



HOUSE COMMITTEE ON
NATURAL RESOURCES
CHAIRMAN BRUCE WESTERMAN

To: Subcommittee on Water, Wildlife and Fisheries Republican Members
From: Subcommittee on Water, Wildlife and Fisheries Staff: Richie O'Connell
(Richie@mail.house.gov) and Jackson Renfro (Jackson.Renfro@mail.house.gov);
x5-8331
Date: Monday, July 20, 2026
Subject: Legislative Hearing on 4 Bills

The Subcommittee on Water, Wildlife and Fisheries will hold a legislative hearing on four bills: H.R. 9621 (Rep. Baumgartner), "*Northwest Endangered Salmon Predation Prevention Act of 2026*"; H.R. 7332 (Rep. Matsui), "*Whale CHARTS Act of 2026*"; H.R. 7466 (Rep. Jackson of TX), "*Safeguarding America's Food Economy and Controlling Agricultural Threats to Livestock and Enterprises Act*" or the "*SAFE CATTLE Act*"; and H.R. 8876 (Rep. Walberg), "*Aquatic Invasive Species Control and Prevention Act of 2026*".

The hearing will take place on **Tuesday, July 21, 2026, at 2:00 p.m., in room 1324 Longworth House Office Building.**

Member offices are requested to notify Will Gardner (Will.Gardner@mail.house.gov) by 4:30 p.m. on Monday, July 20, 2026, if their Member intends to participate in the hearing.

I. KEY MESSAGES

- Exploding pinniped populations and excessive predation in the Pacific Northwest have undermined recovery of threatened and endangered salmon and steelhead populations.
- Efforts to implement conflicting requirements of the Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA) and Endangered Species Act (ESA) in the Pacific Northwest have prevented recovery of the region's ESA-listed salmonid species.
- H.R. 9621 amends the MMPA to provide states and Tribes in the Pacific Northwest with new and expanded tools for, and enhanced flexibility in, managing pinniped populations to recover endangered and threatened salmon species.
- H.R. 8876 expands federal aquatic invasive species frameworks through additional prevention, research, and coordinated management efforts between agencies, states, Tribes, and local governments.
- H.R. 7466 strengthens the federal response to New World Screwworm by requiring the U.S. Departments of Agriculture (USDA) and the Interior (DOI) to coordinate their surveillance, prevention, and eradication efforts to protect wildlife, livestock, and the nation's food supply.

II. WITNESSES

Panel I (Members of Congress)

- *To Be Announced*

Panel II (Administration Witnesses)

- **Dr. Tim Petty**, Assistant Secretary for Oceans and Atmosphere, U.S. Department of Commerce, Washington, D.C. [*H.R. 7332 and H.R. 9621*]

Panel III (Outside Experts)

- **Mr. Nate Pamplin**, Director of External Affairs, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, Olympia, WA [*H.R. 9621*]
- **Dr. Marc Gaden**, Executive Secretary, Great Lakes Fishery Commission, Ann Arbor, MI [*H.R. 8876*]
- **Mr. Jared L. Blankenship**, State Director, District 1, Texas Farm Bureau, Hereford, TX [*H.R. 7466*]
- **Dr. Richard Merrick**, Independent Marine Scientist, Chief Science Advisor (Ret.), NOAA Fisheries, Falmouth, MA [*H.R. 7332 and H.R. 9621*] [*Minority Witness*]

III. BACKGROUND

H.R. 9621 (Rep. Baumgartner), “Northwest Endangered Salmon Predation Prevention Act of 2026”



Figure 1: Sea lion consumes salmon near Bonneville Dam
Source: The Seattle Times

In recent decades, pinniped populations—including harbor seals, California sea lions, and Steller sea lions—have exploded across the Pacific Northwest.¹ Pinnipeds prey on threatened and endangered salmon and steelhead as they migrate to and from the ocean, threatening their recovery, undermining Tribal treaty-reserved fishing rights, and jeopardizing billions of dollars in taxpayer and ratepayer investments. The Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA), however, generally prohibits the “take” of marine mammals,

which include pinnipeds.² Instead, the MMPA requires that these populations be managed to their “maximum productivity.”³ This requirement offers minimal flexibility for managing pinniped populations, even when increased takings would benefit species listed under the Endangered Species Act (ESA),⁴ such as certain vulnerable salmon and steelhead populations.

