off-channel wetland, OH** – Reservoir Fish Habitat Partnership

For more information on project maps and descriptions of the "Waters to Watch" list for 2022, visit: [www.fishhabitat.org/waters-to-watch](http://www.fishhabitat.org/waters-to-watch)





## Bass Pro Shops/National Fish Habitat Partnership U.S. Open Grant Program Funds Nine Projects in 2022

In 2022, the National Fish Habitat Partnership (NFHP) announced nine projects funded through a nearly \$1.6 million grant program established through proceeds from the [Bass Pro Shops U.S. Open Amateur Bass Fishing Championships](#) held in 2021. The projects funded through this opportunity are high-priority focus areas of the Reservoir Fish Habitat Partnership. These projects were selected out of 30 proposals from across the U.S.

The selected projects will bring over \$3 million in total match funding in support of the Bass Pro Shops grant that will go directly to on-the-ground projects benefitting fish habitat and improving angling opportunities.

Projects funded through this opportunity include:

- Beaver Lake, Norfork Lake, Bull Shoals Lake, Arkansas
- Blue Marsh Lake, Pennsylvania
- Lake Shelbyville, Illinois
- Mark Twain Lake, Missouri
- Old Hickory Lake, Tennessee
- Pymatuning Reservoir, Pennsylvania/Ohio
- Ralph Hall Reservoir, Texas
- Table Rock Lake, Missouri
- Three-Mile Lake, Iowa

The funding for this grant program is managed through [Beyond the Pond](#), the non-profit organization established in 2015 to benefit the National Fish Habitat Partnership and associated Fish Habitat Partnerships under NFHP.

## AMPHIBIAN AND REPTILE CONSERVATION

The Amphibian and Reptile Conservation Committee has been continuing its focus on combatting the illegal trade in North American turtles and has worked heavily with the Partners in Amphibian and Reptile Conservation working group, the Collaborative to Combat the Illegal Trade in Turtles (CCITT). In partnership with multiple agencies and organizations, the Committee co-hosted a two-day, virtual Northeast Illegal Turtle Trade Workshop on Enhancing Partnerships to Combat Poaching and Trafficking. The workshop summary was used to guide actions over the year including working with the AFWA Legal and Law Enforcement Committees to develop a joint resolution on Combatting the

Illegal Trade in Turtles and the Model Statutory Language which was passed by the voting body of the Association in September 2022 at the Annual Meeting. The Committee also focused on interim work around preparing for Recovering America's Wildlife Act, increasing knowledge about herpetofaunal diseases, assisting with data collection for the Convention on International Trade of Endangered Species proposals for herpetofauna in the United States, and forming an agency-focused working group to address Bsal (*Batrachochytrium salamandrivorans*).





## PARTNERS IN AMPHIBIAN AND REPTILE CONSERVATION (PARC)

Over the last year, PARC has been focused on increasing communications and outreach through campaigns such as the annual #AmphibianWeek, the new #WildTurtleWeek, and a new monthly newsletter. The Collaborative to Combat the Illegal Trade in Turtles (CCITT) working group teamed up with conservationist and TV personality, Jeff Corwin, to film a PSA on why #EveryTurtleCounts. In addition, CCITT recently published an article on "Turtles in Trouble" in the November/December 2022 issue of The Wildlife Professional magazine. The Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Task Team (DEITT) worked to better define PARC membership and partners, particularly through a diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) lens. They recently started a new seminar series to feature professionals in herpetology. PARC's National Disease Task Team continues to plan and host webinars including one presented in conjunction with the North American Bsal Task Force on Bsal Basics: Better Together. Finally, PARC partnered with the Amphibian and Reptile Conservancy (ARC) and others to host two salamander education events, an in-person workshop at Highlands Biological Station in North Carolina and a virtual webinar. The workshop was hosted with the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission, and the webinar was hosted in conjunction with the Georgia Department of Natural Resources.



