

Lane County  
Audubon  
Society



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Please accept this comment on behalf of the Lane County Audubon Society in support of HB 3464 which would remove the predatory animal designation from beavers in Oregon. Lane County Audubon Society members are dedicated to the conservation of our natural environment, with a primary focus on birds and other wildlife and their habitats. Wetland areas are particularly popular for bird walks due to the large numbers and diversity of birds that can be found.

Beavers act as environmental engineers and keystone species that provide multiple benefits to nature. Their activity provides habitat for a host of species including birds. The resultant meadows, wetlands, and riparian vegetation offer resources that may be difficult to find elsewhere. Beaver activity allows for water storage and helps to suppress damage from floods due to heavy rains. They reduce erosion and help to clean and cool water which in turn, supports fish and wildlife. Beavers help to mitigate climate change through carbon capture and storage. They act as barriers to wildfire spread and as refuges for animals to escape injury from fires. Pretty impressive for one furbearer species.

Wet areas are extremely important for a majority of wildlife species as they provide not just water but also, food, shelter, and nesting sites. Shallow water provides food as vegetation, seeds, and invertebrates that several bird species rely on. Among the birds supported are kingfishers, herons, ducks, and several sensitive species like the sandhill crane. Beaver dams are great places for several species of ducks and swans to build nests. Downed trees support woodpecker and other cavity-nesters. Snags and woodpecker holes support owls. In addition, the riparian trees such as willows and aspen that grow as a result of beaver activity support a host of songbirds. Several research studies highlight science-based details. For example, in California, the presence of beaver dams doubled the probability of willow flycatchers and doubled the density of song sparrows compared to areas without beavers and over 135 bird species were shown to use riparian forests (California Beaver Summit, 2023). Another study in Wyoming found 75% more ducks and geese on streams with beaver activity than without (Mckinstry, et al., 2007). A study on birds attributed the dramatic decline of grassland birds (about 3 billion birds lost since 1970) to the destruction of keystone species like beavers (Askins et al., 2007) and several studies suggest that beaver restoration is key to restoring riparian areas (Ripple et al., 2022)

We believe this to be a commonsense bill that allows ODFW to manage beaver on private land in Oregon, as it does other wildlife species. State wildlife management is the province of the ODFW which is set up to manage furbearers. The bill will contribute to data tracking and management. Importantly, it provides a chance for education both on the benefits of beavers and on how to co-exist with them. The bill is written in a way that will not penalize landowners—it allows beaver to be killed or moved with an easily obtained permit without onerous process. Please support HB 3464. Thank you for your consideration.