

February 8, 2018

Dear Senator/Representative:

On behalf of the more than 500 undersigned organizations from all 50 states, representing millions of members and supporters from across the country, we strongly urge you to defend the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA) — one of our nation's oldest and most important wildlife conservation laws. In particular, we urge you to oppose any effort that undermines the ability to address the incidental take of birds under the MBTA.

This year, our nation celebrates the 100th anniversary of the signing of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act. Passed in 1918, the law is credited with saving many beloved species from extinction, such as the Wood Duck, Sandhill Crane, Snowy Egret, and more. The law implements the visionary treaty signed with Canada in 1916 to protect migratory birds shared by our countries, as well as similar treaties signed later with Mexico, Japan, and Russia. The law is critical in conserving nearly all of our nation's native birds. The MBTA protects more than 1,000 species, most of which are not covered by other laws, while also allowing for the regulation of hunting. The treaty and legislation aimed to protect a variety of birds that provide value to the country, including waterfowl and wading birds that were overhunted in the early 20th century, but also insectivorous and pollinating birds, such as hummingbirds, orioles, and woodpeckers, which help reduce agricultural pests and pollinate crops.

The MBTA has effectively protected birds in the decades since its passage, and it is still needed now as much as ever. While our country has made great progress in conserving birds, hundreds of species remain at serious risk and many are facing long-term declines. The 2016 State of the Birds report, published by the North American Bird Conservation Initiative, found that one-third of our nation's bird species are of high conservation concern, and at risk of extinction without urgent conservation action. Birds face numerous modern-day threats. These threats can often be avoided or minimized with basic precautions and best management practices, such as covering oil waste pits, flagging transmission lines, and following wind energy guidelines. MBTA protections have incentivized proactive conservation to help bird populations and limited the need for further protections under the Endangered Species Act.

The MBTA is now under serious threat. In December, the Trump administration issued a controversial legal opinion providing an interpretation that the law does not apply to the incidental or accidental deaths of migratory birds, reversing decades of precedent. The opinion means that the administration will not hold industries accountable for preventable bird deaths. In Congress, H.R. 4239 – the “SECURE American Energy Act” – would change the law to cement this interpretation and permanently end the government's ability to address major sources of migratory bird mortality from industrial activities. This change would represent the most significant roll back of the MBTA in its 100-year history. It would dramatically reduce the incentive for industries to implement best practices that save birds, and would limit the accountability and recovery from events and activities that kill substantial numbers of birds. For example, after the 2010 Deepwater Horizon oil spill, which killed more than one million birds, BP pled guilty to violations of the MBTA, paying \$100 million to recover damages to birds impacted by the spill. These funds are being distributed through the North American Wetlands Conservation Act to restore habitat for waterfowl and other birds.

As we celebrate the 100th anniversary of the law and the incredible gains we have made to help protect our nation's birdlife, we urge you to oppose any effort that would gut the MBTA and turn back the clock decades on bird conservation.

Sincerely,

National Groups

Alliance for Wise Energy Decisions
American Bird Conservancy
American Birding Association
Animal Welfare Institute
Bluebird Recovery Program
Born Free USA
Center for Biological Diversity
Clean Water Action
Conservation CATalyst
Conservatives for Responsible Stewardship
Cornell Lab of Ornithology
Defenders of Wildlife
Earthjustice
EDM International, Inc.
Endangered Species Coalition
Friends of the Earth
HawkWatch International
Humane Society Legislative Fund
International Marine Mammal Project of Earth Island Institute
League of Conservation Voters
National Audubon Society
National Bobwhite Conservation Initiative
Natural Resources Defense Council
Ocean Conservancy
Oceana
Pacific Seabird Group
Pollinator Partnership
Raptor Resource Project
Rare
Rio Grande Waterkeeper
Sierra Club
Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance
The Humane Society of the United States
The Nature Conservancy
The Rural Alliance
The Wilderness Society
Turtle Island Restoration Network
Waterkeeper Alliance
WE ACT for Environmental Justice
Western Watersheds Project
Wild Nature Institute
Wildlife Conservation Society
World Wildlife Fund
WRI

