

Louisiana Wildlife Federation

Winter 2020



Winter 2020

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Since 1940, Louisiana Wildlife Federation has been the voice for Louisiana's wildlife and natural resources. Join us to protect Sportsman's Paradise for future generations.

Principles:

- Conserve Louisiana's natural resources with emphasis on wildlife and their habitat
- Advance sound, scientifically established resource management principles
- Engage outdoor enthusiasts through education and advocacy

This newsletter is printed biannually for members and supporters. Updates on LWF activities and events can be found on lawildlifefed.org and on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter.



LWF is an affiliate organization of National Wildlife Federation and together we form a powerful network for wildlife conservation locally and nationally.



LWF Staff

Laura Gros, Office Manager
Stacy Ortego, Outreach Coordinator
Rebecca Triche, Executive Director

LWF Board of Directors (through December 2020) Officers & Executive Committee (elected in August 2020)

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LWF Affiliates

American Sportsmen Against Poachers (ASAP)
Avoyelles Wildlife Federation
Baton Rouge Audubon Society
Bayou Chapter of the Ozark Society
Bayou Vermillion Preservation Society
East Ascension Sportsman's League (EASL)
Friends of Black Bayou Lake NWR
Friends of Grand Isle
Friends of Red River NWR
Friends of the Atchafalaya
Louisiana Association of Professional Biologists-La.
Chapter of The Wildlife Society
Louisiana Ornithological Society
Louisiana Trappers & Alligator Hunters Association
Pontchartrain Conservancy
New Orleans Power Squadron
Orleans Audubon Society
Rapides Wildlife Association
Shreveport Society for Nature Study Bird Study Group
Toledo Bend Lake Association
Woodlands Conservancy

MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT



Sitting in my living room deciding what to write here, I found myself completely uninspired by the same four walls that have been staring back at me for many months now. I took office as president of LWF right in the middle of the pandemic. The challenges for all of us have been many. A lot of other non-profits have not been able to weather the storm, but we have. I am grateful to our office staff and board of directors that have made sound decisions on how best to navigate these uncharted waters. Without sound leadership, LWF could easily have fallen as others have. As we strive to find a new normal, we must find new ways to drive our Federation forward and keep our mission achievable. Later as I sat leaning against a tree in Kisatchie National Forest, I found the inspiration needed to pen these words. Spring has sprung and the forest is budding with new life. If you are tired of looking at the same four walls, take a trip outside and let Mother Nature assure you that all is well. Thank you all for your passion for conservation and your contributions to our cause. ■ -Ryan Schaefer

NOTE FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Louisiana is building a top reputation for planning and implementation of coastal restoration and protection. Addressing future sustainability and the long-term management of our vast coastal zone is complex. What other challenges could benefit from increased planning and coordination at the local, state and regional levels?

Flooding is the number one natural disaster in terms of costs yet periodic flooding is essential to riverine and estuarine habitats. Louisiana is a water state. How can we better manage this and adapt thoughtfully? We are already noticing changes in bird and bug migration, changes in temperatures by zone, and loss of habitat due to coastal subsidence and sea level rise. What can Louisiana teach the world about managing for climate change while facing potentially enormous impacts to communities and people who may be disadvantaged by these changes? It's not just one thing that will keep Sportsman's Paradise sustainable for people and wildlife.

Louisiana has several initiatives that are bringing synergy to how we manage our natural resources including the Louisiana Watershed Initiative, the Louisiana Climate Task Force, and the search for a Louisiana National Estuarine Research Reserve (LaNERR).

This positions Louisiana companies, workers, and researchers to be leaders for other states and regional areas of the world in adaptation to climate change, habitat sustainability, energy production, and viable water management. Facing the challenges with transparency and identifying solutions together can lead to Louisiana's economic stability. I'm noticing changes in not just technology but attitudes about the quality of our natural environment. Wildlife needs us to be thoughtful and active in seeking solutions. ■ - *Rebecca Triche*

56TH ANNUAL CONSERVATION ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS PROGRAM RECOGNIZES OUTSTANDING CONSERVATION WORK IN 2019

The annual awards program is hosted by Louisiana Wildlife Federation and the awards are presented jointly with National Wildlife Federation. The annual banquet was canceled due to quarantine measures required for the COVID-19 pandemic. Despite indoor restrictions, the following awards were presented to the recipients at an outdoor setting with social distancing protocols in place:

Volunteer Conservationist of the Year 2019 to Ryan Lambert

of Luling on October 2, 2020 for his activism in support of coastal restoration in Louisiana. He has hosted numerous meetings and wetland tours to educate local and national media, and state and national leaders for more than a decade. As owner of Cajun Fishing Adventures, Captain Lambert offers his experience working daily in the coastal wetlands of Plaquemines Parish but goes far beyond by volunteering with several organizations to educate sportsmen and women about restoring Louisiana's coast. He has been featured in numerous media stories, including the documentaries "Last Call for the Bayou" and "In the Blind" and is an active partner in creating a wetland restoration project at Bay Denesse that is expected to restore 2,550 acres of marsh.