This statutory dilemma has posed a persistent challenge in the Columbia River Basin. In June

¹ *Pinniped Predation on Salmonids in the Washington Portions of the Salish Sea and Outer Coast*, Washington State Academy of Sciences, <https://wdfw.wa.gov/sites/default/files/publications/02579/wdfw02579.pdf>.

² “Marine Mammal Protection,” NOAA Fisheries, 2018, www.fisheries.noaa.gov/topic/marine-mammal-protection.

³ “Marine Mammal Protection Act,” NOAA Fisheries, 2023, <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/national/marine-mammal-protection/marine-mammal-protection-act>.

⁴ “Marine Mammal Protection,” NOAA Fisheries, 2018, www.fisheries.noaa.gov/topic/marine-mammal-protection.

2013, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration’s (NOAA) National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) published an ESA Recovery Plan for various Lower Columbia River species of salmon and steelhead, finding that “pinniped predation on adult spring Chinook salmon and winter steelhead in the Columbia River estuary continues to increase.”⁵ Notably, from 2002 to 2017, salmonid passage at Bonneville Dam decreased from 284,732 to 109,040, while the number of salmonids consumed by California sea lions and Steller sea lions at the dam grew from 1,010 to 5,384,⁶ an increase of roughly 433 percent.

This issue is not confined to the Columbia River. In 2024, a NOAA study found that harbor seals “consume as many as a third of young steelhead smolts migrating out of the Nisqually River’s delta in southern Puget Sound.”⁷ As the Southern Puget Sound stock of harbor seals has grown to more than 2,500 seals, the Nisqually Indian Tribe has faced a considerable challenge.⁸ In fact, the Natural Resources Director for the Tribe, David Troutt, stated, “[t]he Nisqually Indian Tribe has not harvested steelhead from the Nisqually River for more than 30 years.”⁹ This predation undermines steelhead recovery, which has resulted in the Nisqually Indian Tribe catching far fewer fish than it did prior to the Boldt Decision, which recognized Tribal rights to the Puget Sound’s harvestable salmon and steelhead.¹⁰

Under Section 120(b) of the MMPA, states may apply to the Secretary of Commerce for intentional lethal taking of “individually identifiable” pinnipeds that have a “significant negative impact” on ESA-listed salmonid stocks.¹¹ However, this process proved

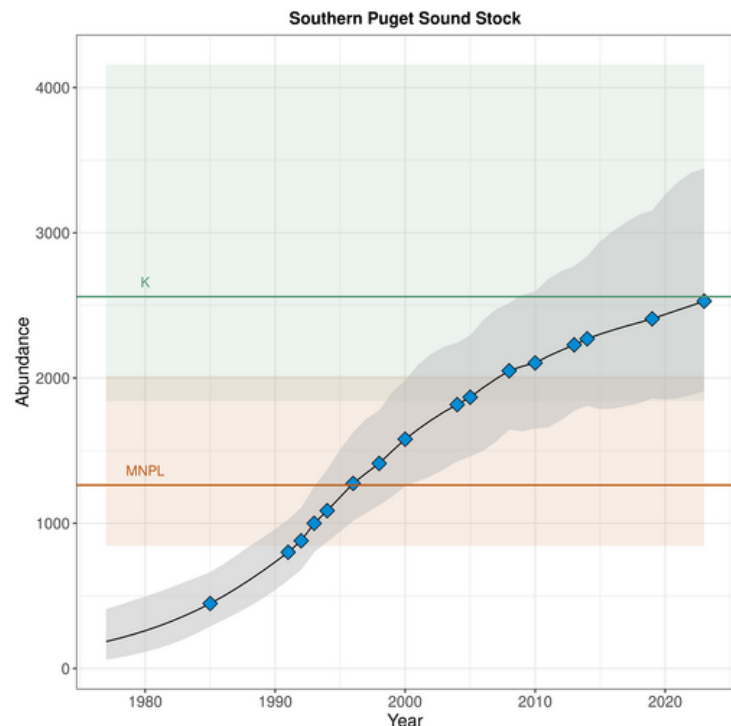


Figure 2: Abundance estimate of Southern Puget Sound Harbor Seal stock showing maximum net productivity levels (MNPL) and estimated carrying capacity (K).

