



February 3, 2025

Dear Chair Lively, Vice-Chairs Gamba and Bobby Levy, and Committee Members:

On behalf of the Oregon Wildlife Coalition, we are writing to express our strong **support for HB 2980**, the Wildlife Stewardship Bill.

As humans and wildlife come into more and more frequent contact, it is critical that the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) has the resources to promote stewardship and reduce conflicts across urban, suburban, and rural landscapes. The Wildlife Stewardship Program is an effective strategy to engage growing populations across all landscapes to further the protection of Oregon's wildlife.

The Wildlife Stewardship Program was originally proposed in ODFW's 2023-2025 Budget and again in their 2025-2027 Budget and is a meaningful investment in preventing and mitigating human-wildlife conflicts, inspiring wildlife stewardship, and building greater public awareness and responsibility through education about living with wildlife in communities across Oregon.

Specifically, HB 2980 will allocate \$923,000 to hire 3 new wildlife biologists, develop a Living with Wildlife public education and outreach campaign and create a grant program to support Oregon's wildlife rehabilitation centers which serve on the frontlines of human-wildlife interactions.

**Wildlife Stewardship Program Benefits:**

- Promotes wildlife stewardship.
- Proactively prevents wildlife conflicts through education about living with wildlife.
- Builds and strengthens partnerships for the benefit of wildlife across Oregon.
- Engages new audiences in wildlife conservation and connects the public to their state wildlife agency.

The Oregon Wildlife Coalition was pleased to have several members of our coalition as participants of the ODFW Taskforce that developed this important and innovative program and appreciated the dedication from Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commissioners Mark Labhart and Kathayoon Khalil who facilitated these discussions.

HB 2980 has tremendous support across a remarkably broad spectrum of stakeholders. We respectfully urge this committee to support HB 2980 and move this bill forward to Joint Ways and Means Committee.

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*The Oregon Wildlife Coalition is a coalition of wildlife conservation groups working proactively and collaboratively to advocate for policies that are science based and humane and reflect the state's conservation values.*

Bird Alliance of Oregon  
Cascadia Wildlands  
Defenders of Wildlife  
Humane Society of the United States  
Humane Voters Oregon

Oregon Wild  
Think Wild  
Western Environmental Law Center  
Willamette Riverkeepers