Regional/State/Local Groups

Alabama

Alabama Ornithological Society
Birmingham Audubon
Mobile Bay Audubon Society
Shoals Audubon Society

Alaska

Arctic Audubon Society
Audubon Alaska
Kodiak Audubon Society
Prince William Sound Audubon Society

Arizona

Arizona Native Plant Society
Desert Rivers Audubon Society
Friends of the San Pedro River
Grand Canyon Trust
Maricopa Audubon Society
Northern Arizona Audubon Society
Northern Jaguar Project
Tucson Audubon Society
White Mountain Audubon Society
Yuma Audubon Society

Arkansas

Arkansas Audubon Society
Arkansas Citizens First Congress
Arkansas River Valley Audubon Society
Audubon Arkansas
Audubon Society of Central Arkansas
Garland County Audubon Society
Hot Springs Village Audubon Society
Little Red River Audubon Society
Northwest Arkansas Audubon Society

California

Altocal Audubon Society
Antelope Valley Audubon Society
Bird Ally X
Buena Vista Audubon
Central Sierra Audubon Society
Conejo Valley Audubon Society
Conservation Congress
Eastern Sierra Audubon Society
Endangered Habitats League
Environmental Action Committee of West Marin
Environmental Protection Information Center
Friends of Atascadero Wetlands

Friends of Famao Slough
Friends of Plumas Wilderness
Golden Gate Audubon Society
Handa Ornithology Lab
International Bird Rescue
Kern Audubon Society
Kerncrest Audubon Society
Klamath Forest Alliance
La Purisima Audubon Society
Los Angeles Audubon Society
Los Padres ForestWatch
Madrone Audubon Society
March Conservation Fund
Marin Audubon Society
Morro Coast Audubon Society
Mt. Diablo Audubon Society
Napa Solano Audubon Society
Native Bird Connections
Northcoast Environmental Center
Ohlone Audubon Society
Palos Verdes/South Bay Audubon Society
Pasadena Audubon Society
Peregrine Audubon Society
Plumas Audubon Society
Pomona Valley Audubon Society
Redbud Audubon
Redwood Region Audubon Society
Sacramento Audubon Society
San Bernardino Valley Audubon Society
San Diego Audubon Society
San Fernando Valley Audubon
San Joaquin Audubon Society
Santa Barbara Audubon Society, Inc
Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society
Santa Cruz Bird Club
Santa Cruz Mountains Bioregional Council
Sea and Sage Audubon Society
Sequoia Audubon Society
Sierra Foothills Audubon Society
Sierra Forest Legacy
Soda Mountain Wilderness Council
Songbird Care and Education Center
Stanislaus Audubon Society
The Wildlife Trust
Tulare County Audubon Society, Inc
Ventura Audubon Chapter
Whittier Area Audubon Society
Wildcare Eastern Sierra
Wintu Audubon Society
Yolo Audubon Society

Yosemite Area Audubon Society

Canada

Alberta Wilderness Association

Colorado

Aiken Audubon Society

Arkansas Valley Audubon Society

Audubon Colorado Council

Audubon Rockies

Audubon Society of Greater Denver

Black Canyon Audubon Society

Boulder County Audubon Society

Central Colorado Wilderness Coalition

Conservation Colorado

Evergreen Audubon

Fort Collins Audubon Society

Grand Valley Audubon Society

Great Old Broads for Wilderness

Quiet Use Coalition

Roaring Fork Audubon

Rocky Mountain Wild

Sheep Mountain Alliance

Southern Plains Land Trust

Weminuche Audubon Society

Western Slope Conservation Center

Wild Connections

Connecticut

Audubon Connecticut

Connecticut Falconers Association

Connecticut Ornithological Association

Friends of Outer Island

Friends of the Westbrook Barrier Islands

Friends of the Wild Whoopers

Horizon Wings Inc.

Litchfield Hills Audubon

Menunkatuck Audubon Society

New Haven Bird Club

The Connecticut Audubon Society

Delaware

Delaware Audubon Society

Delaware Ecumenical Council on Children and Families

Delmarva Ornithological Society

Friends of Bombay Hook

District of Columbia

American University Washington College of Law

Animal Law Society

City Wildlife, Inc.

