



The voice of fish and wildlife agencies

1100 First Street, NE, Suite 825

Washington, DC 20002

Phone: 202-838-3474

Fax: 202-350-9869

Email: [info@fishwildlife.org](mailto:info@fishwildlife.org)

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**For Immediate Release**

Contact: Patricia Allen  
Director of Communications  
202-838-3461 office | 443-808-6437 cell  
[pallen@fishwildlife.org](mailto:pallen@fishwildlife.org)

### **AFWA Celebrates the 30th Anniversary of the North American Wetlands Conservation Act**

**Washington D.C.** (December 10, 2019)- The Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies celebrates the 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the [North American Wetland Conservation Act](#) (NAWCA). This act provides financial support for waterfowl habitat that also supports a multitude of other wetland-related wildlife species. The NAWCA program is recognized as one of the premiere conservation programs in the world because the successful collaborative partnerships between the state fish and wildlife agencies, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, non-governmental organizations, and other partners are key to implementing priority wetland conservation projects.

“The North American Wetland Conservation Act leverages non-federal funding through a diversity of partnerships to achieve wetland benefits far beyond what any single state fish and wildlife agency or non-government organization could achieve alone and maximizes the benefits of wetland conservation dollars on the ground,” said Secretary Kelly Hepler of South Dakota Game, Fish, and Parks and President of the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies. “The Association is pleased that state fish and wildlife agencies are partners in many of the NAWCA funded projects and that local hunters, anglers, and other outdoor recreation enthusiasts benefit from the wetland projects in all 50 states.”

“Wetland conservation projects funded by NAWCA and the many partners throughout North America represent some of the best collaborative initiatives in conservation today,” said Terry Steinwand, Director of the North Dakota Game and Fish Department and Chair of the North American Wetland Conservation Council, responsible for recommending NAWCA projects to the Migratory Bird Conservation Commission. “The federal NAWCA program funding is often matched at a rate of \$3 of non-federal money for every \$1 of federal money, which makes this program one of the most cost-effective conservation programs that our nation's federal and state fish and wildlife managers employ.”

Enacted in 1989, NAWCA helps support the conservation efforts of the North American Waterfowl Management Plan by providing financial resources to carry out wetland conservation projects in the United States, Canada, and Mexico. This program helps improve critical habitat for waterfowl, other fish and wildlife, and enhances flood mitigation while improving air and water quality, among many other positive conservation benefits. NAWCA projects are completed on a voluntary, partnership-basis that has involved more than 6,200 partners over the past 30 years.

Over the past 30 years, NAWCA has provided \$1.7 billion in federal grants for 3,000 projects. The program has impacted over 30 million acres of habitat in the United States, Canada, and Mexico. NAWCA requires that for every federal dollar contributed to the program, a non-federal source must equally match the federal contribution. Throughout the life of the program, conservation groups, including sportsmen and women, have shown their willingness to play a vital role in conservation funding. NAWCA program partners have contributed over \$3.6 billion in matching funds for wetland conservation projects.

As we celebrate the 30th Anniversary of the North America Wetland Conservation Act, the Association wishes to thank Rep. Mike Thompson for championing the [North American Wetlands Conservation Extension Act \(H.R. 925\)](#) which reauthorizes the act through FY 2024.

Learn more about the 30th Anniversary of the North America Wetland Conservation Act by visiting [nawmp.org/nawca30](http://nawmp.org/nawca30).

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The Association of Fish & Wildlife Agencies represents North America's fish and wildlife agencies to advance sound, science-based management and conservation of fish and wildlife and their habitats in the public interest. The Association represents its state agency members on Capitol Hill and before the Administration to advance favorable fish and wildlife conservation policy and funding and works to ensure that all entities work collaboratively on the most important issues. The Association also provides member agencies with coordination services on cross-cutting as well as species-based programs that range from birds, fish habitat and energy development to climate change, wildlife action plans, conservation education, leadership training and international relations. Working together, the Association's member agencies are ensuring that North American fish and wildlife management has a clear and collective voice.

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