



**OREGON
WILD**

Let Nature Live. Let Nature Last.

To: House Committee on Agriculture,
Land Use, Natural Resources, and Water
From: Oregon Wild
Re: Support HB 2977, 1% for Wildlife
Date: February 24, 2025

Chairs, Vice Chair, and members of the Committee,

Thank you for your support of 1% for Wildlife, HB 2977, which secures dedicated and sustained funding to conserve and recover Oregon's imperiled wildlife and habitats, in turn supporting Oregon's thriving outdoor recreation and tourism industry. For the past fifty years, Oregon Wild has been protecting Oregon's wildlife, wild lands, and water for future generations, and we believe HB 2977 is a timely and effective solution to protecting Oregon's wildlife for future generations. You have the power to save imperiled species.

How does it work? A one percentage point increase in the statewide transient lodging tax (TLT) will be directed to the Recovering Oregon's Wildlife Fund, and the money will be used by the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife to implement the State Wildlife Action Plan to conserve and recover our most vulnerable wildlife and their habitat. While the TLT fluctuates, one percent will generate around \$30 million per year for wildlife and habitat recovery.

Why now? The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife in the past has used inconsistent federal grants to conserve imperiled species in Oregon, and hunting and fishing fees are dedicated to the species sought, not imperiled species (as you've seen today, fee revenue cannot keep up with the current costs of target species management). In a highly-uncertain federal appropriations environment, Oregon's wildlife simply cannot wait for "things to shake out and settle down." Our imperiled species need sufficient and certain funds in order to recover and thrive.

Why do we need to invest money in the SWAP at ODFW? Biodiversity loss is incremental over time. The 300+ at-risk animal species and 11 critical habitats of concern benefit more from investment in stabilizing populations and recovering and protecting habitats than in the kind of emergency rescue operations needed to stop a species from going extinct. In other words, investing now in common species keeps them common. It is still our responsibility to protect species even when populations dip dangerously low, but it is so much more expensive, so much more disruptive, and so

much more stressful to people and to the genetic health of imperiled species. An ounce of prevention in the form of sustained investments now is worth a pound of cure in the form of crisis management of at the brink species.

What is the connection between the statewide TLT and wildlife? Abundant wildlife and healthy ecosystems are important reasons why Oregon's tourism industry thrives. Specifically:

- Outdoor recreation supports \$15.6 billion in total consumer spending, supports 224,000 full and part-time jobs in Oregon, and generates \$9.3 billion in wages.
- Oregon's hunting, fishing, and wildlife-watching activities have accounted for \$1.2 billion in spending and have supported over 11,000 jobs in recent years.
- Additionally, these activities generated \$385 million in labor income and \$51 million in state and local taxes.
- Non-consumptive use, such as nature, wildlife, forest, and wildflower observations, accounts for \$939 million of total spending.

Oregon is at a biodiversity crossroads. We have the tools, the people, and the knowledge to slow and reverse biodiversity losses. But it takes sustained investment. You have the power to save imperiled species in Oregon right now, right here. Thank you for your support of this crucial policy. Please move HB 2977 to a work session and on to House Revenue.

Respectfully,

Casey Kulla
state forest policy coordinator
Oregon Wild