DC Audubon Society

Florida

Apalachee Audubon Society

Aquatic Research and Communication

Audubon Florida

Audubon of Martin County

Audubon of Southwest Florida

Audubon Society of the Everglades

Bay County Audubon Society

Cedar Keys Audubon Society

Choctawhatchee Audubon Society

Citrus County Audubon

Clearwater Audubon Society

Duval Audubon Society

Eagle Audubon Society

Flagler Audubon Society

Florida Keys Audubon

Four Rivers Audubon

Francis M Weston Audubon Society

Friends of Moccasin Lake Environmental Education Center

Friends of the Tampa Bay National Wildlife Refuges

Halifax River Audubon

Hendry-Glades Audubon

Hernando Audubon Society

Kissimmee Valley Audubon Society

Manatee County Audubon Society

Marion Audubon Society

Native Nurseries

Okalawaha Valley Audubon

Orange Audubon Society

Peace River Audubon Society

Pelican Island Audubon Society

Ridge Audubon Society

Santa Fe Audubon Society

Seminole Audubon Society

South Florida Audubon Society

Southeast Volusia Audubon Society

Space Coast Audubon

St Johns County Audubon

St Lucie Audubon

St. Petersburg Audubon Society

Tampa Audubon Society

Tampa Bay Raptor Rescue

Tropical Audubon Society

Venice Area Audubon Society
West Volusia Audubon Society
Wild Raptor Sanctuary

Georgia

Atlanta Audubon Society
Oconee Rivers Audubon Society
Ogeechee Audubon Society
R&R Wildlife Rehabilitation

Hawaii

Hawaii Audubon Society

Idaho

Coeur d'Alene Audubon
Golden Eagle Audubon Society
Idaho Conservation League

Illinois

Audubon Great Lakes
Bird Conservation Network
Champaign County Audubon Society
Chicago Audubon Society
Chicago Ornithological Society
Decatur Audubon Society
Lake County Audubon Society
Northwest Illinois Audubon Society
Sinnissippi Audubon Society

Indiana

Amos Butler Audubon Society
Audubon Great Lakes
Dunes-Calumet Audubon Society
Evansville Audubon Society
Hamilton County Parks and Recreation
Robert Cooper Audubon Society
Sassafras Audubon Society
Stockbridge Audubon Society
Sycamore Audubon Society
Tippecanoe Audubon Society

Iowa

Bird Friendly Iowa
Dubuque Audubon Society
Prairie Rapids Audubon Society
Quad City Audubon Society
Tallgrass Prairie Audubon Society

Kansas

Burroughs Audubon Society of Greater Kansas City

Jayhawk Audubon Society
Rolling Hills Zoo
Smoky Hills Audubon Society
Sperry-Galligar Audubon Society
Wichita Audubon Society

Kentucky

Central Kentucky Audubon Society
Kentucky Ornithological Society

Louisiana

Audubon Louisiana
Louisiana Audubon Council
Louisiana Ornithological Society

Maine

Downeast Chapter of Maine Audubon
Maine Audubon
Mid Coast Audubon Society

Maryland

Audubon Maryland-DC
Audubon Society of Central Maryland
Chesapeake Audubon Society
Friends of Blackwater
Maryland Conservation Council
Maryland Ornithological Society
Prince George's Audubon Society
Southern Maryland Audubon Society
Tri-County Bird Club

Massachusetts

Association of Massachusetts Bird Clubs
Brookline Bird Club
Cape Ann Wildlife
Conservation Imaging, Inc.
Forbush Bird Club
Mass Audubon

Michigan

Audubon Great Lakes
Detroit Audubon
Huron Valley Audubon Society
Laughing Whitefish Audubon
Michigan Audubon
Mid-Michigan Stewardship Initiative
Oakland Audubon Society
Saving Birds Thru Habitat
Washtenaw Audubon Society