Conservation Educator of the Year 2019 to Wendy Rihner

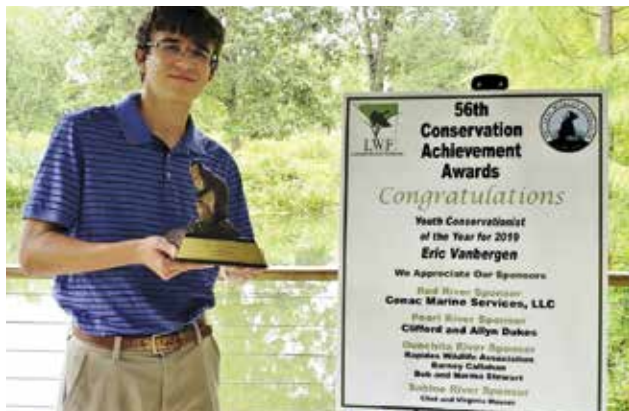
in New Orleans on September 27, 2020 for launching the Native Plants for Birds education campaign with Orleans Audubon Society. The program teaches individuals how to create backyard habitats for wildlife and Rihner made numerous presentations



to hundreds of people in the New Orleans and Baton Rouge area. She also taught bird identification training programs and citizen science workshops throughout 2019 and co-led a birding team that won the national 2019 Golden

Bird Award. Rihner is a retired Delgado Community College English Instructor who continues to educate others by sharing in Louisiana her lifelong passion for birding.

Youth Conservation Organization of the Year 2019 to Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries Archery in Louisiana Schools (ALAS) Program in Minden on September 30, 2020 for teaching nearly 23,000 Louisiana students from more than 200 schools across the state the inclusive sport of Olympic archery. The program helps students develop self-discipline, a sense of accomplishment and belonging, and offers an introduction to hunting and shooting sports. The program provided \$20,500 in scholarships to 16 tournament winners and promoted academic achievement. Hundreds of Louisiana archers competed at the National and Open Championship tournaments in 2019 with Louisiana school teams finishing in the top three in each competition.



Youth Conservationist of the Year 2019 to Eric Vanbergen of Lafayette was presented in Baton Rouge on September 28, 2020 for his leadership in promoting native plant and coastal prairie restoration at his school, Ascension High School in Youngsville. In 2017 he led a volunteer effort to plant a three acre

prairie. Vanbergen worked with mentors, teachers and other students in 2019 to establish another prairie planting within the school building complex to demonstrate using native prairie plants in a designated garden. Vanbergen formed the Ascension High School Prairie Club that is still active today. He is currently at LSU studying landscape architecture.

Conservation Communicator of the Year 2019 to Emma Reid was presented in Baton



Rouge on September 28, 2020 for writing and producing the documentary “In the Blind.” The film, which debuted in 2019 on Louisiana Public Broadcasting, explores how duck hunters in Louisiana have undertaken conservation efforts to preserve and restore the state’s coastal and marsh habitats that support critical wintering ground for migratory waterfowl in the Mississippi Flyway. Reid captures the rich traditions of hunting and the important role hunters play in conservation of wildlife and their habitats, as both the popularity of hunting and the condition of Louisiana’s coastal ecosystem declines.

Conservation Organization of the Year 2019 to Giant Salvinia Control Patrol

presented in New Orleans along Bayou St. John on September 27, 2020 for organizing a community effort in 2019 that removed