Source: “Harbor seal predation on migrating steelhead smolts entering marine waters,” by Pearson, Amburgey, Clark, Tanedo, London, Huber, and Jefferies, 2024, *Marine Mammal Science*.

⁵ *ESA Recovery Plan for Lower Columbia River Coho Salmon, Lower Columbia River Chinook Salmon, Columbia River Chum Salmon, and Lower Columbia River Steelhead*, National Marine Fisheries Service, Northwest Region, 2013, <https://repository.library.noaa.gov/view/noaa/16002>.

⁶ “Sea Lion Predation on Columbia River Salmon and Steelhead,” Congressional Research Service, December 12, 2018, www.congress.gov/crs-product/IF11045?q=%7B%22search%22%3A%22pinniped+populations%22%7D&s=1&r=3#.

⁷ *Harbor Seals Consume up to a Third of Steelhead Migrating out of Nisqually River Delta*, NOAA Fisheries, (2024), <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/feature-story/harbor-seals-consume-third-steelhead-migrating-out-nisqually-river-delta>.

⁸ *Id.*

⁹ *Id.*

¹⁰ *Id.*

¹¹ 16 U.S.C. 1389(f).

unworkable in implementation. Building on the prior authorities, Congress enacted the Endangered Salmon Predation Prevention Act in 2018¹² to provide more appropriate management tools for pinniped populations. The law amended Section 120 of the MMPA to authorize the lethal intentional take of non-depleted pinniped stocks in a defined geographic range along the Columbia River and certain tributaries by:

- the states of Washington, Oregon, and Idaho;
- the Nez Perce Tribe, Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Reservation, Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs Reservation of Oregon, and Confederated Tribes and Bands of the Yakama Nation, which have treaty-reserved fishing rights on the Columbia River; and
- the Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission (CRITFC), which comprises these four Tribes.

NOAA's March 3, 2026, presentation to the Northwest Power and Conservation Council indicated that eight authorizations have been issued under Sections 120 and 120(f), leading to the removal of 505 sea lions (389 California sea lions and 116 Steller sea lions).¹³ NOAA estimated that these removals have saved more than 110,000 adult salmonids from sea lion predation.¹⁴ NOAA stated that while these removals have been helpful, they have “not been particularly effective at achieving the overall goal of balancing the requirements of the ESA and MMPA.”¹⁵

H.R. 9621, bipartisan legislation introduced by Representative Michael Baumgartner (R-WA-05), tackles the limited effectiveness of existing authorities, building on a December 3, 2025, Subcommittee on Water, Wildlife and Fisheries oversight hearing that examined opportunities to reduce pinniped predation on ESA-listed salmonid species in the Pacific Northwest.¹⁶ That hearing highlighted three key deficiencies in current management authorities. First, the method of take authorized under section



Figure 3: Sea lions at the mouth of the Cowlitz River
Source: Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission

120(f) does not permit incorporating adaptive management principles or tailoring management actions to meet situational requirements. The current system's rigidity has functioned as a rate-limiter for take levels when compared to authorized caps on take. Second, the current geographic limitation where take is authorized along the Columbia River allows for pinnipeds to gather in other places, thus moving the problem instead of solving it. According to CRITFC, although a

¹² Pub. L. No. 115–329.

¹³ *Pinniped Predation in the Columbia River Basin*, National Marine Fisheries Service, March 3, 2026, accessed at https://www.nwcouncil.org/fs/19781/2026_03_1.pdf.

¹⁴ *Id.*

¹⁵ *Id.*

¹⁶ Oversight Hearing titled, “Sea Lion Predation in the Pacific Northwest,” U.S. House Committee on Natural Resources, Subcommittee on Water, Wildlife and Fisheries, December 3, 2025, <https://docs.house.gov/Committee/Calendar/ByEvent.aspx?EventID=118718>.