Minnesota

Albert Lea Audubon
Audubon Minnesota
Central Minnesota Audubon Society
Minnesota River Valley Audubon Chapter
Mississippi Headwaters Audubon Society
Natural Resources Club at Central Lakes College
Northeastern Minnesotans for Wilderness
Saint Paul Audubon Society
Save Our Sky Blue Waters
The Trumpeter Swan Society
Zumbro Valley Audubon

Mississippi

Audubon Mississippi
Jackson Audubon Society
Oktibbeha Audubon Society
Okatibbee Creek Audubon Society

Missouri

Audubon Missouri
Bridging The Gap, Inc.
Burroughs Audubon of Greater Kansas City
Conservation Federation of Missouri
Greater Ozarks Audubon Society
Missouri Prairie Foundation
Missouri River Bird Observatory
Ozark Gateway Audubon Chapter
Platte County Land Trust
St. Louis Audubon Society
World Bird Sanctuary

Montana

Bozeman Birders
Bitterroot Audubon Society
Five Valleys Audubon Society
Flathead Audubon Society
Last Chance Audubon
Mission Mountain Audubon
Montana Audubon
Pintler Audubon Society
Sacajawea Audubon Society
Upper Missouri Breaks Audubon
Yellowstone Valley Audubon Society

Nebraska

Audubon Nebraska
Audubon Society of Omaha
Wachiska Audubon Society
Western Nebraska Resources Council

Nevada

Lahontan Audubon Society
Red Rock Audubon Society

New Hampshire

New Hampshire Rivers Council
New Hampshire Audubon
Society for the Protection of NH Forests

New Jersey

Bergen County Audubon Society
Monmouth County Audubon Society

New Mexico

Audubon New Mexico
Central New Mexico Audubon Society
Mesilla Valley Audubon Society
Sangre de Cristo Audubon Society
Southwestern New Mexico Audubon

New York

Audubon Council of New York State
Audubon New York
Audubon Society of the Capital Region
Bedford Audubon Society
Bronx River - Sound Shore Audubon Society
Buffalo Audubon Society, Inc.
Central Westchester Audubon Society
Delaware-Otsego Audubon Society
Eastern Long Island Audubon Society
Eco-Logic, WBAI-FM
Federated Conservationists of Westchester
Four Harbors Audubon Society
Genesee Valley Audubon Society
Great South Bay Audubon
Hudson River Audubon Society of Westchester
Huntington-Oyster Bay Audubon Society
Nassau Hiking & Outdoor Club, Inc.
North Fork Audubon Society
North Fork Environmental Council
North Shore Audubon Society
Northern Catskills Audubon Society
Northern New York Audubon Society
NYC Audubon
Onondaga Audubon
Orange County Audubon Society
Otsego 2000
People for Animal Rights, Inc.
Putnam Highlands Audubon Society
Queens County Bird Club Inc.

Rochester Birding Association
Rockland Audubon Society
Roger Tory Peterson Institute of Natural History
Saw Mill River Audubon
South Shore Audubon Society
Southern Adirondack Audubon Society
Sullivan County Audubon Society
Surfrider Central Long Island Chapter
Surfrider Foundation NYC

North Carolina

Audubon North Carolina
Cape Fear Audubon Society
Elisha Mitchell Audubon Society
Forsyth Audubon
High Country Audubon Society
High Peaks Birders
Mecklenburg Audubon Society
New Hope Audubon Society
Seahawk Audubon, College Chapter
T. Gilbert Pearson Audubon
Wake Audubon

North Dakota

Audubon Dakota

Ohio

Audubon Great Lakes
Audubon Society of Greater Cleveland
Audubon Society of Ohio
Black River Audubon
Black Swamp Bird Observatory
Blackbrook Audubon Society
Canton Audubon Society
Columbus Audubon
Western Cuyahoga Audubon Society

Oklahoma

Tulsa Audubon Society

Oregon

Audubon Society of Corvallis
Audubon Society of Lincoln City
Audubon Society of Portland
East Cascades Audubon Society
Forest Web of Cottage Grove
Friends of Malheur National Wildlife Refuge
Friends of the Kalmiopsis
Kalmiopsis Audubon Society
Klamath Forest Alliance