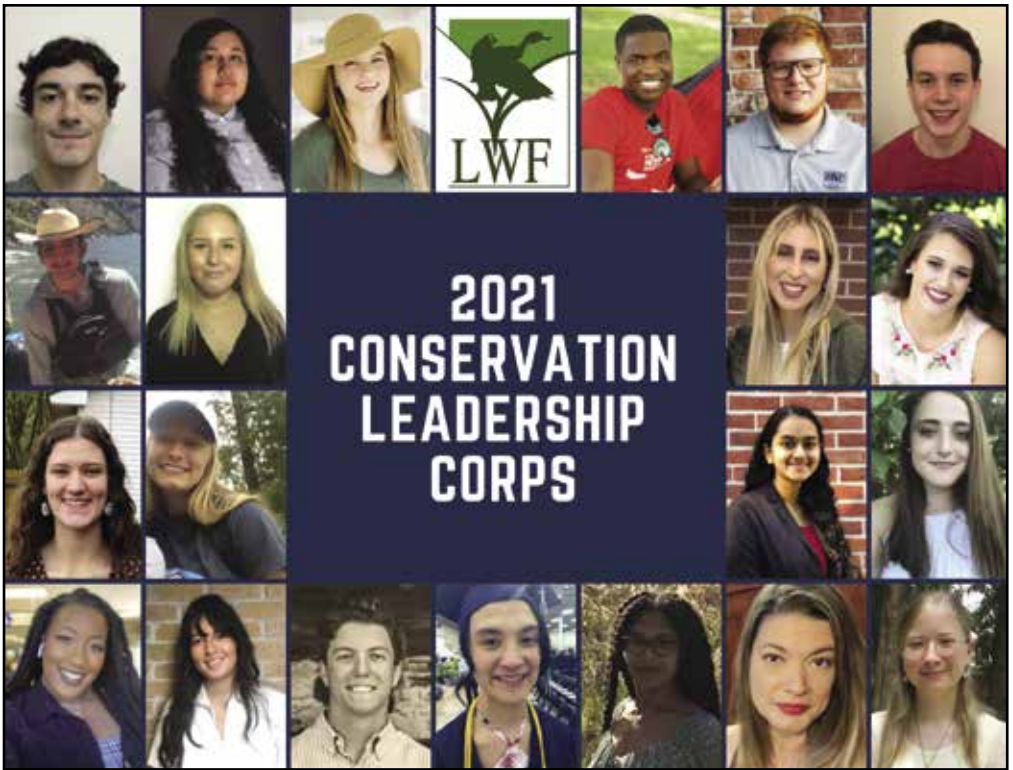
the invasive species Giant Salvinia from Bayou St John. This group of 300 volunteers removed 10 tons of Giant Salvinia by hand or helped quarantine other sections of the bayou for further removal with a safer herbicide. The volunteers also hired an amphibious machine to remove 50 tons of Giant Salvinia and 90% of the material removed was composted in a partnership with the City of New Orleans and Compost NOW!

Corporate Conservationist of the Year 2019 to Edison Choest Offshore

for partnering with Entergy to install the first ever utility-scale shore power installation at Port Fourchon that offers a docking ship the ability to seamlessly transition from fossil fuel-generated ship power to cleaner electric grid power. The installation can accommodate 10 marine vessels at port to reduce carbon emissions from use of marine diesel by as much as 42 percent. This joint effort serves as a model that could be adopted around the world.



Sponsors of the program help us recognize people, organizations and businesses making a difference in wildlife conservation and environmental sustainability. Thank You! Cenac Marine Services, LLC; Clifford and Allyn Dukes; Rapides Wildlife Association; Barney Callahan; Bob and Norma Stewart; and Clint and Virginia Mouser. ■



LWF'S CONSERVATION LEADERSHIP CORPS 2021 CLASS ANNOUNCED

By Stacy Ortego, LWF Outreach Coordinator

Louisiana Wildlife Federation is excited to announce this year's cohort for its Edgar Veillon Conservation Leadership Corps, a leadership development program that provides expert training for future conservation leaders.

2021 marks the third year of the program. LWF was thrilled to see the program gain so much attention and interest. A total of 91 students from colleges and universities across the state applied for the program. Efforts were made to reach as many colleges as possible as well as more departments than had been contacted in the past. This resulted in a wonderfully diverse group from many different areas of study!

Training will be provided by current and former natural resource professionals in the public, non-profit and private sectors. Students will be presented with real-world issues and experience. This year's conservation focus is Trash Pollution in Louisiana Waterways. Through the integration of presentations, case studies, and collaborative activities, students will increase their knowledge of conservation policy and build skills in leadership and advocacy.

Due to safety concerns related to COVID-19, this year's cohort will meet online with the possibility of an optional socially-distanced group activity in the spring. Training will take place during one weekend each month in January, February, March, and April 2021.

