Johnson Introduces Bill to Protect Wildlife for Next Generation

First of its kind funding will help states fund conservation programs

Washington, DC—U.S. Senator Tim Johnson (D-SD) today introduced legislation that would create a first of its kind funding program to help states protect nongame fish and wildlife species under the Wildlife Conservation and Restoration Program (WCRP). The Teaming with Wildlife Act has already been endorsed by the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies, which represents fish and wildlife agencies in the 56 states and territories across the country.

“Hunting, fishing and enjoying the outdoors has been engrained in all our lives. This legislation will help ensure that we can pass these South Dakota traditions on to future generations,” said Johnson, a member of the Energy and Natural Resources Committee. “I am proud to introduce this bill to help states across the country enhance wildlife conservation.”

The legislation would provide $350 million annually over five years to help states carry out comprehensive wildlife restoration programs consistent with a state wildlife action plan. Since 2001, every state has adopted a state wildlife action plan to effectively recover fish and wildlife species. This act introduced today would create a reliable funding source for the program through a portion of the royalties collected from mineral development on federal lands. Johnson has long supported efforts to create a reliable funding stream to support the WCRP since Congress authorized the program in 2000.

Under the act, the South Dakota Department of Game, Fish and Parks would receive a minimum of $3.5 million annually, or $17.5 million over five years.

“For many years, the license fees paid by hunters and anglers supported improvements to hunting and fishing opportunities in South Dakota. The Teaming with Wildlife Act fills a critical underserved need, ensuring states can support a rich and diverse habitat for all species,” continued Johnson.

As a senior member of the Energy Committee, Johnson has been leading the fight to protect our wildlife and secure federal funding for conservation programs and recreational projects.

Shovels Ready…

Our Audubon chapter has been working with the city Arbor Committee to establish a bird feeding station at the arboretum near the Ike’s Club. A Tree City Dedication and planting is scheduled for Wednesday, April 22 at 1 pm.
Please join me in welcoming Glenn Moravek as our new Conservation Chairman. Glenn is a long time member of MBAS and has served on our Board of Directors. Thanks for offering to help, Glenn.

**Sandhill Crane Field Trip** by Dave Johnson

We froze our keesters the morning of March 28 at Rowe Sanctuary. It was 16 degrees. I dressed plenty warmly, but by 9am I was having trouble holding the field glasses steady. Unfortunately, the cold seemed to prevent the spectacular mass exodus the cranes usually make, but Dave Kruger and I had gone out the evening before, and saw some cranes nearby in a corn field doing a mating dance. Very impressive. The most impressive thing from the blind, however, may have been a mink that made repeated dives into the ice laden river, looking for breakfast, I’d guess. He just made me shiver. I’ve posted a not so great crane video at [http://video.google.com/videoplay?docid=7221812739599332484](http://video.google.com/videoplay?docid=7221812739599332484). There are better crane videos, there, too.

**Updated Website**

We now have our own domain name, which means an easier web address to remember. Our new site is [www.MissouriBreaksAudubon.org](http://www.missouribreaksaudubon.org). Check out the downloadable calendar. The new site is much simpler to maintain then the old one, allowing group collaboration, so expect it to be kept up to date.

**Annual Picnic**

Our annual picnic is scheduled tentatively planned for Saturday, May 19 Oahe Downstream, Campground 3 at the picnic shelter. As usual, bring your own beverage and a dish to pass. The chapter will provide hot dogs, buns and condiments. Check the web calendar for more details as the date approaches.

**Online Newsletter**

As a member of the National Audubon Society in Hughes and Stanley counties, you receive a copy of this newsletter as part of your national membership. If you would like to receive this newsletter by e-mail instead of hard copy (saving trees, postage, and trash), send your e-mail address to info@MissouriBreaksAudubon.org. We won’t share your address with anyone, and you can unsubscribe at any time. Of course, if you don’t want the hardcopy either, let us know and well take care of that, too.