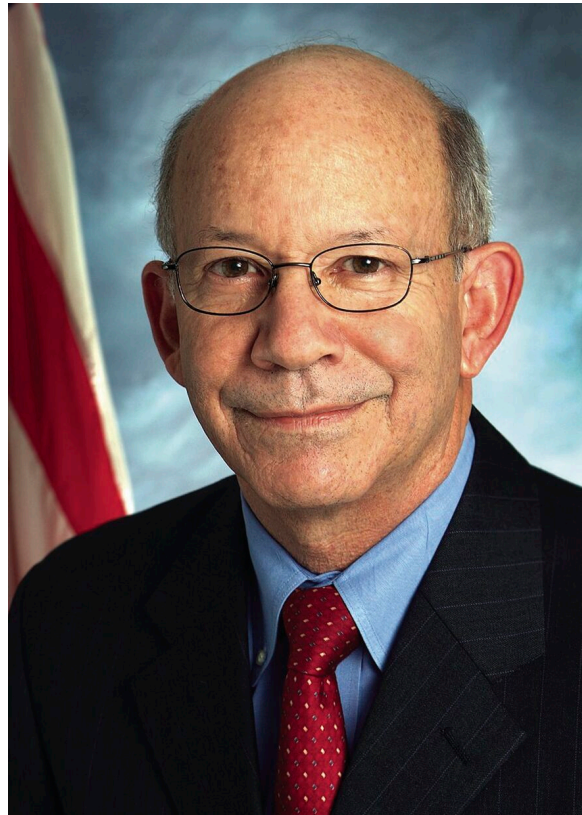


Oregon stands to receive millions in funding

May 6, 2021



A major new piece of legislation, co-sponsored by Oregon Congressman Peter DeFazio, was introduced in the House of Representatives Thursday. The Recovering America's Wildlife Act of 2021 (RAWA) would provide vital new resources for the conservation of Oregon's at-risk fish and wildlife species.

The legislation would dedicate \$1.3 billion annually to state fish and wildlife agencies to implement congressionally mandated State Wildlife Action Plans, like the Oregon Conservation Strategy, and dedicate an additional \$97.5 million for conservation led by tribal fish and wildlife agencies.

ODFW estimates that \$23 million per year would come to Oregon under the Recovering America's Wildlife Act. ODFW would use these new funds to implement the Oregon Conservation Strategy and connect more Oregonians to the outdoors. This would add an estimated 12 percent to ODFW's current budget and greatly expand programs and partnerships that maintain healthy fish and wildlife populations by maintaining and restoring functioning habitats, preventing declines of at-risk species and reversing declines in these resources where possible.

“From my perspective, passing this bill would be the most significant moment in fish and wildlife conservation in the United States this century,” said Curt Melcher, director of the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife. “The Recovering America’s Wildlife Act would allow us to fully implement the Oregon Conservation Strategy and truly begin to address species conservation proactively instead of the reactive, emergency approach.”

State agencies will need to provide a 25 percent match in order to access funding from RAWA. Over 18,000 individuals have already donated more than \$400,000 to the recently created Oregon Conservation and Recreation Fund since the campaign launched in July 2020, which demonstrates that Oregonians are committed to supporting the Oregon Conservation Strategy and connecting Oregonians to outdoor opportunities.

“Oregon has a strong history of protecting and enhancing fish, wildlife and the lands and waters that support them. This new funding opportunity sets the stage for addressing key conservation issues of the 21st century, especially the impacts of the changing climate and ocean on Oregon’s ecosystems,” said Mary Wahl, chair of the Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission.

Some of the species that would benefit from these funds include red abalone, nearshore rockfish, Oregon spotted frog, pygmy rabbit, trumpeter swan, Townsend’s big-eared bat and white sturgeon among many others.

Congresswoman Debbie Dingell (D-MI) and Congressman Jeff Fortenberry (R-NE) introduced the Recovering America’s Wildlife Act with a bipartisan group of representatives, including House Committee on Natural Resources Chairman Rep. Raúl Grijalva (D-AZ), Rep. Jared Huffman (D-CA), Rep. Peter DeFazio (D-OR), Rep. Chellie Pingree (D-ME), Rep. Mike Simpson (R-ID), Rep. French Hill (R-AR), Rep. Austin Scott (R-GA), and Rep. Jenniffer González Colón (R-PR).

A version of this legislation in the 116th Congress was co-sponsored by Oregon Representatives Bonamici, Blumenauer, DeFazio and Schrader.