(Continued on next page)

THIS YEAR'S CONSERVATION LEADERSHIP CORPS STUDENTS ARE:

Gabriel Bourgeois (Senior, Environmental Management Systems: Resource Conservation, Louisiana State University)

Guadalupe Estrada Cordero (Freshman, Animal Sciences, Louisiana State University)

Kaylee Cormier (Junior, Biology & Chemistry, McNeese State University)

Devin Durgin (Senior, Environmental Science, University of Louisiana-Lafayette)

Aaron Enlund (Senior, Civil Engineering, University of Louisiana-Lafayette)

Marion "Trey" Gray (Junior, History & Political Science, Tulane University)

Samuel Hinerfeld (Junior, Environmental Studies & Political Economy, Tulane University)

Kari Hoover (Junior, Communications, Tulane University)

Lauren Johnson (Senior, Natural Resource & Ecology Management, Louisiana State University)

Rebekah Lepretre (Freshman, Natural Resource Conservation Management, McNeese State University)

Lindsey Oxford (Junior, Environmental Science, University of Louisiana-Lafayette)

Carlie Rojas (Freshman, Mechanical Engineering, University of New Orleans)

Ria Salway (Freshman, Biological Sciences: Marine Biology, Louisiana State University)

Abby Slatterly (Junior, Natural Resource & Ecology Management: Ecological Restoration, Louisiana State University)

Aundrea Smith (Junior, Biology, Dillard University)

Savanah Stokely (Junior, Natural Resource Ecology, Louisiana State University)

Aaron Taliaferro (Junior, Forestry, Louisiana Tech)

Marisa Terry (Junior, International Studies: Global Diplomacy/Europe, Louisiana State University)

Tatianna Townsend (Senior, Leadership & Human Resource Development, Louisiana State University)

Sarah Vaz (Junior, Environmental Biology, Nicholls State University)

Jessica Wright (Junior, Biology: Ecology & Evolution, University of Louisiana-Monroe)

Congratulations to the 2021 Conservation Leadership Corps students! This year's program is made possible through the generous support of the Stuller Family Foundation. LWF also thanks its Conservation Education Committee for their assistance as well as our speakers for volunteering their time and expertise. ■



Spending more time outside? Want to attract more wildlife to your garden? Louisiana Wildlife Federation has partnered with National Wildlife Federation on the Garden for Wildlife program. Make your garden a Certified Wildlife Habitat and get a sign like this one to show your friends and neighbors that your garden is wildlife-friendly! Everyone that certifies helps support LWF.

Find out more at nwf.org/garden

HONORARY & MEMORIAL GIFTS (THROUGH DECEMBER 31, 2020)

- In Honor of Adrienne Zetty by Melissa Bolin
- In Honor of Amy and Bryan Hester by Susan W. Dunbar
- In Honor of Kristin McDonald by Kelsie Kinsley
- In Honor of Mr. & Mrs. Aaron Svoboda by Alex Kufeldt
- In Memory of Robin Pomeroy by Molly Goodrich
- In Memory of Elizabeth Nell Dubus Michel Baldrige by Barbara Wright and Jane Honeycutt



Leave a Legacy Gift for Louisiana's Wildlife

Ways You Can Leave a Legacy Gift:

Gifts in your Will – You can leave a gift to LWF by bequest in your will or trust. Bequests are one of the most popular options for creating a legacy because they are so flexible.

Gifts by Beneficiary Designation – Many assets transfer by the beneficiary designation form you completed when you established your account, rather than through your will or trust. To name LWF as a beneficiary, please use our legal name, Louisiana Wildlife Federation, Inc. and our federal tax identification number (72-0445638).

Please let us know if you have already included LWF in your estate plans. We want to thank you for your gift.

Contact Rebecca Triche
225-344-6707
rebecca@lawildlifefed.org





AMERICAN WHITE PELICANS IN LOUISIANA

By Jay V. Huner, Louisiana Ecrevisse, Boyce, Louisiana

Who doesn't know what a pelican is? We are exposed to them in children's books from an early age. Their huge bills are their trade marks. We have two species in Louisiana, the coastal Brown Pelican and the more cosmopolitan American White Pelican.

The Brown Pelican breeds along our coast and is our Louisiana State Bird. It is rarely found inland and generally only after being carried inland by tropical weather systems. The American White Pelican, however, is cosmopolitan being observed across the state and throughout the area. They do not breed in Louisiana. Most breed in large lakes, primarily, located in prairie regions on either side of the USA-Canada border.

Although the Brown Pelican is the Louisiana State Bird, the American White Pelican is the species that appears on the Louisiana State Flag. Go figure!