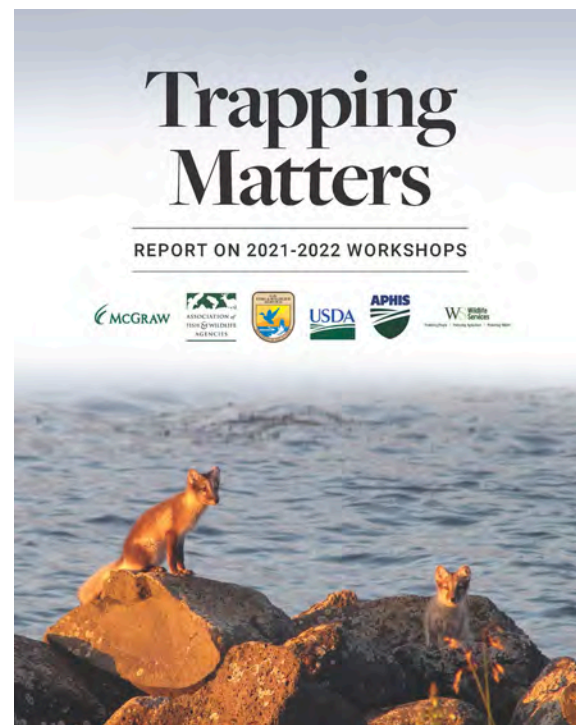
## INVASIVE SPECIES

The AFWA Invasive Species Committee continues to pursue interstate and interjurisdictional partnerships to improve invasive species management. The Committee worked with the Association's Government Affairs staff to follow S.626 - Lacey Act Amendments of 2021 and later the COMPETES Act while also keeping members apprised of invasive species funding through the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law and the Inflation Reduction Act. Throughout the year, the Committee held interim meetings that included topics such as preparing for Recovering America's Wildlife Act, the new Call Before You Haul program, the Bullfrog and Invasive Sunfish Community of Practice, and general committee updates. Committee members also participated in the newly formed Organisms in Trade Hitchhiker Workgroup through the Aquatic Nuisance Species Task Force. In addition, the Committee participated in and provided feedback on the Blue-Ribbon Aquatic Invasive Species Commission Report and Recommendations on Improving the Prevention, Eradication, Control and Mitigation of Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS). A report from the Commission should be released in winter of 2023.



## FURBEARER MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

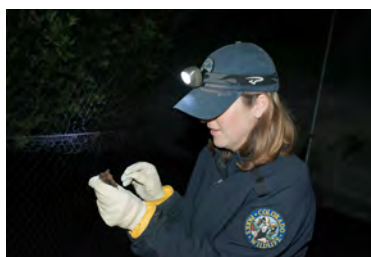
The AFWA Furbearer Conservation Technical Working Group continues to develop Best Management Practices for Trapping with our partners at the Wildlife Services' National Wildlife Research Center. At the same time, through Multistate Conservation Grants, we were able to deliver professional development training via Trapping Matters Workshops and Wild Fur Schools to some 700 wildlife professionals including 30 state fish and wildlife agencies, 42 universities, and five federal agencies. The group also created a virtual training series (Let's Talk About Trapping) that will provide agencies with a mechanism to educate staff about trapping and trapping communications in a virtual environment. The furbearer program also developed three new Conservation Briefs to help agencies grapple with some of the tougher issues about trapping. The new briefs cover Trapping and the North American Model, Safety and Trapping, and the negative effects of Trapping Bans.





### Human-Wildlife Conflict Working Group

This group produced a document on *conflicts with coyotes in urban areas*. Multiple authors from numerous agencies have contributed. This document is in a final review stage and is expected to be published in a peer reviewed journal in the coming months. For more information contact AFWA staff Bryant White [bwhite@fishwildlife.org](mailto:bwhite@fishwildlife.org).



### WILDLIFE DIVERSITY CONSERVATION & STATE WILDLIFE ACTION PLANS

The Association continued its long-standing advocacy for the State and Tribal Wildlife Grants Program. Bipartisan Dear Colleague Letters supporting FY2023 funding for the program were signed by 165 members in the U.S. House of Representatives and 46 members in the U.S. Senate, both near historical highs. Funding for the program increased to \$73.8 million. Through support provided by the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS) and U.S. Geological Survey (USGS), the Association hired part-time bat and invertebrate/pollinator coordinators to staff work groups and provide technical and communication support to the states. The Association started the virtual State Wildlife Action Plan Learning Series which serves as a forum for information sharing and discussion to assist with State Wildlife Action Plan revisions.



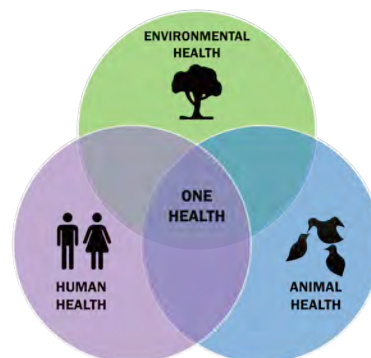
### LANDSCAPE CONSERVATION

The AFWA/U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS) Landscape Conservation Joint Task Force held its inaugural meeting in February which was followed by regular meetings throughout the year. The joint task force successfully advocated for state fish and wildlife agency reviewers of America the Beautiful Challenge (AtB) grants, voiced the desire for regional fish and wildlife associations to apply for AtB grants and assisted regional collaboratives and Western Association of Fish & Wildlife Agencies (WAFWA) with identification of landscape conservation priorities. The Association supported regional collaboratives and implementation of the State Wildlife Action Plan and Landscape Conservation framework. The National Wildlife Federation was contracted to assess state needs and recommendations for the U.S. Geological Survey's Species of Greatest Conservation Need database.



### FISH AND WILDLIFE RELEVANCY

The Association assisted the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service Science Applications with planning and execution of the virtual Future of Conservation Forum in January. Over 200 invited professionals participated in the event. Teams identified actions needed to accelerate biodiversity conservation, address climate change, improve coordination, make better use of western science and traditional ecological/indigenous knowledge, and step-up conservation on private lands and urbanscapes. Many of the ideas generated during the forum aligned with principles in the Fish and Wildlife Relevancy Roadmap. The results of the forum were vetted during a special session at the North American Wildlife and Natural Resources Conference and will be compiled into a final report.