Klamath Siskiyou Wildlands Center
Lane County Audubon Society
Northcoast Environmental Center
Oregon Wild
Rogue Valley Audubon
Salem Audubon Society
Siskiyou Audubon Society
Soda Mountain Wilderness Council
Umpqua Valley Audubon Society

Pennsylvania

Allegheny Plateau Audubon Society
Appalachian Audubon Society
Audubon Pennsylvania
Audubon Society of Western Pennsylvania
Bartramian Audubon Society
Berks Nature
Bucks County Audubon Society at Honey Hollow
Conococheague Audubon Society
Greater Wyoming Valley Audubon Society
Hawk Mountain Sanctuary Association
Juniata Valley Audubon Society
Lehigh Gap Nature Center
Lehigh Valley Audubon Society
Lycoming Audubon Society
Manada Conservancy
Quittapahilla Audubon Society
Seven Mountain Audubon
South Mountain Audubon Society
Valley Forge Audubon Society
Wildbird Recovery, Inc
Wildlands Conservancy
Wyncote Audubon Society

Rhode Island

Audubon Society of Rhode Island
Ocean State Bird Club
The Watch Hill Conservancy

South Carolina

Audubon South Carolina
Bird Club Sun City Hilton Head
Charleston Audubon
Columbia Audubon Society
Gryphon Den
Hilton Head Audubon Society
Piedmont Audubon
Waccamaw Audubon Society

South Dakota

Audubon Dakota
Prairie Hills Audubon Society

Tennessee

Conservation Cooperative
Cumberland-Harpeth Audubon Society
Southeastern Avian Research
Tennessee Ornithological Society

Texas

3 Rivers Foundation
Audubon Texas
Bexar Audubon Society
Central Texas Audubon Society
Fort Worth Audubon Society
Friends of the High Plains Refuge Complex
Houston Audubon Society
Huntsville Texas Audubon Society
Prairie and Timbers Audubon Society

Utah

Bridgerland Audubon Society
Friends of Great Salt Lake
Great Salt Lake Audubon
Great Salt Lake Institute at Westminster College
League of Women Voters of Utah
Utah Audubon Council
Utah Rivers Council

Vermont

Audubon Vermont
Northeast Kingdom Audubon
Otter Creek Audubon Society
Rutland County Audubon

Virginia

Audubon Society of Northern Virginia
Cape Henry Audubon Society
Northern Neck of Virginia Audubon Society
Rappahannock Wildlife Refuge Friends Group
Richmond Audubon
Rockbridge Bird Club
Virginia Bluebird Society

Washington

Admiralty Audubon Society
Audubon Washington
Black Hills Audubon Society
Conscious Talk Radio

Eastside Audubon Society
Friends of Seward Park
Grays Harbor Audubon Society
Kettle Range Conservation Group
Kitsap Audubon Society
Kittitas Audubon Society
Lower Columbia Basin Audubon Society
North Cascades Audubon Society
North Central Washington Audubon Society
Olympic Peninsula Audubon Society
Olympic Vulture Study
Pilchuck Audubon Society
Rainier Audubon Society
Seattle Audubon Society
Skagit Audubon Society
Spokane Audubon
Tahoma Audubon Society
Vancouver Audubon Society
Vashon-Maury Island Audubon Society
Whidbey Audubon Society
Willapa Hills Audubon Society
Wolf Haven International
Yakima Valley Audubon Society

West Virginia

Mountaineer Audubon
Potomac Valley Audubon Society

Wisconsin

Audubon Great Lakes
Hoy Audubon Society
LJ Geer Design
Madison Audubon Society
Milwaukee Riverkeeper
Northeastern Wisconsin Audubon Society
Western Great Lakes Bird and Bat Observatory
Wisconsin Metro Audubon Society
Wisconsin Society for Ornithology

Wyoming

Audubon Rockies
Bighorn Audubon
Cheyenne - High Plains Audubon Society
Laramie Audubon Society
Meadowlark Audubon Society
Murie Audubon Society
North Laramie Range Alliance
Red Desert Audubon
Wyoming Outdoor Council