

113TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. RES. 296

Designating the week beginning on October 13, 2013, as “National Wildlife Refuge Week”.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

NOVEMBER 14, 2013

Mr. COONS (for himself, Mr. CARDIN, Mr. SESSIONS, and Mr. SCHATZ)
submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to

RESOLUTION

Designating the week beginning on October 13, 2013, as
“National Wildlife Refuge Week”.

Whereas, in 1903, President Theodore Roosevelt established the first national wildlife refuge on Pelican Island in Florida;

Whereas, in 2013, the National Wildlife Refuge System, administered by the Fish and Wildlife Service, is the premier system of lands and waters to conserve wildlife in the world, and has grown to approximately 150,000,000 acres, 561 national wildlife refuges, and 38 wetland management districts in every State and territory of the United States;

Whereas national wildlife refuges are important recreational and tourism destinations in communities across the United States, and these protected lands offer a variety

of recreational opportunities, including 6 wildlife-dependent uses that the National Wildlife Refuge System manages: hunting, fishing, wildlife observation, photography, environmental education, and interpretation;

Whereas, in 2013, 364 units of the National Wildlife Refuge System have hunting programs and 303 units of the National Wildlife Refuge System have fishing programs, averaging approximately 2,500,000 hunting visits and nearly 7,000,000 fishing visits each year;

Whereas the National Wildlife Refuge System experienced nearly 31,000,000 wildlife observation visits during fiscal year 2013;

Whereas national wildlife refuges are important to local businesses and gateway communities;

Whereas, for every \$1 appropriated, national wildlife refuges generate nearly \$5 in economic activity;

Whereas the National Wildlife Refuge System experiences nearly 47,000,000 visits each year, which generated more than \$2,400,000,000 and more than 35,000 jobs in local economies during fiscal year 2011;

Whereas the National Wildlife Refuge System encompasses every kind of ecosystem in the United States, including temperate, tropical, and boreal forests, wetlands, deserts, grasslands, arctic tundras, and remote islands, and spans 12 time zones from the Virgin Islands to Guam;

Whereas national wildlife refuges are home to more than 700 species of birds, 220 species of mammals, 250 species of reptiles and amphibians, and more than 1,000 species of fish;

Whereas national wildlife refuges are the primary Federal lands that foster production, migration, and wintering habitat for waterfowl;

Whereas, since 1934, the sale of the Federal Duck Stamp to outdoor enthusiasts has generated more than \$850,000,000 in funds, which has enabled the purchase or lease of more than 5,500,000 acres of wetland habitat for waterfowl and numerous other species in the National Wildlife Refuge System;

Whereas the recovery of 386 threatened and endangered species is supported on refuge lands;

Whereas national wildlife refuges are cores of conservation for larger landscapes and resources for other agencies of the Federal Government and State governments, private landowners, and organizations in their efforts to secure the wildlife heritage of the United States;

Whereas more than 38,000 volunteers and approximately 220 national wildlife refuge “Friends” organizations contribute more than 1,400,000 hours annually, the equivalent of more than 700 full-time employees, and provide an important link to local communities;

Whereas national wildlife refuges provide an important opportunity for children to discover and gain a greater appreciation for the natural world;

Whereas, because there are national wildlife refuges located in several urban and suburban areas and one refuge located within an hour drive of every metropolitan area in the United States, national wildlife refuges employ, educate, and engage young people from all backgrounds in exploring, connecting with, and preserving the natural heritage of the United States;

Whereas, since 1995, refuges across the United States have held festivals, educational programs, guided tours, and other events to celebrate National Wildlife Refuge Week during the second full week of October;

Whereas the Fish and Wildlife Service will continue to seek stakeholder input on the implementation of “Conserving the Future: Wildlife Refuges and the Next Generation”, an update to the strategic plan of the Fish and Wildlife Service for the future of the National Wildlife Refuge System;

Whereas the week beginning on October 13, 2013, has been designated as “National Wildlife Refuge Week” by the Fish and Wildlife Service; and

Whereas the designation of National Wildlife Refuge Week by the Senate would recognize more than a century of conservation in the United States, raise awareness about the importance of wildlife and the National Wildlife Refuge System, and celebrate the myriad recreational opportunities available to enjoy this network of protected lands: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That the Senate—

2 (1) designates the week beginning on October
3 13, 2013, as “National Wildlife Refuge Week”;

4 (2) encourages the observance of National Wild-
5 life Refuge Week with appropriate events and activi-
6 ties;

7 (3) acknowledges the importance of national
8 wildlife refuges for their recreational opportunities

1 and contribution to local economies across the
2 United States;

3 (4) pronounces that national wildlife refuges
4 play a vital role in securing the hunting and fishing
5 heritage of the United States for future generations;

6 (5) identifies the significance of national wild-
7 life refuges in advancing the traditions of wildlife ob-
8 servation, photography, environmental education,
9 and interpretation;

10 (6) recognizes the importance of national wild-
11 life refuges to wildlife conservation and the protec-
12 tion of imperiled species and ecosystems, as well as
13 compatible uses;

14 (7) acknowledges the role of national wildlife
15 refuges in conserving waterfowl and waterfowl habi-
16 tat pursuant to the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (40
17 Stat. 755, chapter 128);

18 (8) reaffirms the support of the Senate for
19 wildlife conservation and the National Wildlife Ref-
20 uge System; and

21 (9) expresses the intent of the Senate—

22 (A) to continue working to conserve wild-
23 life; and

- 1 (B) to manage the National Wildlife Ref-
- 2 uge System for current and future generations.

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