### ONE HEALTH AND FISH AND WILDLIFE HEALTH

The Association contracted with Conservation Visions to write a [white paper](#) to illuminate how the work of state fish and wildlife agencies can fit into a One Health framework. Directors approved the white paper and it's 24 recommendations and accompanying [resolution](#) at the September Business meeting. AFWA President Melcher began work to stand up a President's Task to review and prioritize the recommendations. The Association continued its partnership with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in a One Health community of practice. AFWA staff assisted the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Agency with development of criteria for a new fish and wildlife health grant program for states and tribes, provided support for the Fish and Wildlife Health Initiative and provided communications on high pathogenic avian influenza and SARS CoV2 in wildlife.



## WIND AND WILDLIFE

The Energy and Wildlife Policy Committee (EWPC) continues to work with states and partners to reduce impacts to fish and wildlife from energy development and generation in North America. Dr. Meaghan Gade was hired as the Association's full time Energy and Wildlife Program Manager in May to staff the committee and lead energy and wildlife work. Prior to her hiring, Jason Goldberg from the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service Science Applications served as a detail. The Committee's Wind Wildlife Working Group drafted a letter under President Wasley's signature to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) requesting the development of an addendum to the 2012 Wind Energy Guidelines (WEGs) to update advances in science and technology that can be leveraged to reduce impacts on wildlife. In September, the USFWS agreed to develop a technical addendum to the WEGs and has been engaging with the Association and other stakeholders to begin this process. The Committee's Solar Wildlife Working Group (SWWG) completed the first Solar Siting Survey and is drafting a final report. The survey had numerous recommendations to aid state agencies with solar development, and the SWWG is developing resources and tools to advance these recommendations. The EWPC continues to coordinate with federal and other partners including U.S. Geological Survey, USFWS, Department of Energy, Renewable Energy Wildlife Institute, and American Clean Power to promote information dissemination and collaboration.

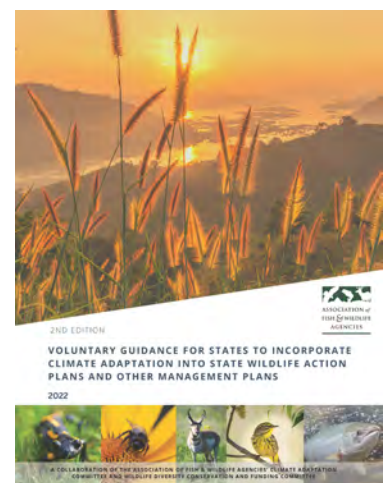


## CLIMATE ADAPTATION

The Association continues to address climate change in fish and wildlife management with leadership from the Climate Adaptation Committee. A joint work group of the Climate Adaptation and Wildlife Diversity Conservation and Funding Committee updated the [Voluntary Guidance for States to Incorporate Climate Adaptation into State Wildlife Action Plans](#). This guidance aims to help states incorporate climate adaptation into the 2025 State Wildlife Action Plan (SWAP) revisions, and achieve adaptation outcomes for fish, wildlife, and their habitats.

The Association signed a charter formalizing the National Fish, Wildlife, and Plant Climate Adaptation Network and will serve on the Network's Leadership Committee, along with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Native American Fish and Wildlife Society, and others. The Network is a hub for collaboration among state, federal, Tribal, NGO, and academic partners. A work group was formed to revise the National Fish, Wildlife, and Plant Climate Adaptation Strategy, and the revision is expected to be completed in early 2024.

Jacob Blandford was hired to manage the Association's Adaptation Program in May. Jason Goldberg, Senior Biologist with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Science Application program served as a detailee at the Association while the Adaptation Program Manager position was vacant, allowing adaptation work to continue uninterrupted.



## EDUCATION AND OUTREACH STRATEGIES





## Project WILD

“Meeting challenges by finding opportunities” is a fitting theme for the Project WILD program in 2022. In light of ongoing challenges for educators brought on by the COVID pandemic, supply chain disruptions that impacted the available inventory of Project WILD publications, and shifting needs in the field of educator professional development, new strategies to expand Project WILD’s delivery options became a key focal point for 2022. One strategy was further building Project WILD online professional development courses. With support from the EPA’s Office of Environmental Education, through the ee360+ grant program administered by the North American Association for Environmental Education, Project WILD was able to create new courses for K-12 formal and nonformal educators, as well as college level instructors, thereby completing a set of the first generation of Project WILD online training offerings.

The ee360+ grant also helped further Project WILD’s efforts to strengthen relevance through the lens of diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) in wildlife conservation education. Project WILD coordinators examined their program implementation and audience engagement at the state and local levels. Coordinators will continue to share lessons learned as DEI plans are acted on over the coming year.

Working in partnership with the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service Federal Duck Stamp, Project WILD and the Federal Junior Duck Stamp program hosted a short series of “Drawing on Nature” webinars that examined connections between art and science education. Monthly webinars designed for Project WILD state coordinators featured topics and speakers to help coordinators strengthen their state programs. Topics included leveraging community support in the design and use of outdoor classrooms, Wildlife Forever’s “Art of Conservation” art contest initiatives, and how to apply principles from the *National Fish, Animals, and Plants Climate Adaptation Strategy* as a learning framework for teaching.

