NCTWS Conservation Annual Report
February 2020

Committee Members: Rachael Urbanek, Chair; Mike Baranski; Allen Basala; Liz Hillard; Liz Rutledge; Meagan Thomas

2019-20 Activities:

1. North Carolina HB 483 – Let them Spawn
   a. NCWF sponsored legislation
   b. Establishes a min. size limit for each historically significant marine fishery species to ensure that 75% of the juvenile fish at that size have reached maturity and had the opportunity to spawn at least once
   c. NCWF has a letter of support we can adapt if we want to support it.
      i. NCTWS Board approved to sign on only if NCAFS signs on.
         1. NCAFS will not be writing a letter of support at this time due to contention among members for its merit.

2. Wildlife Corridors Conservation Act
   a. H.R. 2795 - Introduced by Representatives Beyer (VA) on 16 May 2019
      i. 10 co-sponsors, 0 from NC
   b. S. 1499 – Introduced by Udall (NM)
      i. Identical Bill introduced the same day
      ii. 15 co-sponsors, 0 from NC
      iii. 16 May 2019 – Last action - introduced
   c. National program for maintaining wildlife migrations, movements, and wildlife corridors.
   d. Creates: wildlife corridors program; movements grant program; regional wildlife movement councils; national coordinating committee; corridor database.
   e. VA and NM Wildlife Federations distributed letters of support to state chapters.

3. Recovering America’s Wildlife Act
   a. H.R. 3742 - Reintroduced 12 July 2019
   b. House Markup Summary
      i. Changed the current state funding formula from 50% based on the land area of the state / 50% based on the population of the state to 50% proportion of land and water in a state, 25% proportion of human population, and 25% proportion of T/E vertebrates and invertebrates in the state. This change increases funding to states with higher numbers of T/E species.
      ii. Increased the amount required to be spent on T/E species from 10% to 15% with the following flexibility:
1. States would be able to spend the 15% on species that are candidates for listing or petitioned for listing under the ESA, as well as already listed as T or E, and those under State law;
2. The 15% is an average over 5 years; and
3. The Secretary may reduce the minimum requirement spent on an annual basis if the Secretary determines that the State, territory, or the District of Columbia is meeting the conservation and recovery needs of all species.

iii. Changed the state reporting requirement to Congress from 5 years to 3 years, and included in the reporting requirements the submission of a three-year work plan and a three-year expected budget with results from the previous three-year period. This will be submitted to the House Natural Resources and Senate Environment and Public Works Committees and to the FWS.

iv. Changed the amount apportioned to the US territories from ¼% each to 1/3% each, except Puerto Rico with would be no less than 1%.

172 cosponsors total - NC Co-sponsors: Rouzer, Budd, McHenry, Price
i. NCTWS CAC sent letters of support to remaining representative in the state
   1. Received Response from Price
   ii. NCTWS CAC sent independent scientist letter sign-on to members

d. 5 December 2019 - Last action - Subcommittee Vote: House Natural Resources Subcommittee on Water, Oceans, and Wildlife: 26 Yeas, 6 Nays

   a. Currituck National Wildlife Refuge: Expand hunting hours for existing migratory game bird hunting and expand method of take and bag limits for existing big game hunting on 3,610 acres to further align with state regulations.
   b. Edenton National Fish Hatchery: Formally open to sport fishing for the first time.
   c. Mattamuskeet National Wildlife Refuge: Expand season date ranges for existing big game hunting to further align with state regulations and offer youth hunt on 7,811 acres.
   d. Pete Campbell agreed to the Mattamuskeet deer hunt and sees no problem with it. However, he mentioned that he is apprehensive of whether this may lead a pipeline to receiving pressure to open up the refuge to resident species hunts when wintering waterfowl are present. Pete said he would keep us posted.

5. North Carolina SB 606 – Prioritize Native NC Plants on Highway ROW
   a. Signed into Law 22 (Attached)
   b. Amended the Department of Transportation's authority to plant trees and other vegetation in the highway right-of-way by directing the Department to select acceptable plants with a strong preference for those that are native to North Carolina.
   c. Thank You Letter of Support sent to Representatives Davis, McInnis, and Rabon
      i. Reply received from Davis

6. Other Legislation Discussed but No Actions Taken:
   a. North Carolina HB 808 - Community Cats/Animal Shelter Disposition
   b. North Carolina H. R. 1222: Target Training and Marksman Training Support Act
c. North Carolina SB821 and HB 1120 – Repeals the Clean Water Management Trust Fund Board of Trustees and the NC Parks and Recreation Authority

Respectfully submitted by

Rachael E. Urbanek, CWB®
NCTWS Conservation Affairs Chairs