2020 permit issued by NOAA under section 120(f) allowed for management of sea lions in the Cowlitz River where predation occurs, as a practical matter, lawful trapping could occur only at specified haul-out sites on docks on the mainstem Columbia River. These geographic limitations hindered effective management of the sea lion population despite ongoing predation inside the area covered by the permit.¹⁷ Finally, while authority has been granted for take in the Columbia River basin, this problem persists across the Pacific Northwest, especially in the Salish Sea and the Puget Sound. Northwest Indian Fisheries Commissioner, Ed Johnstone, and Nisqually Indian Tribe Chairman, Ken Choke, both testified on the urgent need to authorize new management tools throughout Washington.^{18,19}

H.R. 9621 provides needed solutions for the Pacific Northwest. The bill eliminates the restrictions that specify where lethal management can occur on the Columbia River and that limit chemical euthanasia as the only acceptable method of take. Instead, the legislation incorporates adaptive management principles into those processes to ensure that the fisheries' co-managers can do their jobs effectively. For the Columbia River, H.R. 9621 also creates the Columbia River Pinniped Exclusion Technology Accelerator to develop non-lethal technologies that prevent pinnipeds from proceeding upstream into salmon habitat and other waters that support juvenile salmonid migration.

To halt the longstanding decline of salmon and steelhead populations in the Puget Sound and other parts of western Washington, H.R. 9621 also expands these management tools to allow state and Tribal fishery co-managers in western Washington. The bill allows the Secretary of Commerce to issue permits to these eligible entities to allow for the humane lethal taking of harbor seals, California sea lions, and Steller sea lions in "each river and stream in the State of Washington that flows into the marine waters of the State." The bill also allows permit recipients to delegate their permits to any other eligible entity, similar to the permit delegation framework already authorized in the Columbia River under section 120(f). Issued permits would be effective for a maximum of five years. H.R. 9621 limits taking to ten percent of the potential biological removal for any covered pinniped²⁰ and provides for suspension of permitting authority after five years, if such authority is no longer necessary to protect endangered fish populations. Additionally, the bill also requires the Secretary of Commerce to submit, within one year of enactment and annually thereafter, a report to Congress describing the population status of pinnipeds in covered waters and any extent to which pinniped predation is preventing the recovery of threatened and endangered salmon species.

¹⁷ *Updating MMPA Section 120(f)*, Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission.

¹⁸ Testimony of Ed Johnstone, Chairman, Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission, Oversight Hearing titled, "Sea Lion Predation in the Pacific Northwest," U.S. House Committee on Natural Resources, Subcommittee on Water, Wildlife and Fisheries, December 3, 2025, <https://docs.house.gov/meetings/II/II13/20251203/118718/HHRG-119-II13-Wstate-JohnstoneE-20251203.pdf>.

¹⁹ Testimony of the Honorable Kenneth Choke, Chairman, Nisqually Indian Tribe Oversight Hearing titled, "Sea Lion Predation in the Pacific Northwest," U.S. House Committee on Natural Resources, Subcommittee on Water, Wildlife and Fisheries, December 3, 2025, <https://docs.house.gov/meetings/II/II13/20251203/118718/HHRG-119-II13-Wstate-ChokeK-20251203.pdf>

²⁰ Potential biological removal means "the maximum number of animals, not including natural mortalities, that may be removed from a marine mammal stock while allowing that stock to reach or maintain its optimum sustainable population." Cf. 16 U.S.C. 1362(20).

H.R. 7332 (Rep. Matsui), “Whale CHARTS Act of 2026”

Since 2008, NOAA has enforced a 10-knot speed limit on vessels measuring at least 65 feet in length to prevent them from striking the North Atlantic right whale. Although this rule remains in effect, NOAA released an Advance Notice of Proposed Rulemaking in March 2026, “to modify and modernize the North Atlantic Right Whale Vessel Speed Rule.”²¹ In part, NOAA is examining opportunities to leverage technology to reduce vessel strikes and to improve upon the one-size-fits-all speed restriction.