Project WILD state coordinators as well as AFWA staff also contributed their expertise on various topics to advance learning and professional development during the annual Project WILD conference. Topics included the changing landscape of climate change education, habitat connectivity and wildlife corridors, and teaching about the conservation of amphibians and reptiles. Discussion among coordinators and presenters frequently tied in with efforts to advance the One Health initiative—particularly in regard to the benefits for children when learning outdoors and in nature, as well as Project WILD’s role in advancing learning about ecosystem services.

As we move into 2023, a special thanks goes out to Johnnie Smith who recently retired from his position as Texas Parks & Wildlife’s Outreach and Education Director. Until his departure, Johnnie served as the co-chair for the Project WILD Subcommittee. Thanks also goes to Jen Dennison with Ohio DNR’s Division of Wildlife for her efforts serving on a detail assignment. While on detail, Jen worked with the Association on the national Project WILD program to help with operations and special projects.

## National and Regional Results of the Wildlife Viewer Survey: Enhancing Relevancy and Engaging Support from a Broader Constituency

Wildlife viewing is among the fastest growing outdoor recreation activities in the United States, with significant implications for the work of fish and wildlife agencies. To better understand wildlife viewers in the United States, the Dayer Lab at Virginia Tech in collaboration with the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies Wildlife Viewing and Nature Tourism Working Group conducted a survey of more than 4,000 wildlife viewers nationwide. The study fills an important knowledge gap for wildlife agencies and illuminates how to better engage this broad constituency of wildlife recreationists, increasing agency relevancy to a wider array of people who enjoy the outdoors.

[This Wildlife Viewer Survey Report](#) (funded through a multistate conservation grant) examined: viewing and conservation behaviors of wildlife viewers; past and likelihood of future financial contributions to state agencies; perceptions of state agencies and their management for wildlife viewers; how to build relevancy with a broader audience of wildlife viewers; comparisons of wildlife viewers across the four AFWA regions; participation of consumptive and non-consumptive wildlife viewers; and more. This report concludes with five key recommendations for state agencies to increase engagement and relevancy with wildlife viewers. Researchers at Virginia Tech co-developed these recommendations



based on insights from the study and co-production workshop with state agency staff at the 2022 Wildlife Viewer and Nature Tourism Academy.

- Respond to demand for agencies to develop programs and services to engage viewers
- Broaden constituency of state agencies through supporting viewing experiences of underserved groups
- Develop financial support opportunities for viewers to contribute financially to state agencies
- Support state agencies in implementing results
- Conduct additional research to fill wildlife viewing information gaps.

### Management Assistance Team (MAT)

The Management Assistance Team's (MAT) work is funded by a multistate conservation grant. MAT is charged with increasing the leadership capacity and agency effectiveness within state fish and wildlife agencies and the conservation community through leadership and organizational development initiatives, training, consulting, and support of the National Conservation Leadership Institute (NCLI). In 2022, the MAT ran 28 webinars over 41 sessions for 482 students. The webinars offered in 2022 were: The Communicator's Notebook, Adaptive Leadership – Peer Consulting as part of the AL Practicum, Power of Inclusion, Navigating Change and Embracing the New Normal, Regenerative Leadership, Leading with Empathy, Inclusive Leadership: Creating Brave Spaces, Breaking Down Stressful Situations, Conflict Resolution, Mindfulness and Compassion in Conservation, and Social Location and Relevancy. Of

these webinars, four were new, and most of the webinars were offered multiple times to meet the needs of state agency personnel. MAT also conducted 22 online courses for 356 students consisting of eight Topics: Adaptive Leadership Principles, Adaptive Leadership Practicum, Conservation Communication Strategies, Emotional Intelligence, Leader as Communicator, Reflections on Agency Management, Visionary Leadership, and What Great Managers Know. MAT continued to make available five on-demand webinars with 572 views. Additionally, three face-to-face workshops were held with 35 attendees: Mindfulness & Compassion in Conservation; Adaptive Leadership Principles; DiSC & HR Roundtable. Lastly, MAT provided consulting services to 11 agencies/organizations: New York, Oregon, Pheasants Forever, Utah, Vermont, Virginia, Wisconsin DNR, Wisconsin LE, Back Country Hunters & Anglers, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service. In all, MAT served 29 state agencies in 2022. Notable accomplishments in 2022 also included MAT's work with the Wildlife Management Institute to update the [Commission Guidebook](#), to include best practices and recommendations for effective Commission and Agency collaboration; and the completion of a yearlong leadership development program for Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife. For more information on MAT's products and services visit [www.fishwildlife.org/afwa-inspires/mat-team](http://www.fishwildlife.org/afwa-inspires/mat-team).





