



THE GLOBAL WARMING WILDLIFE SURVIVAL ACT



For years, scientists have recognized that global warming poses unprecedented risks to wildlife. The changing, shrinking and destruction of habitat caused by global warming requires wildlife to migrate or adapt and threatens their very existence.

Global warming is – and will continue to be -- one of the greatest threats to ecosystem integrity, individual fish and wildlife species, coastal human settlements and world economic development throughout the 21st century.

The Global Warming Wildlife Survival Act creates a comprehensive framework for a coordinated national response to address the impacts of global warming on wildlife. The Wildlife Survival Act has been introduced in both the House and the Senate this Congress. Representatives Norm Dicks (D-WA-6), Jay Inslee (D-WA-1) and James Saxton (R-NJ-3) introduced the Wildlife Survival Act (H.R.

2338). This legislation was included in the Natural Resources Committee's section of the New Direction for Energy Independence Act (H.R. 3221) and passed by the full House last year. In the Senate, the Wildlife Survival Act (S. 2204) was introduced by Senator Sheldon Whitehouse (D-RI) and Senator Barbara Boxer (D-CA), Chair of the Senate Environment and Public Works (EPW) Committee. The Lieberman-Warner Climate Security Act (S. 3036) has also incorporated many of this legislation's principles in its natural resources adaptation provisions (Title VI, Subtitle D and Title XII, Subtitles C and D).

Reducing Global Warming & Helping Wildlife Adapt to its Impacts

Global warming poses one of the most significant environmental challenges of our day. Congress must pass national legislation that takes immediate steps to significantly reduce greenhouse gas emissions to address the root cause of climate change. But we cannot stop there. The Global Warming Wildlife Survival Act takes the next step to prepare for the current and future unavoidable effects of global warming on ecosystems and wildlife.

Even with significant emission reductions, wildlife will continue to suffer from the impacts of global warming for the next 100 years until greenhouse gases already in the atmosphere dissipate. Since global warming is one of the most significant threats facing wildlife in the coming century, its future will depend upon our ability to design

and implement strategies to help them through this bottleneck period.

The Global Warming Wildlife Survival Act will:

- Ensure that federal and state agencies develop and implement plans to reduce the impact of global warming on wildlife and its habitat.
- Coordinate a national strategic response to enable wildlife to adapt to the current and future impacts of global warming that will occur over the next century as we work to reduce emissions.
- Establish a national scientific advisory council to determine likely impacts of global warming on wildlife.
- Establish a framework through which significant levels of federal funding can be allocated to help wildlife survive global warming.

The Global Warming Wildlife Survival Act Addresses Challenges to Wildlife and Habitat Protection

National and state conservation policies need to address the unprecedented challenges wildlife face as a result of global warming. Global warming is a complicated problem to address because its impacts will occur across state, federal, local and private jurisdictional boundaries and existing conservation programs are designed to address existing, not future challenges.

Moreover, the scientific capacity of federal agencies is woefully inadequate. No federal land system has a comprehensive biological inventory of its lands. How are agencies to know how ecological systems are changed as a result of global warming, and what adaptive responses may be necessary, if agencies do not even know what is out there?

A Strategic Policy Response

New Direction and Coordinated, Interagency Response

Many federal programs currently exist to protect and restore fish and wildlife habitat. These programs are not primarily designed to address the challenges posed by global warming; however, they are essential tools that need to be used to mitigate future impacts of global warming on wildlife and habitats. The managers of federal lands such as national parks, national forests, national wildlife refuges, and the Bureau of Land Management lands must use their existing authorities and be given additional direction to consider the impacts of global warming on wildlife. Though the brunt of some global warming impacts may not be fully felt for a number of years, planning to address and ameliorate those impacts on wildlife and wildlife habitat must begin now.

Equally important, new governmental processes and structures need to be explored that will themselves be resilient and adaptive to the threats from global warming. While it is important for each federal agency to develop measures for protecting wildlife from the effects of global warming, it is insufficient for individual agencies, or even individual federal land units, to contemplate and plan strategies purely on their



own. The problem is simply too complex. An effective response to the impact of global warming on wildlife requires: dramatically enhanced scientific capacity, a coordinated national strategy to ensure that wildlife impacts spanning government jurisdictions are effectively addressed and adequate federal funds that are prudently committed.

National & State Strategies

A national strategy for addressing the impact of global warming on wildlife should be established, with the express purpose of helping wildlife navigate the bottleneck of global warming impacts over the next century. This strategy should examine management issues common to geographic areas and threat type (e.g. sea level rise, increased hurricane frequency and intensity). Individual agencies and land management units could then coordinate their management activities with these national and regional goals and strategies.

State strategies, particularly those set forth in state wildlife action plans, should address global warming impacts on wildlife and also be coordinated with the national strategy. Every state has already completed these plans, which identify at-risk habitats and species that need special conservation attention. However, these plans do not currently take into account global warming's impacts.

ADDRESSING GLOBAL WARMING'S IMPACT ON WILDLIFE

Enhanced Scientific Capacity

A coordinated science arm of a national strategy for addressing the impacts of global warming on wildlife is also essential to developing effective measures to respond to those impacts.

A new national, interagency global warming scientific support center should be established to better coordinate and focus scientific efforts. Besides conducting research, the center could directly support federal land management and wildlife agencies in responding to global warming. Building more robust scientific inventory and monitoring programs within each federal land management agency is also essential to managing wildlife and federal lands in a world changed by global warming.

Additionally, the national strategy should be developed with the advice and consent of a science advisory board to ensure that it is based on the best available science. This board would be comprised of a balanced membership with expertise in relevant scientific disciplines.

Rising sea levels, melting ice, habitat shifts and drought threaten the survival of species worldwide. As ice bridges linking land and sea continue to disappear, adult and young polar bears are starving and drowning. Some polar bears are resorting to cannibalism. Caribou are departing their wintering grounds a month earlier and are having trouble making it to the coastal plain of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge in time for spring, when the most nutritious forage is available for their calves. Islands used by the endangered Hawaiian monk seal could be completely underwater by century's end.

A Balanced & Accountable Funding Framework

Significant resources will be needed to address the unprecedented challenges wildlife face as a result of global warming. The Global Warming Wildlife Survival Act contains a general authorization for federal appropriations needed to implement the Act.

Separate global warming legislation geared toward reducing greenhouse gas emissions has the potential to generate billions of dollars in revenue from the auctioning of credits under a federal carbon trading system. In the long run, such legislation is a reliable and appropriate source of funding for the Wildlife Survival Act. By dedicating a portion of the revenues from these carbon trading measures to conservation and planning efforts of federal and state agencies, we have the ability to prepare for the current and future effects of global warming on ecosystem integrity and design and implement strategies to help mitigate its impacts on wildlife and habitat. The Wildlife Survival Act establishes an accountable and balanced framework through which significant levels of federal funding can be allocated.

