

111TH CONGRESS
2^D SESSION

S. RES. _____

Designating the week beginning October 9, 2011, as “National Wildlife Refuge Week”.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

Mr. COONS (for himself, Mr. SESSIONS, and Mr. CARDIN) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on _____

RESOLUTION

Designating the week beginning October 9, 2011, as
“National Wildlife Refuge Week”.

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

Whereas in 2011, 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, 553 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 Na-

tion, 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 370 units of the National Wildlife Refuge System have hunting programs and more than 350 units of the National Wildlife Refuge System have fishing programs, averaging more than 2,500,000 hunting visits and more than 7,100,000 fishing visits;

Whereas the National Wildlife Refuge System experiences 28,200,000 wildlife observation visits annually;

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 45,700,000 visits every year, generating nearly \$1,700,000,000 and 27,000 jobs in local economies;

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, more than \$750,000,000 in funds, from the sale of the Federal Duck Stamp to outdoor enthusiasts, has enabled the purchase or lease of more than 5,300,000 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 39,000 volunteers and more than 220 national wildlife refuge “Friends” organizations contribute nearly 1,400,000 hours annually, the equivalent of 665 full-time employees, and provide an important link with local communities;

Whereas national wildlife refuges provide an important opportunity for children to connect with nature and discover 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 explor-

ing, connecting with, and preserving the natural heritage of the Nation;

Whereas since 1995, refuges across the Nation 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 the recommendations in the document entitled “Conserving the Future: Wildlife Refuges and the Next Generation”, which is 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 9, 2011, has been designated as “National Wildlife Refuge Week” by the Fish and Wildlife Service;

Whereas in 2011, the designation of National Wildlife Refuge Week would recognize more than a century of conservation in the United States and would serve to raise awareness about the importance of wildlife and the National Wildlife Refuge System and to 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 9, 2011, as “National Wildlife Refuge Week”;

4 (2) supports the goals and ideals of National
5 Wildlife Refuge Week;

6 (3) acknowledges the importance of national
7 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;

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

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

20 (9) expresses the intent of the Senate—

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

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