



KALMIOPSIS AUDUBON SOCIETY

P.O. Box 1265 • Port Orford OR • 97465

April 26, 2023

To: Oregon Senate Committee on Natural Resources
Re: Support for HB 3464, Beaver Management

Honorable Chair Golden, Vice-Chair Girod, and members of the Committee

I am writing on behalf of the Kalmiopsis Audubon Society. Our group has more than 400 members in Curry County, who care about habitat for birds, fish, and wildlife in the mountains, rivers and coast of Oregon's spectacular south coast. We are writing in strong support of HB 3464, which would bring a sensible, science-based approach to beaver management in Oregon.

Over the past decade, the work of beavers as crucial ecosystem "engineers" has become more widely recognized. The small dams they build create wetlands that hold water on the land and increase habitat complexity and biodiversity. In the face of climate change, it's becoming clear that beaver-modified habitats can increase resiliency (in the face of drought and wildfires) and otherwise improve habitat for other wildlife, including salmon and birds.

Before colonization, beavers inhabited low-gradient streams all across Oregon making the "Oregon Territory" a hot spot for wetlands –and also for the fur trade that would decimate beavers and otters. Oregon became known as the "Beaver State," but after the fur trade slaughter, beaver populations plummeted and the untold richness of historic, beaver-modified habitats was lost.

Despite beavers' place on the back side of Oregon's state flag, these animals have long been mistakenly regarded as "predatory" in our state's wildlife law because they fall under the scientific order of "Rodentia." (They are, in fact, herbivores that love to nibble on willows and cottonwood trees!) However, this mis-categorization has meant anyone can trap and kill an unlimited number of beavers at any time for any reason. There has been no tracking so no one even knows how many beavers have been killed each year.

HB 3464 would remove the "predatory animal" designation from beavers and direct ODFW to establish a sound system for beaver management, just as it manages other wildlife. This would include determining rules for when beaver can be removed and creating a system to track beaver removals and killings. Beavers would still be subject to hunting, trapping, and removal if they cause certain economic damages.

The bill received unanimous, bi-partisan support in the House Committee on Climate, Energy, and Environment.

For all these reasons, we urge you to vote for this bill, which will bring a more sensible and science-based approach to beaver management to Oregon.

Thank you for your public service and for considering our perspective.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Ann Vileisis". The signature is written in a dark ink and is positioned below the word "Sincerely,".

Ann Vileisis, President, Kalmiopsis Audubon