H.R. 7332 amends the provisions of the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for Fiscal Year (FY) 2023 that created a program to “reduce the risk to large cetaceans posed by vessel collisions and to minimize other impacts on large cetaceans through the use of near real-time location monitoring and location information.”²² H.R. 7332 redirects this program to focus on “mapping, surveying, monitoring, and mitigation,” recognizing the progress that new technologies have made in detecting whales and other marine mammals while on the water. The bill also alters the purpose of the program to include mapping and surveying migratory whales, monitoring of large cetaceans, and the development of detection technologies for migratory whales and other large cetaceans. The legislation also directs NOAA, in consultation with the Marine Mammal Commission, to produce distribution maps of migratory whales and predictive distribution maps that take into account future environmental conditions.

H.R. 7332 further directs NOAA to establish a pilot program for real-time monitoring of the North Atlantic right whale and to submit a report to Congress on the program’s effectiveness. The legislation also includes a grant program that NOAA would operate under a cooperative agreement with the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation to support activities that reduce lethal and sub-lethal interactions between ocean users and migratory whales and other large cetaceans. This includes funding research on detection technologies and other mitigation practices.

H.R. 7466 (Rep. Jackson of TX), “Safeguarding America’s Food Economy and Controlling Agricultural Threats to Livestock and Enterprises Act” or the “SAFE CATTLE Act”

The New World Screwworm (NWS) (*Cochliomyia hominivorax*) is a parasitic fly whose larvae feed on the living tissue of warm-blooded animals, including livestock, wildlife, pets, birds, and, in rare instances, humans.²³ Adult female flies lay eggs in open wounds or mucous membranes, and after hatching, the larvae burrow into healthy tissue, causing a painful condition known as myiasis.²⁴ Because NWS harms both wildlife and livestock, coordinated federal management is essential to preventing its spread.

²¹ Advance Notice of Proposed Rulemaking To Amend the North Atlantic Right Whale Vessel Strike Reduction Rule, Federal Register, March 4, 2026, <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2026/03/04/2026-04260/advance-notice-of-proposed-rulemaking-to-amend-the-north-atlantic-right-whale-vessel-strike>.

²² Pub. L. No. 117-263.

²³ “New World Screwworm: Be Aware and Prepare | Information for Veterinarians,” APHIS, U.S. Department of Agriculture, <https://www.aphis.usda.gov/sites/default/files/factsheet-nws-private-veterinarians.pdf>.

²⁴ “About New World Screwworm.” U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, July 8, 2026, <https://www.cdc.gov/new-world-screwworm/about/>.

The U.S. eradicated NWS in 1966 through a cooperative eradication campaign led by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) that used the sterile insect technique, which suppresses wild populations by releasing sterilized male flies that cannot produce viable offspring.²⁵ Since eradication, USDA has partnered with the Panamanian government through the Panama-United States Commission for the Eradication and Prevention of Screwworm (COPEG) to maintain a biological barrier at the Darién Gap to prevent the northward spread of the pest.²⁶ USDA estimates that NWS eradication has saved the U.S. livestock industry hundreds of millions of dollars annually, which is supported by the fact that a 1976 NWS outbreak in Texas caused an estimated \$732 million in direct livestock losses and nearly \$1.8 billion in total economic losses (adjusted to current dollars).²⁷

