

Oregon Conservation and Outdoor Recreation Organizations Support Dedicated Funding for Oregon's Imperiled Species

We, the undersigned organizations, support long-term, dedicated funding to prevent the decline of Oregon's most imperiled fish, wildlife, and the plants and habitats they rely upon. HB 2977 - "1% for Wildlife" - secures dedicated, sustainable funding for the implementation of Oregon's State Wildlife Action Plan (SWAP), known as the Oregon Conservation Strategy and Nearshore Strategy. "1% for Wildlife" proposes increasing the state transient lodging tax from 1.5% to 2.5% (an increase of 1%), to combat the biodiversity crisis, by investing in the conservation and recovery of Oregon's most vulnerable wildlife and habitat.

Oregon is fortunate to have a diverse and bountiful array of flora and fauna, and habitats that support them. Unfortunately, many species face increasing challenges putting their future at risk. At the request of Congress, Oregon developed a SWAP in 2005 to assess the health of Oregon's fish, wildlife, and habitat and create a roadmap of conservation actions needed to sustain them. The SWAP is updated every ten years, and as of 2015, the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) identified at least 294 species of greatest conservation need and 11 native habitats needing proactive restoration actions. Without direct and targeted interventions, these species and habitats will continue on their downward spiral of decline and possible extinction.

Unfortunately, current funds available for implementing the SWAP are only a small fraction of what is required to recover our state's most at-risk fish and wildlife. For instance, state general and lottery funds combined comprise only 10-13% of ODFW's total budget, with direct investments in the SWAP at only 2.75%. Without sufficient and consistent funding from the state, Oregon's most vulnerable species and habitats remain at risk.

Oregon's population growth, development, climate change, and other natural and human-made impacts contribute to growing pressures on Oregon's fish, wildlife, and habitat. Oregonians have a strong interest in healthy populations of native flora and fauna and the habitats that sustain them. These pressures on Oregon's wildlife and the decline in species and habitat quality also pose a threat to Oregon's vibrant outdoor economy and the thousands of Oregonians whose livelihoods depend on it.

Hunters, anglers, birders, hikers, campers, outdoor recreationists, and wildlife watchers have created a robust outdoor recreation economy that depends on healthy wildlife, fish populations, and landscapes. This includes Oregonians and millions of non-Oregonians who visit Oregon to enjoy these opportunities and support our robust tourism industry. A 2023 analysis revealed that Oregon's outdoor recreation industry accounted for 2.6% of the state's GDP, higher than the national average. Additionally, data from 2019 shows that Oregon's outdoor economy contributes to \$15.6 billion in consumer spending, of which hunting, fishing, and wildlife watching account for \$1.2 billion.

"1% for Wildlife," is a bold, proactive solution that will directly help at-risk species. This increase to Oregon's state transient lodging tax would provide a steady, sustainable source of funds to ODFW to recover Oregon's most imperiled species and habitat and enhance biodiversity - all of which contribute to Oregon's tourism and outdoor recreation economy.

We, the undersigned support "1% for Wildlife" to protect and enhance Oregon's precious natural heritage.