### National Conservation Leadership Institute (NCLI)

The National Conservation Leadership Institute (NCLI) was established in 2005 to help develop conservation leadership to address the daunting challenges facing our ever-changing world. Through intense and empowering learning sessions facilitated by top-ranked faculty, peer coaches, and peers, this premier leadership program provides conservation professionals with the skills and knowledge needed to address conservation's most pressing needs. After a varied and prolonged experience disrupted by COVID, 2022 enabled the 15th Cohort of the NCLI to complete a one-week virtual second residency in January followed by a third and final in-person residency and graduation in May bringing the total NCLI Alumni to more than 500 strong. In similar fashion, the 14th Cohort of the NCLI whose final residency was conducted virtually due to COVID in 2020 was able to convene in Estes Park, CO for a three-day "reconvening" and continued education, in-person experience. The 16th cohort of the NCLI began its journey in October comprised of participants from 22 state agencies, eight federal agencies, three NGOs, one Native American Tribe, and one Industry for a total of 35 fellows. The Native American Fish and Wildlife Society (NAFWS) obtained funding for tribal participation in NCLI and fully funded tuition for one Cohort 16 fellow. Additionally, the NCLI Board welcomed its first Native American board member, Baasweve Fred Maulson, an NCLI Alumnus who is with the Great Lakes Indian Fish & Wildlife Commission. Alumni engagement continued last year with the delivery of a one-day Alumni Virtual Summit, a Case Study Webinar, and several Alumni Business Meetings, networking events and opportunities. For more information on the NCLI, please visit [www.conservationleadership.org](http://www.conservationleadership.org).





## OPERATIONAL STRATEGIES





## MULTISTATE CONSERVATION GRANT PROGRAM

Since 2000, the Multistate Conservation Grant Program has dedicated more than \$140 million to national and regional level conservation priorities.

The modernizing Pittman-Robertson Fund for Tomorrow's Needs Act was signed into law on December 20, 2019, adding up to \$5 million annually, beginning with 2020, for Wildlife Restoration eligible grants as defined by the legislation.

In 2022, 42 projects were awarded \$9,117,093.88. Multistate Conservation Grant Program (MSCG). Projects implemented in 2022 include:

- **Contaminant Loads in Waterfowl of the Northeast Atlantic Flyway: New Threats and Outdated Advisories – Cornell University**

Our goal in the study is to collect data capable of allowing state wildlife agencies and health departments in a four-state area (NY, NJ, PA, and CT) to update consumption advisories for waterfowl given information on the levels of chemical contaminants. Current consumption advisories are based on old data, are relatively broad by species, and are not particularly informative, which may dissuade new or cautious hunters from pursuing waterfowl. Data from this study will also inform wildlife agencies of the need (or not) to conduct further intensive surveillance to understand the impact of these contaminants on waterfowl populations based more specifically on species, location, or compound.

A statistically robust study design was created and included randomization of samples (birds) selected for study and standardization of the data collection method, including predefined variables, definitions, locations of measurements, instruments of measurement, and units of measurement. Using the study protocol, state wildlife agencies for NY, NJ, PA, and CT collected carcasses and tissue samples from five species of hunter-harvested ducks and geese (mallard, American black duck, Canada goose, American green-winged teal, and wood duck) across 13 ecoregions in the four-state area. Samples were sent to the Cornell Wildlife Health Laboratory for processing and distribution to laboratories for chemical analysis. Sample analyses are underway to determine the levels of six contaminants (PCBs, dioxins, furans, organochlorine pesticides, mercury, and PFAS) in waterfowl across the study area.

- **Native American Participation and Perceptions Towards Hunting, Trapping and Target shooting - Outdoor Stewards of Conservation Foundation (OSCF)**

With more than seven million Native American tribal members inhabiting all 50 states in America, it is imperative to understand current participation rates better and perceptions of hunting, trapping, and target shooting within this important group.

Working with partners from the Little River Band of Ottawa Indians and the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians, OSCF developed and conducted an online survey among the U.S. general population and the Native American population.

The report generated eye-opening findings, particularly when comparing the Native American and U.S. General Populations. Native Americans currently participate at a higher rate than the general population and are significantly more interested in and favorable towards hunting, trapping, and target shooting activities. There is also higher interest in participation among Native Americans who are not currently participating, which helps justify recruitment efforts for wildlife agencies and industry.

The full report on Native American Participation as well as an informative 30-minute webinar, can be found on Outdoor Stewards of Conservation Foundation's website (<http://www.OutdoorStewards.org>) and by clicking the 'Research and Resources' tab or by following this direct link: <https://www.outdoorstewards.org/native-american-research-report>.



## 2022 ANNUAL MEETING

The Association held its 112<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting, September 18-21, 2022 as a hybrid meeting. Leading off the conference, the 2022 plenary “One Health: A Prescription for the Relevancy of Wildlife Conservation” which focused on facing new realities and opportunities to earn the public’s trust and how to adapt to meet new expectations of information, communication and relationships with those we wish to serve. The session wrapped up with a panel discussion where panelists leaned in with a conversation about the practice of One Health.

The Association thanks our plenary speakers: Carter Smith, Executive Director, Texas Parks & Wildlife Department; Tony Wasley, Director, Nevada Department of Wildlife; Shane Mahoney, President/CEO Conservation Visions; Clint Runge, CEO & Founder, Archrival; Jason Sumners, Deputy Director, Missouri Department of Conservation, Camille Hopkins, Wildlife Disease Coordinator, U.S. Geological Survey; Cheryl Stroud, Executive Director, One Health Commission, for their insights.

### 2022 Annual Meeting Resolutions

The voting membership of the Association of Fish & Wildlife Agencies passed four resolutions during its Business Meeting held on September 21, 2022. Resolutions are developed within AFWA Committees to express formal opinion for adoption by the Association.