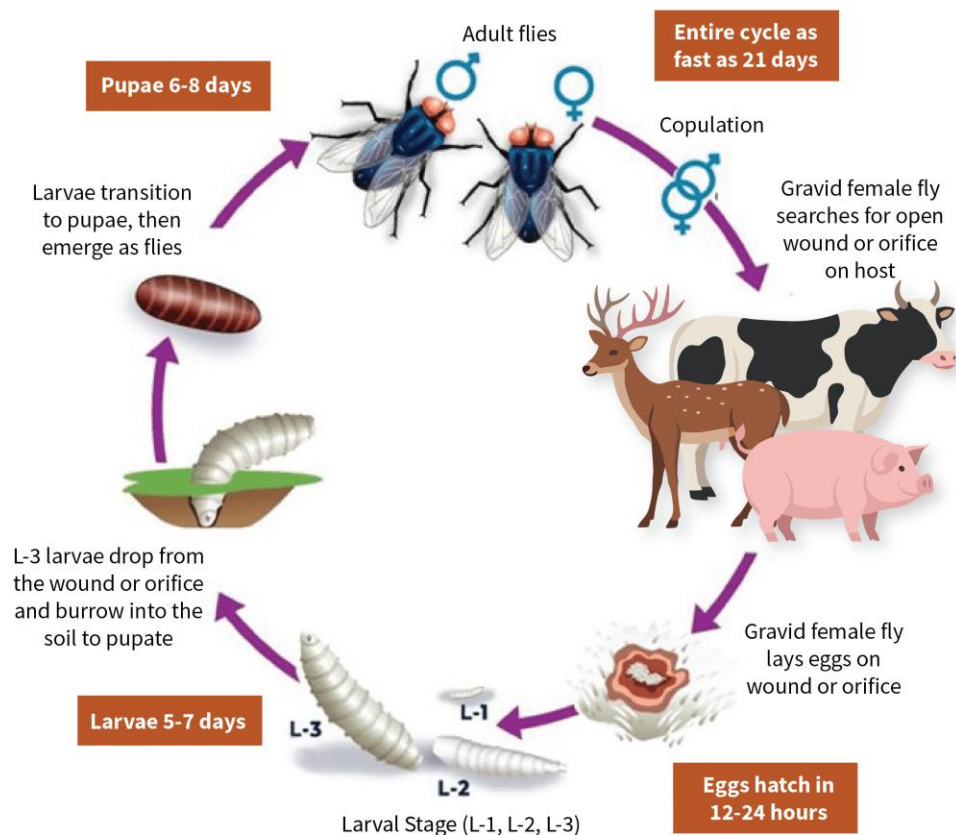


Figure 4: New World Screwworm Life Cycle
Source: USDA APHIS

Since 2023, NWS has spread north through Central America and into Mexico, prompting USDA to increase surveillance, shift sterile insect dispersal operations closer to the U.S.-Mexico border, impose livestock import restrictions from affected regions, and coordinate closely with Mexican

²⁵ Christine Whitt, "New World Screwworm: Current Issues," Congressional Research Service, June 2, 2025, <https://www.crs.gov/Reports/IN12558?source=search&index=0&searchGUID=ae197f8f2d784ec08577379dd8dba493>.

²⁶ *Id.*

²⁷ *Id.*

animal health officials.²⁸ USDA's current response also features a nationwide reporting system, emergency response resources, and the temporary closure of southern ports of entry to livestock trade.²⁹ Because NWS threatens livestock and wildlife alike, USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) emphasizes that preventing establishment in free-ranging wildlife is critical to protecting domestic cattle herds and ensuring rapid eradication if introductions occur.³⁰

USDA serves (through APHIS) as the lead federal agency for preventing, detecting, and eradicating foreign animal diseases affecting livestock and oversees approximately 193 million acres of public land on the National Forest System, which supports extensive wildlife resources.³¹ The Department of the Interior (DOI) also manages hundreds of millions of acres of wildlife habitat and federal lands through the National Park Service, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Bureau of Land Management, and the Bureau of Reclamation.³² Because wildlife inhabiting these lands can become infested and spread New World Screwworm across jurisdictional



Figure 5: Deer infested with New World Screwworm.
Source: USDA APHIS

boundaries, an effective response requires close coordination between agencies responsible for agricultural biosecurity and wildlife management. Currently, however, there is no statutory requirement directing USDA and DOI to establish a formal interagency agreement governing surveillance, monitoring, and eradication activities for New World Screwworm on covered Federal lands.

