

117TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. RES. 1420

Expressing support for the designation of the week beginning on October 9, 2022, as “National Wildlife Refuge Week”.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

SEPTEMBER 30, 2022

Mr. THOMPSON of California (for himself, Mr. WITTMAN, Mr. KIND, and Mr. JOYCE of Ohio) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Natural Resources

RESOLUTION

Expressing support for the designation of the week beginning on October 9, 2022, as “National Wildlife Refuge Week”.

Whereas, in 1903, President Theodore Roosevelt established the first national wildlife refuge on Pelican Island in Florida;

Whereas, in 2022, the National Wildlife Refuge System, administered by the United States Fish and Wildlife Service, is the premier system of land and water to conserve wildlife in the world and has grown to 568 national wildlife refuges and 38 wetland management districts, with units located in every State and territory of the United States;

Whereas national wildlife refuges are important recreational and tourism destinations in communities across the

United States, and this protected land offers a variety of recreational opportunities, including the six wildlife-dependent uses of hunting, fishing, wildlife observation, photography, environmental education, and interpretation;

Whereas the National Wildlife Refuge System receives more than 61,000,000 annual visits, which generate more than \$3,200,000,000 for local economies and support 41,000 jobs;

Whereas 436 units of the National Wildlife Refuge System have hunting programs and 378 units have fishing programs that, respectively, support more than 2,500,000 hunting visits and more than 8,300,000 fishing visits annually;

Whereas the National Wildlife Refuge System has hosted more than 37,000,000 birding and wildlife observation visits in recent years;

Whereas national wildlife refuges are important to local businesses and gateway communities;

Whereas the National Wildlife Refuge System contains many different kinds of ecosystems, including tropical and boreal forests, wetlands, deserts, grasslands, arctic tundras, and remote islands, and spans 12 time zones from the United States Virgin Islands to Guam;

Whereas national wildlife refuges are home to more than 700 species of birds, 220 species of mammals, 250 species of reptiles and amphibians, and more than 1,000 species of fish;

Whereas national wildlife refuges are the primary Federal lands on which the production, migration, and wintering habitat for waterfowl are fostered;

Whereas, since 1934, the Migratory Bird Conservation Fund, which has been largely funded from the sale of the Federal Duck Stamp to outdoor enthusiasts, has generated more than \$1,100,000,000 and enabled the conservation of more than 6,000,000 acres of habitat for waterfowl and numerous other species in the National Wildlife Refuge System;

Whereas refuges provide protection to more than 380 threatened and endangered species;

Whereas national wildlife refuges are cores of conservation for larger landscapes and resources for other agencies of the Federal Government, State governments, private landowners, and organizations in efforts to secure the wildlife heritage of the United States;

Whereas more than 16,000 volunteers and almost 180 national wildlife refuge “Friends” organizations contribute around 762,000 volunteer hours annually, the equivalent of 360 full-time employees, and provide an important link to local communities;

Whereas national wildlife refuges provide an important opportunity for children to discover and gain a greater appreciation for the natural world;

Whereas 101 units of the National Wildlife Refuge System are within 25 miles of cities and suburbs where 80 percent of individuals in the United States live;

Whereas, through the Urban Wildlife Conservation Program, the United States Fish and Wildlife Service works to dismantle barriers that have blocked underserved communities from full and equal participation in outdoor recreation and wildlife conservation;

Whereas the Urban Wildlife Conservation Program fosters strong new conservation coalitions, educates and employs youth, betters communities, builds trust in government, and connects individuals with nature;

Whereas national wildlife refuges provide opportunities for people from all backgrounds to explore, connect with, and preserve the nature heritage of the United States;

Whereas, since 1995, refuges across the United States have held festivals, educational programs, guided tours, and other events to celebrate “National Wildlife Refuge Week” during the second full week of October;

Whereas the United States Fish and Wildlife Service has designated the week beginning on October 19, 2022, as National Wildlife Refuge Week; and

Whereas the designation of National Wildlife Refuge Week by the House of Representatives would recognize more than a century of conservation in the United States, raise awareness about the importance of wildlife and the National Wildlife Refuge System, and celebrate the myriad recreational opportunities available for the enjoyment of this network of protected lands: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That the House of Representatives—

2 (1) supports the designation of “National Wildlife Refuge Week”;

3 (2) encourages the observance of National Wildlife Refuge Week with appropriate events and activities;

4 (3) recognizes the importance of national wildlife refuges to wildlife conservation, the protection of

1 imperiled species and ecosystems, and compatible
2 uses;

3 (4) acknowledges the importance of national
4 wildlife refuges for their recreational opportunities
5 and contribution to local economies across the
6 United States;

7 (5) finds that national wildlife refuges play a
8 vital role in securing the hunting and fishing herit-
9 age of the United States for future generations;

10 (6) identifies the significance of national wild-
11 life refuges in advancing the traditions of wildlife ob-
12 servation, photography, environmental education,
13 and interpretation;

14 (7) recognizes the important work of urban na-
15 tional wildlife refuges in welcoming racially and eth-
16 nically diverse urban communities that were long ex-
17 cluded, including work to—

18 (A) foster strong new conservation coali-
19 tions;

20 (B) provide education and employment op-
21 portunities to youth;

22 (C) improve communities;

23 (D) build trust in government; and

24 (E) connect individuals with nature;

1 (8) acknowledges the role of national wildlife
2 refuges in conserving waterfowl and waterfowl habi-
3 tat under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (16 U.S.C.
4 703 et seq.);

5 (9) reaffirms the support of the House of Rep-
6 resentatives for wildlife conservation and the Na-
7 tional Wildlife Refuge System; and

8 (10) expresses the intent of the House of Rep-
9 resentatives—

10 (A) to continue working to conserve wild-
11 life; and

12 (B) to manage the National Wildlife Ref-
13 uge System for current and future generations.

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