We see American White Pelicans most often in the winter when large numbers move south. Many Baton Rouge residents are amazed to look up into the December sky and see several hundred huge white birds circling slowly in the sky above and around the Capitol City's lakes at Capitol Lake and the University Lakes.

American White Pelicans seem to rise effortlessly into the sky riding rising thermal air currents. As they circle upward, they disappear when their wings and bodies move into shadows only to reappear much higher than when last seen. This can be especially dramatic amongst and above the state buildings in the Capitol's complex.

It's hard to miss huge white birds with 8-10 foot wing spans weighing 10-20 pounds. Wing tips in mature adult pelicans are black. In the spring, adults develop conspicuous yellow plates on the upper bills.

The American White Pelicans feed by swimming slowly along and periodically dipping their bills into the water to catch fish and invertebrates, especially crawfish. It's common to see a dozen or more pelicans swimming along forming a living seine to crowd prey into shallower water where they can be easily scooped up. It's not unusual to see feeding pelican flocks in the previously referenced Baton Rouge lakes.

It's common to see the pelicans on inland lakes and coastal bays feeding in association with cormorant flocks. The cormorants drive schools of fish into shallows where the pelicans can easily catch them.

People visiting the locks and dams along the Red River – there are five of them – sometimes encounter good numbers of American White Pelicans below the dams. The birds crowd into the area below the spillways to catch fish disoriented when they are carried over the dams.

While most references suggest that American White Pelicans only prey on unwanted forage fishes, they do create problems for catfish and crawfish farmers. The birds eat 3-5 pounds of fish and invertebrates a day. Even a few dozen pelicans can create serious economic damage on aquaculture crops if they feed undisturbed for any length of time.

While American White Pelicans are most likely to be found here in winter months, a few may be encountered in other months of the year, especially along the Gulf Coast. Again, they have never been reported to nest in Louisiana but there are reports of a nesting colony along the lower Texas coast. ■

ENFORCING CATAHOULA LAKE'S MID-LAKE REFUGE, MAINTAINING WATERFOWL HABITAT

Louisiana Wildlife Federation continues to speak up about the Catahoula Lake situation and the impact on the management of the lake and its important wetlands for wildlife habitat. In October 2020, LWF sent a letter of comment to the agencies that signed the Catahoula Lake Water Level Management Agreement (Tri-Party Agreement) — Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service — encouraging continued maintenance for and enforcement of the mid-lake refuge in Catahoula Lake.



LWF also applauds the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' recent decision to continue managing the lake's water levels as stated in the Tri-Party Agreement as we all await how private and public boundaries will be determined. In the short term, this will maintain the habitat necessary for fall and winter waterfowl populations and for summer/late fall shorebird and wading bird populations. You can read the full comment letter and past comments at the website: lawildlifefed.org. ■



PADDLING OPTIONS IN EBR PARISH

By Charles Williams, LWF 2nd Vice President

LWF's membership includes many persons who enjoy paddling on rivers and bayous for the scenery, moderate exercise, birding, and fishing. In 2018 at the LWF annual convention, members passed a resolution addressing a major problem that paddlers had noted was increasing—that is, a lack of access points for entry to and exit from the rivers. The resolution urged that the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries, Department of Transportation and Development, and local governments throughout the state cooperate for the creation and maintenance of designated access points for rivers and bayous that offer recreational paddling and fishing opportunities, especially for our designated scenic rivers. The resolution also called attention to the BREC (Baton Rouge Recreation and Park Commission) plans to develop a system of “blueways” in East Baton Rouge Parish and urged other parish governments to do the same to increase recreational paddling opportunities.

We have recently learned that in 2021 BREC will complete another canoe landing in south Baton Rouge. It will be located on Bayou Manchac a short distance downstream from where Wards Creek enters the bayou. Access will be from Jefferson Highway into Manchac Park. Completion of this landing will create the opportunity for a one-way paddle between the landing in Highland Road Park (on Bayou Fountain) and this new one, a distance of 6.5 miles. Since this is all flatwater, the paddle can be in either direction.

This year BREC plans to flesh out the Blueways concept plan with priorities and an implementation plan after feasibility studies of an array of additional possible landing sites. We especially hope to see progress in BREC's efforts to arrange canoe launches on the Comite and Amite Rivers where there are numerous parks and rights of way that can provide accessible landings. LWF and its paddling members will need to continue to express support for Blueways by attending public input hearings and commenting on plans. ■

BUSINESS ALLIANCE PARTNERS

LWF Business Alliance Partners help us strengthen the connection between Louisiana business leaders and our natural resources stewards. Corporate support has been and always will be essential for the promotion and protection of our sportsman's paradise. Quality outdoor opportunities make Louisiana a desirable place to live and work, and adds to our economic well-being. Business Alliance members join other outdoor-oriented citizens who believe in constructive conservation and protection of our states natural resources.