1. In support of enhancing regulatory, collaborative, and strategic capacity to combat the illegal trade in turtles.
2. Supporting State, Provincial, Territorial, and Association leadership for a “One Health” approach to the well-being of people and wildlife.
3. Urging corrective action to address federal excise tax slippage for important archery and sportfishing equipment.
4. Appreciation to the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department for a successful 112<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting.

[You can view the full text of the resolutions online.](#)

## ANNUAL MEETING SPONSORS

The Association extends its appreciation to the 112<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting Sponsors and exhibitors.

**Sustaining Partner Level:** U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

**Platinum Level Sponsors:** Bass Pro Shops, Ducks Unlimited; Audubon, National Wild Turkey Federation, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Recreational Boating & Fishing Foundation, U.S. Department of Agriculture- Wildlife Services

**Gold Level Sponsors:** American Sportfishing Association, Brant, Kalkomey, NRA Hunters’ Leadership Forum, North American Non-Lead Partnership, USDA Forest Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture- Natural Resources Conservation Services

**Silver Level Sponsors:** Archery Trade Association, U.S. Department of the Interior- Bureau of Land Management, ESRI, National Shooting Sports Foundation, Pheasants Forever/Quail Forever, Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, Swarovski Optik, U.S. Geological Survey

**Bronze Level Sponsors:** Accufire, Airgun Sporting Association, Bluestar Forensic, Boone and Crockett Club, DJ Case & Associates, HuntStand, Mule Deer Foundation, National Archery in the Schools Program, Responsive Management, SmartCOP, Southwick Associates, SWYM Consulting, The Nature Conservancy, The Wildlife Society, Tyler Technologies, Voss Signs, Wildlife Management Institute

**Exhibitors:** ACI Worldwide, BearWise, Berryman Institute, LA Wallet, Miller Ag-Renewal, Inc., National Conservation Leadership Institute, Tomahawk Live Trap, Truax Company, Inc.



## 2022 ANNUAL AWARDS

The Association of Fish & Wildlife Agencies (AFWA) recognized 15 individuals and one private landowner for their dedication to advancing fish and wildlife conservation at the Association's Annual Awards Ceremony held both in person and virtually on September 20, 2022 in Fort Worth, Texas.

Recipients include:

### **Seth Gordon Award**

Carter Smith, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department

### **John L. Morris Award**

George Dunklin, Jr.

### **Ernest Thompson Seton Award**

Austin Booth and Brad Carner, Arkansas Game & Fish Commission

### **Mark Reeff Award**

Dr. Nicole Angeli, U.S. Virgin Islands Department of Planning and Natural Resources

### **Private Lands Fish & Wildlife Stewardship Award**

Sommers Ranch, Albert Sommers

### **Stephen Kellert Award**

Dr. Elsa Haubold, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

### **Gary Taylor Award**

Jen Mock Schaeffer, (previous) Association of Fish & Wildlife Agencies

### **Conservation Law Enforcement Award**

Patrick (Mike) Neal, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources.

### **Special Recognition Awards**

Paul Johansen, West Virginia Division of Natural Resources

Jenifer Wisniewski, Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency

Gary Whelan, Michigan Department of Natural Resources

Becky Humphries, National Wild Turkey Federation

Howard Vincent, Pheasants Forever/Quail Forever

The Association would like to pay tribute to the wildlife professionals, Fallen Heroes, who have lost their lives while carrying out their duties to enforce conservation laws and regulations and manage fish and wildlife resources within the past year. These deceased professionals are Officer Mike Trujillo, Colorado Parks & Wildlife, and Kyle Patterson, Senior Investigator, Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission.



CARTER SMITH

## 2022 FINANCIALS

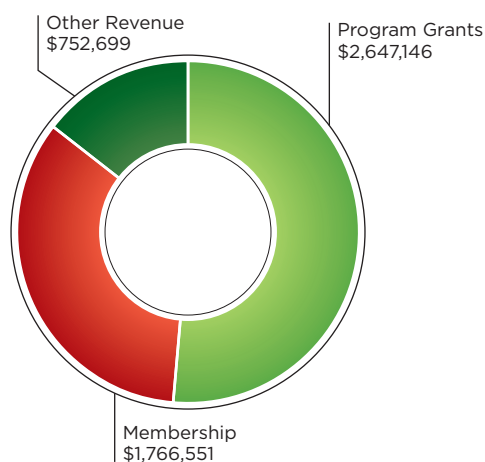




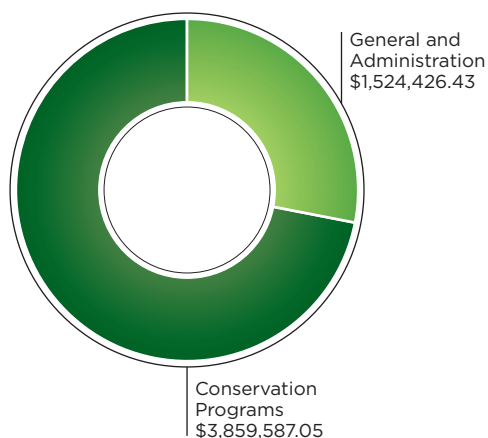
## 2022 FINANCIALS

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

### 2022 Revenue



### 2022 Expenses



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

## MEMBERSHIP DUES

State	33%
Provincial/Territorial	<1%
Associate	<1%
Contributing	<1%

## GRANT REVENUE

Federal	16%
Multistate	24%

## OTHER REVENUE

Annual Meeting	11%
Overhead	10%
Miscellaneous	5%

<b>TOTAL REVENUE</b>	<b>\$5,597,000</b>
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<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>\$5,384,000</b>
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<b>UNREALIZED LOSS</b> (Investments)	<b>\$430,000</b>
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## STRATEGIC PLANNING – PERFORMANCE MEASURES

