

2017 Accomplishments by TWS BAC Conservation Affairs Committee

Jeanne Chinn, Chair, CAC

Accomplishments:

Provided protections for a Northern Spotted Owl Activity Center during the breeding season in the Town of Ross, Marin. The landowner was planning to sell the hump of natural landscape in the middle of town and had installed orange developer fencing on wooden stilts. The landowner took down the fencing and stilts prior to February 1st when breeding season activities begin. Neighbors are in the process of gathering funding to purchase the land so it can remain protected.

Contacted representative members of congress in our 9-county Bay Area region, and our CA senators, to support funding for the State and Tribal Wildlife Grants Program. It is the nation's core program for preventing species from becoming endangered. Received many responses from Representatives.

Worked with Wendy St. John to have a notice on the TWS Bay Area website for our chapter members to contact me regarding contacting local Congress Representatives to assist in disseminating science-based information.

Met with Congressman Huffman's deputy assistant in person to discuss protection of habitat and species and help her become aware of the scientific knowledge-based TWS support available when the Congressman has questions.

The Bay Area CAC member chapter, along with the Hawaii member chapter, was included in a comment letter to the Department of the Interior by the Western Section of TWS CAC regarding protection of 26 national monuments, 8 located within the geographic boundary of the Western Section along with 2 marine national monuments, from losing their status or being diminished in size.

Bay Area CAC sent a comment letter to Secretary Ryan Zinke regarding protection of Berryessa Snow Mountain National Monument, located within our chapter area. The monument is widely recognized for its diversity of habitat types, varied landscapes and elevations offering high quality habitat for a variety of threatened and endangered species, including northern spotted owls, marten and fisher, as well as waterways for California Coastal chinook salmon and Northern California steelhead, as well as black bears, river otters, coyotes, deer, Tule elk, mountain lions, and songbirds.

Bay Area CAC sent comment letters to congressmen in our area regarding H.R. 2063, the "SAVES Act", which would remove Endangered Species Act protections for non-native species and seriously undermine the progress the U.S. has made in combating illegal wildlife trafficking and the transnational crime organizations that are driving it. The poaching and illegal trade of non-native species such as elephants, rhinos and tigers is a multi-billion dollar criminal enterprise that is wiping out wildlife populations and financing threats to America's security around the world. Recognizing the severity of this crisis, Congress overwhelmingly passed the END Wildlife Trafficking, signed into law just a year ago, and President Trump included combating wildlife trafficking in his Executive Order 13773 on Transnational Organized Crime. H.R. 2603 would undermine both of these policies. H.R. 2603 would remove the authority of US agencies to regulate the import and export of species to ensure that international trade is not a threat to their survival, unless those species are listed under the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES)—which many are not.

Bay Area CAC sent comment letters to Representative Huffman and our U.S. Senators re H.R. 3668, The Sportsmen's Heritage and Recreational Enhancement Act (SHARE Act), which would delist wolves in the Great Lakes Distinct Population Segment, and prevent the courts from reviewing the action or the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service from ever relisting these wolves. Given the questionable successful management of individual states when wolves have been locally delisted, it does not support their prevention from another extinction by preventing the federal government re-taking possession of their management if wolf populations drop below sustainable numbers. This bill also allows birds to be shot over unharvested cropland by amending the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, which was put in place to protect our migratory birds in their migratory patterns for survival. Already much of their habitat has been fragmented through development and agriculture, to have a healthy environment we need all of our species on the landscape. The bill eases fishing restrictions in marine sanctuaries, which were made sanctuaries to protect at-risk fish and aquatic species, has the federal government forgotten the definition of "sanctuary?" And the bill also bans the purchase of new wetland and bird habitat. Considering 95-97% of wetlands have been lost to development and fragmentation, the remaining wetlands should be protected outright, not banned from purchase for protection.

And then the catastrophic wildfires of Northern California took precedent.

Current – working on since spring of 2017:

Working with BLM staff to support updating BLM's California list of sensitive species to include 10 California Species of Special Concern and 1 species on the California (wintering) Watch List in relation to species on their recently acquired Cotoni-Coast Dairies property, a large chunk of Santa Cruz County that has recently become a CA Coastal Monument.