

**FROM THE DESK OF  
REP. MITCH GREENLICK**



July 4, 2017

Dear Members of the Oregon Legislature,

On behalf of the Audubon Society of Portland and our 17,000 members, I want to express deep disappointment in the way in which SCR-18 (State Bird) was handled on Monday, July 3<sup>rd</sup>. The hearing before the House Rules Committee was announced with minimal notice and no public testimony was allowed at the hearing. Advocates who managed to make it to the hearing, despite the remarkably short notice, were not given the courtesy of an opportunity to speak. The hearing came immediately before a holiday and the floor vote will occur two days after the holiday, severely reducing the public's ability to communicate with their legislators prior to the floor vote. In our view, this is a disappointing manner in which to conduct any legislative process and it is particularly ironic that these types of political maneuvers would be devoted to passing a non-urgent bill that is supposed designate a symbol to represent all of Oregon.

The amendment which was passed on Monday, designating the Western Meadowlark as the state songbird and the Osprey as the state raptor, seemed to be perceived by some on the committee as a political compromise. We do not view it that way and we do not expect that our members or birders across the State of Oregon with view it that way either. The designation of a state symbol should be engaging, inclusive and empowering--This process from start to finish has been the antithesis of those values. There was never any effort what so ever to engage or seek input from the public in general or birders and bird conservation organizations specifically and the legislation that is up for a vote on Wednesday is completely devoid of any provisions to engage the public going forward.

The selection of the Western Meadowlark in 1927 stands in stark contrast with the selection of the Osprey in 2017. The Meadowlark was selected based on statewide contest, sponsored by Audubon, in which more than 80,000 school children, representing every county in the State of Oregon, voted. That would be a remarkable feat today...that it happened in 1927 is truly astounding. However, rather than drawing inspiration from this example, the 2017 legislature appears to be poised to go entirely the other direction disenfranchising and excluding the public from the decision-making process.

We urge those who are considering voting "yes" on SCR-18 to consider the narrative that will go forward with this legislation. Just as the legendary 1927 contest goes hand in hand with the Western Meadowlark, so too will the disappointing public process that resulted in its designation travel side by side with the Osprey. Audubon reaches tens of thousands of school children every year in Oregon and we expect that the discussion of the state bird(s) will be a much a discussion about civics as it will be about avian natural history.

**Please vote no on SCR-18 when it reaches the floor.**

Thank you for your consideration of these comments.

Respectfully,

Bob Sallinger  
Conservation Director  
Audubon Society of Portland