The Association reached another important milestone with its 2020-2025 Strategic Plan. Working together with Timmons Groups (a well-known consultancy in the conservation field), AFWA staff and leadership identified and developed key metrics to measure the effectiveness of specific strategic initiatives. These metrics will be updated and posted on the AFWA website in 2023, allowing members to monitor our achievements.

The work will continue into a new phase in 2023 with approval of a multistate conservation grant to develop key 'Knowledge Hubs' that will act as clearing houses for AFWA members to access strategies, plans and data to help them implement mission critical programs

## THE ASSOCIATION COMMITTEES, SUBCOMMITTEES & WORKING GROUPS

Almost without exception, the accomplishments of which the Association are most proud started within our 70+ committees, subcommittees and working groups, and 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 Committee

Bioenergy Working Group

Conservation Reserve Program Working Group

Environmental Quality Incentives Program / Conservation Stewardship Program Joint Working Group

Farm Bill Easements Working Group

Forestry Working Group

Private Lands Working Group

Public Access Working Group

Regional Conservation Partnership Program Working Group

### Amphibian & Reptile Conservation Committee

### Angler & Boater R3 Committee

### Annual Meeting/Awards Committee

### Audit Committee

### Bird Conservation Committee

Bird & Fish Related Conflict Working Group

Grassland Working Group

Harvest Information Program (HIP) Working Group

Incidental Take Working 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 Adaptation Committee

