

WOW Subcommittee Leg. Hearing
June 13, 2019

Wild Bird Conservation Act

Thank you very much Chair Huffman for holding this hearing and for considering my bill, which would reauthorize the Wild Bird Conservation Act.

The authorization expired nearly 25 years ago in 1995 and I personally believe it is time to revisit this important issue.

I care very deeply about protecting wildlife, especially in a time when hundreds of international scientists have sounded the alarm to the extinction crisis that our planet is facing, as we heard in this committee last month from IPBES [*ip-bess*] scientists.

The Wild Bird Conservation Act provides another tool to protect and conserve our incredible diversity of birds. First and foremost, the WBCA limits the importation of exotic bird species to ensure their populations continue to thrive in the wild.

As the number [one](#) importer of exotic birds, it's critical that the United States provide protections against wildlife trafficking and other international trade that harms wild bird populations.

One of the most important components of the WBCA is the Exotic Bird Conservation Fund, which provides financial and technical assistance for on the ground bird conservation projects in their countries of origin.

The Exotic Bird Conservation Fund, in particular, is why it is so important that we reauthorize the WBCA.

As an example, I would like to highlight one of the birds that benefits from this fund.

Picture in your mind a classic parrot with red, yellow and blue feathers.

That's the scarlet macaw, a species protected under the Wild Bird Conservation Act.

These beautiful parrots have been captured for the pet trade to an alarming extent, with only [a few thousand](#) left in the wild in Central America and Mexico.

The illegal trafficking of these macaws remains very lucrative, as well as dangerous for the local communities.

The Exotic Bird Conservation Fund supports local community projects to protect scarlet macaw nests from poachers, and to rehabilitate macaws so they can return to the wild.

By funding these projects and limiting the importation of scarlet macaws, the Wild Bird Conservation Act is doing a great service both to the ecosystem and to the Central American people who culturally value these birds.

Mr. Chair, I'm thrilled that we are discussing the reauthorization of the Exotic Bird Conservation Fund to ensure that conservation projects for exotic birds will continue. Thank you.