



# Recovering America's Wildlife Act

Good for Georgia's wildlife, economy and people



Our natural world provides innumerable benefits to human health, well-being, and economic prosperity. As wildlife and their habitats disappear, those benefits are compromised. Across the country, experts have identified more than 12,000 Species of Greatest Conservation Need. Unfortunately, we lack a dedicated funding stream to conserve our nation's biodiversity and help prevent thousands of vulnerable species from becoming endangered.

The **Recovering America's Wildlife Act** would be the most significant investment in wildlife conservation in a generation—it would fund proactive, voluntary efforts to address the nation's wildlife crisis. Passage of the Act would stimulate our economy, create more outdoor recreation opportunities, and conserve our natural heritage for future generations.

In fiscal year 2022, Georgia received \$1.52 million in State and Tribal Wildlife Grant funding which enabled headway on several priority species. However, **with current funding at less than 5% of what's needed to implement State Wildlife Action Plans**, state wildlife agencies and their partners struggle to keep up with species in decline—to understand all of their unique needs and implement the broad-scale conservation work necessary to stabilize populations.

The following are a few examples of what Georgia could achieve with passage of the Recovering America's Wildlife Act. The estimated budget for just these projects far exceeds the entire annual State and Tribal Wildlife Grant funding apportionment. At-risk reptiles, birds, fish, wetlands and longleaf pine forests, would be helped through these examples, but many of **Georgia's 640 Species of Greatest Conservation Need** may not be so fortunate without adequate funding.

Recovering America's Wildlife Act would reap benefits tenfold by helping to prevent future endangered species listings, creating new jobs, investing in our natural infrastructure, and protecting important wildlife services—such as pollination and water filtration. This legislation would boost our outdoor recreation economy, which depends on healthy fish and wildlife populations. It would ensure more wildlife viewing opportunities, which contributes to millions of jobs and billions in annual consumer spending. **With passage of the Act, we could start implementing these projects right away.**



Red-cockaded woodpecker; gopher tortoise

## Project Spotlight: Conserve Habitat on Private Lands

**Conservation Benefits:** More than 90% of the land in Georgia is privately owned. Land conversion resulting in habitat loss is the leading threat to wildlife. DNR will strengthen prescribed fire programs, helping landowners and communities by lowering wildfire risks and enhancing habitat. Landowners, land managers and consultants will be provided tools, training and incentives for managing fire-dependent uplands, wetlands and other key habitats. Staff will team with the USDA and landowners on Farm Bill conservation practices, while growing support through state-based programs that benefit key species such as gopher tortoises and red-cockaded woodpeckers on private lands.

**Partners:** Private landowners, Georgia Forestry Commission, Natural Resources Conservation Service, The Nature Conservancy, The Orianne Society, Tall Timbers, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

**Economic Impact:** More local jobs involving technical guidance and habitat management. Reduced risk of wildfires. Healthier pollinator populations, benefiting agriculture. Improved habitat for recreational use.

**Congressional Districts:** All      **Estimated Budget:** \$2.5 million a year (staffing, equipment, partner support)



**Conservation Benefits:** Georgia is a top-five state in aquatic diversity. Unfortunately, Georgia is also a leader in the number of at-risk freshwater fishes, mussel, crayfish and snail species. To carry out needed measures to conserve and restore the state's rich aquatic life, DNR will deploy regional teams targeting priority watersheds and species of greatest conservation. These five partner-powered teams will monitor species and habitats, reintroduce and add to priority populations, restore riparian areas, coordinate conservation of species such as robust redhorse and Atlantic sturgeon, and provide technical support to minimize the impacts of infrastructure projects, improve aquatic connectivity and expand aquatic-based recreation such as water trails.

**Partners:** Alabama Aquatic Biodiversity Center, U.S. Geological Survey, Georgia Department of Transportation, Georgia River Network, Georgia Water Planning Regions, USDA, The Nature Conservancy, Riverkeepers, Tennessee Aquarium Conservation Institute, UGA River Basin Center and other academic institutions and local governments

**Economic Impact:** Enhanced water quality for people. Lower water-treatment costs. Increased business for outdoor gear manufacturers, outfitters and communities via aquatics-related recreational opportunities. Less costs involving federally listed species, as the need to list species is reduced and recovery efforts lead to down- or de-listing.

**Congressional Districts:** All      **Estimated Budget:** \$2.75 million a year (\$250,000/basin for contracted work)

## Project Spotlight: Urban Outreach and Green Growth

**Conservation Benefits:** Georgia is one of the fastest growing states. To better engage and serve urban and suburban residents, DNR's Urban Wildlife Program will grow, providing critical assistance to metro communities across the state. Support for city and county efforts to preserve greenspace and wildlife corridors will increase. DNR's Wildlife Viewing Grants Program will be ramped up and outreach programs will target the needs of urban and suburban communities.

**Partners:** Communities, schools, consultants, Georgia Audubon, UGA Warnell School of Forestry and Natural Resources, Georgia Forestry Commission, Georgia Conservancy, Georgia Wildlife Federation, Atlanta Botanical Garden, State Botanical Garden of Georgia and landowners

**Economic Impact:** Jobs for local contractors and governments. New outdoor recreation opportunities that yield multiple benefits for area businesses and communities.

**Congressional Districts:** All      **Estimated Budget:** \$1.5 million a year for programming, research and contracts