### Education, Outreach & Diversity Committee

Diversity & Inclusion Working Group

Education Working Group

Outreach Working Group

Project WILD Subcommittee

Wildlife Viewing & Nature Tourism Working Group

### Energy and Wildlife Policy Committee

Solar Wildlife Working Group

Wind Wildlife Working Group

### Executive Committee

### Federal and Tribal Relations Committee

### Finance Committee

### Fish & Wildlife Health Committee

Lead and Fish and Wildlife Health Working Group

Aquatic Animal Health Working Group

### Fish and Wildlife Trust Funds Committee

Federal Assistance Coordinators Subcommittee

Trust Fund Collection Working Group

### Fisheries & Water Resources Policy Committee

Bird & Fish Related Conflict Working Group

Drug Approval Working Group

Subcommittee on Water

### Hunting and Shooting Sports Participation Committee

### International Relations Committee

CITES Technical Working Group

### Invasive Species Committee

Feral Swine Working Group

### Law Enforcement Committee

Interstate Wildlife Violator Compact

### Leadership and Professional Development Committee

Adaptive Leadership Working Group

### Legal Committee

### Legislative and Federal Budget Committee

### National Grants Committee

Multistate Conservation Grant Program

### Nominating Committee

### Ocean Resources Policy Committee

### Resolutions Committee

### Science and Research Committee

Human/Wildlife Conflict Subcommittee

### Sustainable Use of Wildlife Committee

Furbearer Conservation Technical Working Group

### Technology & Data Committee

### Threatened and Endangered Species Policy Committee

ESA and Climate Change Working Group

### Wildlife Diversity Conservation and Funding Committee

Bat Working Group

### Wildlife Resource Policy Committee

### Task Forces

Joint Federal/State Task Force on Federal Assistance Policy

National Survey Technical Workgroup

President's Task Force on the Multistate Conservation Grants Program



## STAFF

**Ron Regan**, Executive Director

**Patricia Allen**, Director of Communications

**Jacob Blandford**, Adaptation Program Manager

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

**Meaghan Gade**, Energy and Wildlife Program Manager

**Estelle Green**, Administrative Assistant

**Deb Hahn**, Director of International Programs

**Mark Humpert**, Director of Conservation Initiatives

**Gina Jackson**, Program Manager, Development,  
Communications and Learning

**Lane Kisonak**, Chief Legal Officer

**Marc LeFebvre**, Program Manager, Project WILD

**David Lind**, Legislative Liaison

**John Lord**, Director of Financial and Membership Services

**Amanda Myers**, Program Manager,  
Training & Information Services

**Angela Rivas Nelson**, Executive Assistant

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

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

**Dean Smith**, NAWMP Director/Wildlife Liaison

**Elena Takaki**, Director, Project WILD and Director of  
Leadership Development

**Kurt Thiede**, Director of Government Affairs

**Kalina Vatave**, Program Coordinator, Agriculture Policy

**Bryant White**, Program Manager, Trapping Policy

**Kerry Wixted**, Program Manager, Reptile & Amphibian/  
Invasive Species

**Silvana Yaroschuk**, Program Manager, Multistate  
Conservation Grants/Accounting Asst.

**Jeff Yattaw**, Senior Accounting Manager

## OFFICERS & EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

### President:

Curt Melcher, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife

### Vice President:

Chuck Sykes, Alabama Division of Wildlife & Freshwater Fisheries

### Secretary/Treasurer:

J.D. Strong, Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation

### Past President:

Vacant

### EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

#### Chair:

Vacant

#### Vice Chair:

Judy Camuso, Maine Department of Inland Fisheries & Wildlife

#### Members:

Bryan Burhans, Pennsylvania Game Commission

Brad Loveless, Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks & Tourism

Brian Nesvik, Wyoming Game and Fish Department

Sara Parker Pauley, Missouri Department of Conservation

Kendra Wecker, Ohio Division of Wildlife

Amanda Wuestefeld, Indiana Division of Fish and Wildlife

### EX OFFICIO VOTING MEMBERS

#### Canada:

Christie Curley, Ontario Ministry of Northern Development, Mines, Natural  
Resources and Forestry

### REGIONAL ASSOCIATION MEMBERS

#### Midwest:

Tim McCoy, Nebraska Game & Parks Commission

#### Northeast:

Mark Tisa, Massachusetts Division of Fisheries & Wildlife

#### Southeast:

Paul Johansen, West Virginia Division of Natural Resources

#### Western:

Jennifer Psyllakis, British Columbia Ministry of Forestry, Lands and Natural  
Resource Operations

\*Current slate 2022-2023 Officers & Executive Committee Members – February 2023

### Photographers:

**Cover photo:** U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

**Back Cover photo:** Colorado Parks & Wildlife

### Additional featured photos:

Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (pg. 2); Nebraska Game and Parks Commission (pg. 2);  
Marco Verch (pg. 3); Arizona Game and Fish Department (pg. 3); Oregon Department of Fish and  
Wildlife (pg. 4, 5, 17, 28); Nevada Department of Wildlife (pg. 6); Connecticut Department of Energy  
and Environmental Protection (pg. 7); National Park Service (pg. 8); Colorado Parks and Wildlife (pg. 9, 12,  
18, 20, 22); New York State Department of Conservation (pg. 10); U.S. Department of Agriculture (pg. 11);  
Idaho Fish and Game Department (pg. 12, 18); David Rivas (pg. 13); Joshua Galicki (pg. 14); Eastern Brook  
Trout Joint Venture (pg. 15); North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission (pg. 16, 24); U.S. Fish & Wildlife  
Service (pg. 18); Ohio Department of Natural Resources (pg. 19, 21); Lorelee Monas (pg. 25).

## 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 DNR 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 and Parks  
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 Department of Wildlife Resources  
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

National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration - Fisheries Service  
U.S. Dept. of Agriculture - Forest Service  
USDA-APHIS-Wildlife Services  
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency  
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service  
US Geological Survey

### Canadian Government Members

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British Columbia Ministry of Forests, Lands & Natural Resource Operations  
Canadian Wildlife Service  
Manitoba Department of Sustainable Development  
New Brunswick Dept. of Natural Resources  
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  
Quebec - Direction générale de la gestion de la faune et des habitats, Secteur de la faune et des parcs, Ministère des Forêts, de la Faune et des Parcs  
Saskatchewan Ministry of Environment  
Yukon Department of Environment

### Affiliate Members

Aquatic Resources Education Association  
Association for Conservation Information  
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  
National Association of University Fisheries and Wildlife Programs  
National Bobwhite & Grassland Initiative  
North American Wildlife Enforcement Officers Association  
Organization of Fish and Wildlife Information Managers  
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 Clean Power Association  
American Fisheries Society  
American Sportfishing Association  
Archery Trade Association  
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Bat Conservation International  
Boone and Crockett Club  
Canadian Wildlife Federation  
Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation  
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Ducks Unlimited Canada  
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Federal Premium, CCI, Remington & HEVI-Shot Ammunition  
Fur Institute of Canada  
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Island Conservation  
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Mule Deer Foundation  
National Audubon Society  
National Bowhunter Education Foundation  
National Marine Manufacturers Association  
National Rifle Association  
National Shooting Sports Foundation, Inc.  
National Trappers Association  
National Wild Turkey Federation  
National Wildlife Federation  
NatureServe  
North American Grouse Partnership  
North Dakota Natural Resources Trust  
Outdoors Tomorrow Foundation  
Pheasants Forever  
Pope and Young Club  
Property and Environment Research Center  
Recreational Boating and Fishing Foundation  
Renewable Energy Wildlife Institute  
Resource Management Service, LLC  
Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation  
Safari Club International  
The Nature Conservancy  
The Peregrine Fund  
The Ruffed Grouse Society  
The Wildlife Society  
Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership  
Wild Sheep Foundation  
Wildlife Management Institute



# ASSOCIATION OF FISH & WILDLIFE AGENCIES 113TH ANNUAL MEETING

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 24- WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 27  
Calgary, Alberta Canada



ASSOCIATION of  
FISH & WILDLIFE  
AGENCIES

Alberta  
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