



**OREGON CHAPTER OF
THE WILDLIFE SOCIETY**
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FROM: The Oregon Chapter of The Wildlife Society

TO: House Committee on Agriculture, Land Use, Natural Resources, and Water

SUBJECT: HB 2977 (1% for Wildlife) - SUPPORT

Co-Chair Helm, Co-Chair Owens, Vice-Chair McDonald, Members of the Committee,

The Oregon Chapter of The Wildlife Society (ORTWS) appreciates your consideration of HB 2977 and the opportunity to provide comments. ORTWS would like to express our strong support of this bill.

ORTWS represents nearly 600 wildlife professionals from many areas of public and private enterprises composed of students, scientists, educators, technicians, consultants, biologists, and land managers. These professionals in our organization dedicate their lives to managing, conserving, and studying wildlife populations and their habitats throughout Oregon. Our mission is to inspire, empower, and enable Oregon's wildlife professionals and students to promote science-based wildlife conservation and management through the participation and leadership of an open and inclusive community of members.

We are in support of HB 2977 because it closely aligns and supports our mission to promote the stewardship of wildlife and their habitats through the use of sound ecological information. Similarly, ORTWS strongly supports the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife's (ODFW) mission to protect and enhance Oregon's fish and wildlife populations and their habitats for use and enjoyment by present and future generations. Although every person in Oregon, resident or not, benefits from ODFW implementing its mission, ODFW is primarily funded directly or indirectly through hunting/fishing licenses and receives little General Fund. Rectifying this imbalance of hunters/anglers paying for everyone's wildlife and habitat is just one feature of HB 2977.

Threats to wildlife, habitat, and biodiversity are ever present and action must take place immediately if there is any hope for the future. Fortunately, there are products in place to help change this downward spiral: the Oregon State Wildlife Action Plan (SWAP) (also known as the Oregon Conservation Strategy) serves as a blueprint to identify both the species that need immediate action and the actions needed. In it, nearly 300 species are identified in Oregon that are at an elevated risk of extinction and 11 habitats are of conservation concern. Much of the funds for implementing the SWAP come from federal funds that are historically insufficient but with the current uncertain times, there is a high probability they may also entirely disappear. HB 2977 is directed at creating and utilizing resources to fully implement the Oregon SWAP and conserve Oregon's wildlife and habitat for generations to come. Fully implementing the SWAP requires a long list of Oregon experts, agencies, and partners that far exceed ODFW's capacity, meaning the professional and economic impact would be far and wide.

Oregon's fish, wildlife, and habitat are locally, nationally, and internationally recognized as diverse, captivating, and enticing to both those that like to recreate outdoors but also those that appreciate their intrinsic value. As such, local economies and tourism greatly benefit from healthy and robust fish, wildlife, and habitat, which is obvious when considering the well-known impact of hunters and anglers. Despite this massive economic driver by wildlife and habitat enthusiasts, the current system does not contribute to its own existence and longevity. This is a tragic missed opportunity when the number of fish, wildlife, and habitat enthusiasts in Oregon (which includes hunters/anglers) number in the millions annually. The concept proposed in HB 2977 would help resolve that issue.

To ensure the protection and enhancement of all Oregon's fish, wildlife, and habitat for current and future generations and that all persons in Oregon have the opportunity to contribute to see that come true, ORTWS supports HB 2977.

Thank you again for the opportunity to provide testimony.

Regards,

ORTWS Board of Directors