

112TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

S. RES. 580

Designating the week beginning on October 14, 2012, as “National Wildlife Refuge Week”.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

SEPTEMBER 22 (legislative day, SEPTEMBER 21), 2012

Mr. COONS (for himself, Mr. SESSIONS, Mr. CARDIN, Mr. LIEBERMAN, Mr. BROWN of Massachusetts, Mr. UDALL of New Mexico, Ms. SNOWE, Mrs. MURRAY, Mr. ALEXANDER, Mr. REED, Mr. COCHRAN, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mr. KERRY, Mrs. BOXER, Mr. LEAHY, Ms. LANDRIEU, Mr. BENNET, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Ms. MIKULSKI, Mr. PRYOR, Mr. WYDEN, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Mr. UDALL of Colorado, Mr. JOHNSON of South Dakota, Mr. BINGAMAN, and Ms. COLLINS) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to

RESOLUTION

Designating the week beginning on October 14, 2012, as
“National Wildlife Refuge Week”.

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

Whereas, in 2012, 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 more than 150,000,000 acres, 558 national wildlife refuges, and 38 wetland man-

agement 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 more than 360 units of the National Wildlife Refuge System have hunting programs and more than 300 units of the National Wildlife Refuge System have fishing programs, averaging more than 2,500,000 hunting visits and more than 7,000,000 fishing visits each year;

Whereas the National Wildlife Refuge System experienced more than 30,000,000 wildlife observation visits during fiscal year 2012;

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

Whereas, for every \$1 appropriated, national wildlife refuges generate \$4 in economic activity;

Whereas the National Wildlife Refuge System experiences approximately 47,000,000 visits each year, which generated nearly \$2,100,000,000 and more than 35,000 jobs in local economies during fiscal year 2012;

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 waterfowl habitat in the National Wildlife Refuge System;

Whereas 59 refuges were established specifically to protect imperiled species, and of the more than 1,300 federally listed threatened and endangered species in the United States, 280 species are found on units of the National Wildlife Refuge System;

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 42,000 volunteers and approximately 220 national wildlife refuge “Friends” organizations contribute nearly 1,600,000 hours annually, the equivalent of 766 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 1 refuge located within an hour's 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 14, 2012, 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 14, 2012, as “National Wildlife Refuge Week”;

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

4 (3) acknowledges the importance of national
5 wildlife refuges for their recreational opportunities
6 and contribution to local economies across the
7 United States;

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

11 (5) identifies the significance of national wild-
12 life refuges in advancing the traditions of wildlife ob-
13 servation, photography, environmental education,
14 and interpretation;

15 (6) recognizes the importance of national wild-
16 life refuges to wildlife conservation and the protec-
17 tion of imperiled species and ecosystems, as well as
18 compatible uses;

19 (7) acknowledges the role of national wildlife
20 refuges in conserving waterfowl and waterfowl habi-
21 tat pursuant to the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (40
22 Stat. 755, chapter 128);

23 (8) reaffirms the support of the Senate for
24 wildlife conservation and the National Wildlife Ref-
25 uge System; and

- 1 (9) expresses the intent of the Senate—
- 2 (A) to continue working to conserve wild-
- 3 life; and
- 4 (B) to manage the National Wildlife Ref-
- 5 uge System for current and future generations.

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