

The AFWA Strategist

Update for Members and Partners of the Association of Fish & Wildlife Agencies

Summer 2022

AFWA Government Affairs

FY23 Appropriations Update: House Appropriations Subcommittees released and approved draft FY23 spending bills throughout June, including for the Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies and Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies. Overall DOI funding totals \$6.8 billion, an 18% increase over current funding, including \$1.9B for USFWS, a \$230M increase. However, several priority programs fell short of both the President's budget and AFWA's requested levels, including State and Tribal Wildlife Grants at \$74.362M and the North American Wetlands Conservation Fund at \$50M. These bills now await action by the full House Appropriations Committee, and AFWA will continue to engage with appropriators to pursue funding levels in line with our [FY23 Interior testimony](#) and [Agriculture/FDA testimony](#).

Predator Contest Prohibition Bill Moving: On June 16, the House Natural Resources Subcommittee on Water, Oceans, and Wildlife held a [legislative hearing](#) on a series of bills including *the Prohibit Wildlife Killing Contests Act of 2022* ([H.R. 7398](#)). This bill would make it unlawful for any person to organize, sponsor, conduct, or participate in a wildlife killing contest on public land, with exceptions for field trials, contests that target ungulates, Galliformes or Anatidae (e.g., turkeys, ducks, respectively) or lethal control actions by State or Federal agencies targeting invasive species. Public land is defined as any land owned by the U.S. and managed by a public land agency, specifically defined as NPS, USFWS, BLM, BOR, and USFS. AFWA will be submitting a statement for the record acknowledging the challenging issues involved with these types of activities, but still pointing to concerns regarding state authority. We will continue to advocate for retaining state agency management authority in setting these type of regulations.

SCDNR's Dep. Dir. Cope Testifies to Senate EPW: On June 15, the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee held a legislative hearing on a series of bills including the *Coastal Habitat Conservation Act of 2021* (S2194), for which Emily Cope, SCDNR Deputy Director for the Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries Division, provided supporting testimony at the request of the bill's co-sponsor, Sen. Graham. She received universal acclaim from Committee members and staff and her testimony and the full hearing are available [here](#). We were glad to host her at the AFWA offices and as always stand ready to provide support and assistance to members visiting D.C.

AFWA Developing Comments, August 8 Deadlines: CWA 401, ESA 10J, and Hunt/Fish Refuge Rule: EPA has developed a [proposed rule](#) revising and replacing the Agency's 2020 regulatory requirements for water quality certification under Clean Water Act (CWA) section 401. The EPA is also proposing conforming amendments to the water quality certification regulations for EPA-issued National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System permits. AFWA submitted comments on the proposed 2020 rule, and will be updating our comments for submission. We will be holding a webinar in early July to give an overview of the rule and seek feedback to inform AFWA comments. We will also be holding a webinar in early July with members of the AFWA Legal Committee and the Threatened and Endangered Species Policy Committee to inform AFWA's comments on [the proposed ESA 10\(j\) rule](#) regarding the proposal to expand experimental populations outside of historic range to anticipate and account for climate.

On June 9, USFWS published the [proposed 2022–2023 Station-Specific Hunting and Sport Fishing Regulations](#). While the rule provides modest expansions of opportunity at refuges currently open for other hunting and fishing activities, it more importantly signals the intent to prohibit lead fishing tackle and hunting ammo in the 2027 rule at a number of refuges. AFWA will be submitting comments recommending that lead tackle and ammunition decisions be informed by discussions with state fish and wildlife agencies. The comment deadline for all of these is August 8.

IJA Implementation Update: July 18-20, USFWS, AFWA, and NFHP will be co-hosting a workshop with partner Federal Agencies, Tribes, and NGO's to collaborate on implementation of Aquatic Organism Passage funding in the IJA. While FY22 funds were mainly directed to projects already in federal agency queues, all partners share the goal of establishing collaborative frameworks for project priorities, selection, and funding direction moving forward. AFWA is coordinating closely with the regional associations and NFHP to ensure the limited seats are filled by state staff covering all necessary areas of expertise and representing the full suite of states' interests and perspectives.



Recovering America's Wildlife Act- Update

On the historic 14th day in June, the *Recovering America's Wildlife Act* ([H.R.2773](#)) passed on the House floor with a final passage vote of 231-190. This is a significant victory for wildlife, for our many partners, and for all those across the country that we hope to serve with this funding. Congratulations and thank you for all your hard work! The continued commitment and perseverance from states and many partners has gotten us to this point, and we will need to remain steadfast as we still have more work to do. This is both a marathon and a sprint to the finish. It will be important to remember as we chart the successful path to the Senate, and to the end goal of enactment, that we'll need all members, cosponsors, and champions, on both sides of the aisle, to get to the goal line (that may or may not involve another stop in the House). So please join us in thanking the House offices that [voted yes for the bill's passage](#) and encourage contacts to Senators to hunker down and get this pivotal legislation passed in the Senate as soon as possible. You can refer advocates to the [Alliance for America's Fish & Wildlife website](#) to send a letter to Senators encouraging swift action in the Senate. For your awareness, the administration also recently released a strong statement of support for the goals of the bill that you can view [here](#). Feel free to reach out with any questions to Sean Saville, AFWA's Campaign Manager at ssaville@fishwildlife.org; 202-838-2561.

JOIN US FOR THE 112TH AFWA ANNUAL MEETING

Omni Hotel
Forth Worth, Texas
September 18-21, 2022



Registration is now OPEN for
AFWA's 2022 Annual Meeting at
www.afwaannualmeeting.org

WELCOME New Employees!



New Employee!

We are pleased to announce that Meaghan Gade has joined the AFWA family as our new Energy and Wildlife Program Manager.



New Employee!

We are pleased to announce that Jacob Blandford has joined the AFWA family as our new Climate Adaptation Program Manager.



New Employee!

We are pleased to announce that Jeff Yattaw has joined the AFWA family as our new Sr. Accounting Manager.



New Employee!

We are pleased to announce that Kalina Vatave has joined the AFWA family as our new Agriculture Policy Program Manager.

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Southern Wings Webinars

A [Webinar](#) for State Fish & Wildlife Agency Leadership: **August 3rd, 1:00–2:00pm EDT**

Join Director Sara Parker Pauley and other state agency staff to learn more about Southern Wings, why this program is critical to successful migratory bird conservation in your state and how it can help you be RAWA-ready! Speakers include: Sara Parker Pauley, MDC; Craig Thompson, WI DNR; Edwin Juarez, AZ GFD; Sarah Kendrick, USFWS.

[Zoom Link](#), +1 646 558 8656, Meeting ID: 832 5518 6224; Passcode: 442056
Find your local number [here](#).

Your Invited to a webinar about grassland bird conservation in northern Mexico: **August 9th, 1:00-2:00pm EDT**

Southern Wings provides state agencies such as Montana, Iowa, Kansas, South Dakota and more the ability to complement their in-state investment for Species of Greatest Conservation Need, including Baird's sparrow, Sprague's pipit, and long-billed curlew with the protection and improvement of wintering habitat for these same species. Full annual-cycle conservation is the only way to have successful long-term conservation. Find out how supporting conservation work in Mexico can help your state meet the objectives of your SWAPs.

[Zoom Link](#), +1 312 626 6799; Meeting ID: 838 4451 0839; Passcode: 907440
Find your local number [here](#).

2021 AFWA Annual Report



The Association recently released its 2021 Annual Report in which we focus on building resilience and the power of adaptation.

Download at www.fishwildlife.org

