



November 5, 2021

Senator Tom Cotton
326 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20003

I am writing to you on behalf of the Arkansas Audubon Society, a statewide organization committed to fostering a greater knowledge of the natural history of Arkansas and promoting conservation of natural resources in Arkansas. **We strongly urge you to take up cosponsorship of the Recovering America's Wildlife Act (S. 2372).** This legislation would provide state and tribal wildlife agencies with critical funding to enable proactive and cost-effective conservation of America's at-risk wildlife populations.

Nationally, conservation efforts for these at-risk species are severely underfunded, only receiving about \$60 million annually through the existing State and Tribal Wildlife program. While states and tribes are doing excellent work with these funds, the amount is not nearly enough to plan for multi-year conservation and recovery projects or prevent costlier measures, such as Endangered Species Act listings, from occurring.

Here in our home state, the Arkansas Wildlife Action Plan includes a competitive granting process to ensure these funds go to projects that have the best chance of improving our conservation strategies for the species of greatest conservation need. Over the 20 years of this program's existence, nearly \$13 million (about \$650,000 annually) have been awarded to projects that increase our understanding of wildlife biology and improve their habitat. **The Recovering America's Wildlife Act would increase the amount of funding for which Arkansas is available to \$15 million annually.** Just think of the progress we could make using these funds for habitat restoration to benefit game and non-game fish and wildlife, proactive conservation efforts to prevent species from becoming threatened and endangered, and wildlife conservation education and wildlife-associated recreation.

Passage of the Recovering America's Wildlife Act would match an appropriate solution to the scale of this crisis. By dedicating \$1.3 billion annually for the adequate implementation of State Wildlife Action Plans, and \$97.5 million annually for tribal agencies to plan long-term conservation projects, wildlife professionals will have the resources needed to hold the nation's wildlife in the public trust for generations to come.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "M.R. McClung".

Maureen R. McClung, Ph.D.
Conservation Chair
Arkansas Audubon Society