H.R. 7466, introduced by Representative Ronny Jackson (R-TX-13), directs USDA and DOI to enter into a memorandum of understanding (MOU) or other interagency agreement within 180 days of the bill's enactment to coordinate activities to prevent, control, and eradicate NWS in wildlife and other non-livestock animal species on covered federal lands. The agreement must establish joint surveillance and monitoring protocols for early detection, coordinate outbreak response with state wildlife and livestock officials, develop eradication protocols that protect wildlife while safeguarding domestic agriculture and the food supply, and establish science- and risk-based approaches to facilitate continuity of business for unaffected animals and non-contaminated areas. H.R. 7466 also requires annual reports to Congress detailing interagency

²⁸ *New World Screwworm Domestic Readiness and Response Policy Initiative*, U.S. Department of Agriculture, [nws-visit-policy-brief.pdf](https://www.aphis.usda.gov/sites/default/files/factsheet-nws-hunters-508.pdf).

²⁹ "Secretary Rollins Takes Decisive Action and Shuts Down U.S. Southern Border Ports to Livestock Trade due to further Northward Spread of New World Screwworm in Mexico," U.S. Department of Agriculture, July 9, 2025, <https://www.usda.gov/about-usda/news/press-releases/2025/07/09/secretary-rollins-takes-decisive-action-and-shuts-down-us-southern-border-ports-livestock-trade-due>.

³⁰ "New World Screwworm: A Threat to Wildlife," APHIS, U.S. Department of Agriculture, <https://direct.aphis.usda.gov/sites/default/files/factsheet-nws-hunters-508.pdf>.

³¹ "Livestock and Poultry Disease," APHIS, U.S. Department of Agriculture, June 17, 2026, <https://www.aphis.usda.gov/animals/animal-health/livestock-and-poultry-disease>.

³² Mark K. DeSantis, "U.S. Department of the Interior: An Overview," Congressional Research Service, June 23, 2021, <https://www.crs.gov/Reports/R45480?source=search&index=7&searchGUID=0abdd027f30a4361a69690f418f1a001>.

coordination efforts, surveillance and prevention activities, any infestations occurring within the U.S., and recommendations for improving the federal response until USDA certifies that NWS has been quarantined south of the Darién Gap in Panama. Covered lands include those managed by the National Park Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Bureau of Land Management, Bureau of Reclamation, and Forest Service.

H.R. 8876 (Rep. Walberg), “Aquatic Invasive Species Control and Prevention Act of 2026”

Recreational fishing generates approximately \$230 billion in annual economic activity nationwide and supports more than 1.1 million jobs.³³ Aquatic invasive species (AIS), including silver carp, zebra mussels, blue catfish, and sea lamprey, threaten fisheries by degrading aquatic habitats and reducing fishing and boating opportunities.³⁴ For example, in the Great Lakes region, one sea lamprey can consume up to 40 pounds of fish, such as salmon, steelhead, and lake trout, over the course of its adult life.³⁵ Similarly, in the Chesapeake Bay, invasive blue catfish consume and outcompete species like striped bass and white perch, reducing recreational fishing opportunities throughout the region. AIS also impose significant economic costs on outdoor recreation and critical water infrastructure, including irrigation systems, hydropower facilities, and water supply networks.³⁶ Managing and preventing the spread of AIS is a shared responsibility among all 50 states and numerous federal agencies.



Figure 6: Lake trout with severe sea lamprey wounds.

Source: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Sponsored by Representative Tim Walberg (R-MI-07), H.R. 8876 amends the Nonindigenous Aquatic Nuisance Prevention and Control Act of 1990 to expand efforts to prevent, control, and eradicate AIS.³⁷ The bill establishes competitive grant programs to support states, Tribes, local governments, institutions of higher education, and other eligible entities in preventing, detecting, managing, and eradicating AIS.³⁸ The legislation authorizes funding to develop new detection and control technologies, supports rapid response efforts when new infestations are discovered, and encourages innovation in ballast water treatment systems and other methods for limiting the spread of AIS.³⁹

³³ “New Report Highlights Sportfishing Industry’s Expanding Economic Impact,” American Sportfishing Association, March 12, 2025, asafishing.org/industry/sportfishing-economic-impact.

³⁴ *Support for the Aquatic Invasive Species Control and Prevention Act of 2026*, Letter to Representatives Tim Walberg and Sarah Elfreth, May 19, 2026, American Sportfishing Association, <https://asafishing.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/05/AIS-Control-and-Prevention-Act-Sign-on.pdf>.

