

June 25, 2025

Senate Committee on Rules
Oregon State Legislature
900 Court St. NE
Salem Oregon 97301

Dear Friends:

On behalf of American Bird Conservancy, which works to conserve birds and their habitats throughout the Americas, please support HB2977 to increase funding for state wildlife conservation to paid for with a tax increase on the short-term lodging. We appreciate that the bill recognizes that Oregonians have *"a strong and growing interest in healthy populations of native flora and fauna and the habitats that sustain them."*

As a national bird conservation organization, we strongly support providing state fish and wildlife agencies and Indian Tribes with dependable, dedicated resources to help more than 12,000 species in need of proactive conservation to avoid becoming endangered.

The [2025 U.S. State of the Birds Report Addresses Conservation Needs Across Habitats and Species](#) highlights 229 Species Conservation Planning and Population Recovery and unfortunately confirms that bird population declines are continuing across nearly all habitat types. Another recent study "[North American bird declines are greatest where species are most abundant](#)" finds that 75% of bird species have declined between 2007 to 2021

Oregon has a number of bird species listed under the Endangered Species Act including the Marbled Murrelet and Northern Spotted Owl, both of which depend on old growth forests. The Marbled Murrelet is a rapidly declining critically endangered seabird which only nests in the inland Old-Growth forests of the Pacific Northwest.

American Bird Conservancy and partners support recovering this species to benefit the economies and other wildlife that depend on our Northwest Forests. Protection of old-growth forest habitat leads to cleaner air and water and supports tourism, recreation, and commercial fishing industries our communities rely on. These forests also provide a natural climate solution by absorbing carbon.

The murrelet's recent five-year status review confirmed its threatened status and found that its breeding success rate is so low that future population declines are likely. Nest predation has been found to be a limiting factor in the murrelet's population growth.

To reduce forest fragmentation which facilitates nest predation, increased protective buffers are needed around nests. Funds are also needed to support campground cleanup campaigns to reduce the number of ravens and jays predating Murrelet nests.
This is an essential recovery activity that could be supported by this legislation.

Marbled Murrelets need:

- Old-growth trees for nesting - they don't build nests, so wide, flat branches are a must.
- Habitat buffers around nesting habitat - forest fragmentation allows nest predators easy access to nests, so larger patches of trees need protection
- Recovery actions support– nest predation is also high around recreation areas where predators thrive off of human food scraps, so visitor education on federal lands is imperative



Marbled Murrelet chick on a nest, National Park Service

Critically endangered California Condors, Streak Horned Larks, and Western Snowy Plover also call the Beaver State home. All would benefit from bolstered recovery efforts that can be supported by this bill.

Birding in the United States: A Demographic and Economic Analysis was released by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in November as an addendum to the 2022 National Survey of Fishing, Hunting, and Wildlife-Associated Recreation. The addendum identifies the characteristics of those who watch, feed, or provide habitat for birds and includes such measures as geographic location and avidity. It also quantifies the economic impact of birders.

The report's top-line findings include:

- 37% of the adult U.S. population (**96 million Americans**) identify as birders, defined as either taking a trip to watch birds or having closely observed or tried to identify birds around the home.
- Birders directly expended **\$108 billion** annually on both trips and equipment for birding; these expenditures supported **\$279 billion** in total industry output, benefitting 1.4 million jobs with \$90 billion in income.

Thank you for considering this request to support HB2977. For more information on forest conservation, the Northwest Forest Plan amendment, or Marbled Murrelet recovery, please contact me at sholmer@abcbirds.org.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Steve Holmer".

Steve Holmer
Vice President of Policy
American Bird Conservancy