We thank them for their support and belief in the mission of LWF.

PECAN

DRAX Biomass
VieMed
Walters & Associates

LONGLEAF PINE

Crimson Midstream
Volks Constructors
The Stewart Agency
Petrus Feed and Seed
H&R Block

If you own a business or know a business that might be interested in joining our Business Alliance, please contact Rebecca Triche at 225-344-6707. ■



Photo credit: Thomas J. Graner

TAKE THE CONSERVATION PLEDGE

"I give my pledge as an American to save and faithfully to defend from waste the natural resources of my country – Its air, its soil and minerals, its forests, waters and wildlife." ■



Photo by Burg Ransom



Whooping Crane photo courtesy of Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries

AVERTING A WILDLIFE CONSERVATION CRISIS: SUPPORT FOR RECOVERING AMERICA'S WILDLIFE ACT (RAWA)

by Rebecca Triche, LWF Executive Director

Federal legislation to address wildlife management has been introduced and Louisiana Wildlife Federation urges your support for Recovering America's Wildlife Act (RAWA).

The crisis facing our nation's fish and wildlife is daunting. More than one-third of all species in the United States are at risk of becoming threatened or endangered unless we proactively implement on-the-ground conservation measures. It costs the American public hundreds of millions of taxpayer dollars each year to recover threatened or endangered species, costs that could be avoided or greatly reduced if we prevent fish and wildlife from needing these "emergency room" measures in the first place.

The Recovering America's Wildlife Act is built upon the premise that the best way to save America's wildlife is through collaborative, proactive, voluntary work before species are in trouble. This legislation will help conserve and

recover our nation's fish and wildlife by dedicating \$1.3 billion for state-level conservation and \$97.5 million to Tribal nations to recover and sustain healthy fish and wildlife populations. The funds will be used to accelerate the recovery of the more than 12,000 species of greatest conservation need across the country by implementing the strategies identified in each state's congressionally mandated State Wildlife Action Plan. Similarly, tribal nations will expand conservation efforts on their lands, which provide vital habitat for hundreds of fish and wildlife species, including more than 500 species listed as threatened or endangered.



Louisiana Pine Snake photo courtesy of The Alexandria Zoo

Our nation has a remarkable history of coming together to bring species back from the brink of extinction by funding professional, science-driven fish and wildlife management. Eighty years ago, prized game species were at the cusp of being lost forever. Hunters and anglers came together to leverage user fees for game species conservation because they understood that preserving wildlife takes coordinated, consistent investment in collaborative conservation.

It will take a similar vision and effort to address the escalating problems facing our fish and wildlife in the 21st century. Emerging diseases, invasive species, and extreme weather threaten wildlife at a scale inconceivable just a few decades ago.

All Americans benefit from healthy fish and wildlife populations, but currently 80 percent of the funding for our state wildlife agencies comes from just one small slice of the population—hunters and anglers. Sportspeople have long supported wildlife conservation efforts by paying taxes on shooting, hunting, and fishing gear, and through the purchase of licenses, permits, and stamps. For decades, this model of conservation worked to preserve game species, but too often there is not enough money to help imperiled wildlife that are not hunted or fished. Adequate funding is the key to protecting species long before they become endangered.

Louisiana has 362 species of greatest conservation need and increased funding can help with research, data collection and management options for habitat. The Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries has a plan for using the expected \$16 million annually from passage of RAWA. This includes being proactive to keep the 27 species identified as needing protection off the Endangered Species List. Funding would be prioritized to help recover species currently on the Endangered Species List, such as Louisiana Pearlshell and Louisiana Pine Snake.

You can show your support for wildlife by talking about how passage of the Recovering America's Wildlife Act helps ensure that our children and grandchildren inherit the full diversity of our nation's fish and wildlife and enjoy the same outdoor recreation opportunities we have today. ■



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Cover Photo:

***A Deer at Black Bayou Lake National
Wildlife Refuge by Burg Ransom***

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This newsletter highlights key program activities and issues in the second half of 2020. You can catch up with LWF's 2021 activities at our website and in social media.

“The nation behaves well if it treats the natural resources as assets which it must turn over to the next generation increased, and not impaired, in value.”

—*Theodore Roosevelt*