

Educational Corner—Submitted by Mindy Koch

The Recovering America's Wildlife Act

A third of America's fish and wildlife species are at risk of extinction. There are many elements that contribute to this risk including habitat loss, invasive species, disease and the impacts of a changing climate. There are currently 1,600 species on the threatened and endangered species list. Slowing the decline of biodiversity is an ongoing challenge.

In 1937, the Pittman-Robertson Act (PR) was initiated by hunters and anglers to fund wildlife conservation. It created a 10-11 percent excise tax on fishing and hunting purchases to fund wildlife conservation. Currently, 80 percent of the funding for states' wildlife agencies comes from hunting and fishing license sales and PR funds. Historically, the funding approach has worked; however, the general decrease in license sales and the accelerating loss of biodiversity suggests there needs to be a new funding approach for fish and wildlife funding.

In an attempt to reverse wildlife and fisheries population declines, Congress is considering enacting the Recovering America's Wildlife Act (RAWA). RAWA is a proposed bipartisan amendment to the 1937 Pittman-Robertson Act. RAWA will dedicate \$1.397 billion annually to provide funding to state fish and wildlife agencies and tribal agencies. RAWA would go for States to implement their wildlife conservation strategies, recover endangered or threatened species, combat invasive species and fund law enforcement activities related to the protection of wildlife species of greatest conservation need. Funding is also dedicated for tribal agencies to work on at risk species recovery.

RAWA is currently working its way through Congress. It is supported by diverse interests, from business leaders to the conservation community. The bill would also generate over 33,000 direct jobs and boost the country's outdoor recreation economy. RAWA has the potential to provide much needed future funding for state and tribal wildlife agencies.

Kirtland's Warbler



Grey Wolf



Eastern Massasauga



Canada Lynx

