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## **New U.S. Senate Bill Would Help Declining Wildlife, Boost Outdoor Recreation in Texas**

New legislation filed in the U.S. Senate will fund locally-led efforts to prevent declining species from becoming endangered and help wildlife thrive nationwide. The bipartisan Recovering America's Wildlife Act will send more than \$50 million to Texas each year, which will be used to help 1,300 Species of Greatest Conservation Need in our state—such as the Texas horned lizard, Northern bobwhite quail, and Guadalupe bass. The funding would come from existing revenues with no new taxes.

“This commonsense bill will allow us to get ahead of wildlife declines by stepping in to help at-risk wildlife early with collaborative, voluntary measures,” said John Shepperd with Texas Foundation for Conservation, speaking on behalf of Texas Alliance for America's Fish and Wildlife. “Recovering America's Wildlife Act will also create jobs restoring wildlife habitat and will connect more Texans to outdoor recreation opportunities.”

S.2372 was just introduced in the Senate by Martin Heinrich (D-NM) and Roy Blunt (R-MO). Representatives Debbie Dingell (D-MI) and Jeff Fortenberry (R-NE) introduced a similar version of the Recovering America's Wildlife Act in the U.S. House in April (H.R.2773). The House bill has 91 national bipartisan cosponsors, including 4 Texans.

In a recent Texas Parks and Wildlife Department [press release](#), the agency highlighted the numerous jobs that could be created if Recovering America's Wildlife Act were to pass, and the economic benefits of boosting the “state's already booming nature-based economy into overdrive.” The legislation is estimated to create tens of thousands of new “shovel-ready” jobs for wildlife management, tree planting, river restoration, wildlife reintroductions, and outdoor recreation projects.

Janice Bezanson with Texas Conservation Alliance notes, “Nature tourism is huge in Texas. People from all over travel here to see iconic landscapes and our native wildlife. Unfortunately, much of the fish and wildlife that our outdoor recreation economy depends on are declining. We’re also losing animals that are essential to agriculture, like bees that pollinate our crops and bats that help control insect pests.”

State fish and wildlife agencies are currently funded at less than 5% of what’s needed to implement their congressionally-mandated state wildlife action plans. These plans are roadmaps designed to help recover at-risk fish and wildlife before they become endangered. If passed, Texas Parks and Wildlife would send grant funds across Texas to conservation organizations, universities, nature centers, and others to fund much-needed conservation projects.

Particularly beneficial for a private lands state like Texas, Bezanson added that “funding could expand cost-sharing programs and more technical guidance for private landowners who want to conduct wildlife and habitat conservation on their property.”

The Recovering America’s Wildlife Act would be the most significant wildlife funding legislation passed in over a generation. The bill is a reminder that Americans from all walks of life will unite to conserve our natural heritage for current and future generations.

The Texas Alliance for America’s Fish and Wildlife is a coalition of more than 165 organizations and businesses formed to support the need for dedicated wildlife conservation funding. To learn more and get involved visit [www.txwildlifealliance.org](http://www.txwildlifealliance.org).

**Media resources:**

[Download photos](#) of some of the species and landscapes that will benefit from Recovering America’s Wildlife Act

[Watch](#) the Recovering America’s Wildlife Act national and Texas videos.