³⁵ *Id.*

³⁶ *Id.*

³⁷ H.R. 8876, 119th Congress, <https://www.congress.gov/119/bills/hr8876/BILLS-119hr8876ih.pdf>.

³⁸ *Id.*

³⁹ *Id.*

H.R. 8876 also directs the Aquatic Nuisance Species Task Force to identify high-risk waterways, improve monitoring and surveillance, and develop national plans for watercraft inspection and decontamination programs, recognizing that recreational boats and commercial vessels are among the primary pathways for spreading invasive species between water bodies. In total, the bill authorizes \$49.5 million annually for FY 2026 through FY 2031 to administer the programs.⁴⁰

IV. MAJOR PROVISIONS & ANALYSIS

H.R. 9621 (Rep. Baumgartner), “Northwest Endangered Salmon Predation Prevention Act of 2026”

Section 2. Adaptive Pinniped Management.

- Amends Section 120(f) of the MMPA to provide more flexibility to the four Tribes of the CRITFC, as well as the states of Washington, Oregon, and Idaho, to permit adaptive management of pinniped populations in the Columbia River Basin. This section removes previous geographic limitations on where management activities can occur, helping to restore ESA-listed salmon and steelhead populations.
- Adds a new subsection to section 120 of the MMPA to provide similar management authorities to the state of Washington and federally recognized Tribes with treaty-reserved fishing rights in western Washington.

H.R. 7332 (Rep. Matsui), “Whale CHARTS Act of 2026”

Section 2. Mapping, Surveying, Monitoring, and Mitigation Program for Migratory Whales and Other Large Cetaceans.

- Amends an existing NOAA program created under the NDAA to focus on mapping, surveying, monitoring, and mitigation of vessel strikes with large whales and cetaceans.
- Directs NOAA to work with the Marine Mammal Commission to produce distribution maps and predictive, forward-looking distribution maps for stocks, populations, or species of migratory whales as NOAA determines appropriate.
- Creates a pilot project to monitor the North Atlantic right whale to help inform the program with the Marine Mammal Commission.
- Creates a grant program administered by NOAA and the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation to develop and support activities that reduce lethal and sub-lethal interactions between ocean users and migratory whales and other large cetaceans.

⁴⁰ *Id.*

H.R. 7466 (Rep. Jackson of TX), “Safeguarding America’s Food Economy and Controlling Agricultural Threats to Livestock and Enterprises Act” or the “SAFE CATTLE Act”

Section 2. Interagency Cooperation on New World Screwworm Eradication and Monitoring Activities.

- Directs USDA and DOI to enter into an MOU or other interagency agreement within 180 days of enactment to coordinate activities to prevent, control, and eradicate NWS in wildlife and other non-livestock animal species on covered federal lands.

H.R. 8876 (Rep. Walberg), “Aquatic Invasive Species Control and Prevention Act of 2026”

Section 2. Aquatic Nuisance Species.

- Establishes competitive grant programs to support states, Tribes, local governments, institutions of higher education, and other eligible entities in preventing, detecting, managing, and eradicating AIS.
- Authorizes funding for the development of new detection and control technologies and supports rapid response efforts when new infestations are discovered.
- Directs the Aquatic Nuisance Species Task Force to identify high-risk waterways, improve monitoring and surveillance, and develop national plans for watercraft inspection and decontamination programs, recognizing that recreational boats and commercial vessels are among the primary pathways for spreading invasive species between water bodies
- Authorizes \$49.5 million annually for FY 2026 through 2031 to carry out the programs.

Section 3. Use of Grant Awards Under Coastal Aquatic Invasive Species Mitigation Grant Program to Encourage Installation of Certain Ballast Water Management Systems.

- Encourages innovation in ballast water treatment systems and other methods for limiting the spread of AIS.

V. COST

The Congressional Budget Office has not provided a cost estimate for any of these bills.

VI. ADMINISTRATION POSITION

The Administration’s position on these issues is unknown at this time.

VII. EFFECT ON CURRENT LAW

H.R. 7332

H.R. 8876

H.R. 9621