

Wild Bird Conservation Act (HB 3374)

What is our challenge? Many of Oregon's wild bird species are experiencing serious population declines including many species still considered "common." In fact more than one out of every four species in Oregon is experiencing serious long-term declines. Causes of decline range from loss and fragmentation of habitat to hazards such as building collisions, pesticides and predation by domestic animals. Funding is need to engage diverse communities across our entire landscape, from our wild lands to our inner cities, in helping to reverse these declines.

Who pays for wildlife conservation in Oregon? Oregon's 300 thousand hunters and 600 thousand anglers spend about \$1.3 billion per year pursuing their sport. They currently pay \$62 million each year in license and equipment fees to support state management of the species they value.

According to recent surveys, 1.7 million people in Oregon engage in wildlife viewing as a recreational activity, spending over \$1 billion per year pursuing this activity. Wildlife viewers are interested in helping fund wildlife management in Oregon. The Wild Bird Conservation Act was developed by wildlife conservation groups and Oregon's largest independent bird feeding stores, the Backyard Bird Shops, to directly support wild bird conservation in our state.

A nickel a pound for birds! According to Oregon Department of Agriculture estimates, Oregonians purchase about 20,000 tons of wild bird seed each year.

The Wild Bird Conservation Act would establish a wholesale level 5¢ per pound fee on wild bird feed distributed for sale in the state of Oregon. The revenues will be used to implement Oregon Conservation Strategy actions aimed at enhancing wild bird species and their habitats on both urban and rural landscapes, aiming particularly at those species currently in decline and engaging new and underserved communities on wild bird conservation.

What would be accomplished? Specifically, the Wild Bird Conservation Act would:

- Directly fund on-the-ground habitat restoration projects on both urban and rural lands around the state.
- Provide information and technical assistance to homeowners and land managers so they can effectively conserve Oregon's native bird species.
- Build public and private partnerships to engage in wild bird conservation efforts.
- Engage new and underserved communities in wild bird conservation in their neighborhoods
- Support native bird management efforts by Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife staff and their conservation partners.

How would this happen? Revenues, estimated at \$2 to \$4 million per biennium, would be used by Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife to fund an Avian Conservation Coordinator position and to provide \$1.8 to \$3.8 million in program and project funds. These program and project funds can be leveraged and matched with federal and private funds. For example, the State Wildlife Grant Program matches each dollar of state funds with a dollar of federal funds.

Accountability: The Wild Bird Conservation Fund would be overseen by a stakeholder committee and the act would have to be renewed in 2017.

