

anti-stalking laws have been passed in all 50 States and the District of Columbia which have further been supplemented the Violence Against Women's Act and the Interstate Stalking Punishment and Prevention Act of 1996.

Mr. Speaker, hearings held within the Judiciary Committee have revealed that stalking is a much bigger problem than previously assumed and should be treated as a major criminal justice problem and public health concern. Stalkers often do not threaten their victims verbally or in writing; therefore, many groups have recommended that credible threat requirements should be eliminated from anti-stalking statutes to make it easier to prosecute such cases. This bill would address these concerns and provide adequate protection to the potential victims.

I commend the sponsors of this legislation and urge my colleagues to support final passage of this bill.

Mr. BACHUS. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BARRETT of Nebraska). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Alabama (Mr. BACHUS) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 1869, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds having voted in favor thereof) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

ARCTIC TUNDRA HABITAT EMERGENCY CONSERVATION ACT

Mr. SAXTON. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and concur in the Senate amendments to the bill (H.R. 2454) to assure the long-term conservation of mid-continent light geese and the biological diversity of the ecosystem upon which many North American migratory birds depend, by directing the Secretary of the Interior to implement rules to reduce the overabundant population of mid-continent light geese.

The Clerk read as follows:

Senate amendments:

Page 5, after line 24, insert:

SEC. 4. COMPREHENSIVE MANAGEMENT PLAN.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than the end of the period described in section 103(b), the Secretary shall prepare, and as appropriate implement, a comprehensive, long-term plan for the management of mid-continent light geese and the conservation of their habitat.

(b) REQUIRED ELEMENTS.—The plan shall apply principles of adaptive resource management and shall include—

(1) a description of methods for monitoring the levels of populations and the levels of harvest of mid-continent light geese, and recommendations concerning long-term harvest levels;

(2) recommendations concerning other means for the management of mid-continent light goose populations, taking into account the reasons for the population growth specified in section 102(a)(3);

(3) an assessment of, and recommendations relating to, conservation of the breeding habitat of mid-continent light geese;

(4) an assessment of, and recommendations relating to, conservation of native species of wildlife adversely affected by the overabundance of mid-continent light geese, including the species specified in section 102(a)(5); and

(5) an identification of methods for promoting collaboration with the government of Canada, States, and other interested persons.

(c) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There is authorized to be appropriated to carry out this section \$1,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2000 through 2002.

Page 6, line 1, strike out "SEC. 4." and insert "SEC. 5."

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SAXTON) and the gentleman from American Samoa (Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SAXTON).

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. SAXTON. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on this legislation.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from New Jersey?

There was no objection.

Mr. SAXTON. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased that we are once again considering H.R. 2454, the Arctic Tundra Habitat Conservation Act. This bipartisan legislation addresses the devastating impact that an exploding population of snow geese, also known as light geese, is having on the fragile Canadian Arctic Tundra.

Mr. Speaker, I am going to be very brief. I would like to say that this bill was debated and reported from the subcommittee. It was debated and reported from the full Committee on Resources. It was debated here on the floor and passed by a voice vote. It went to the Senate, where an amendment was added to provide for some long-term strategies relative to this subject and is back here for concurrence.

This is an essential stopgap measure that is supported by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, by Ducks Unlimited, by the International Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies, by the National Audubon Society, by the National Rifle Association, the Wildlife Management Institute, and the Wildlife Legislative Fund for America.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, I want to express my sincere appreciation to Senator Spencer ABRAHAM for his assistance in moving this important proposal. I am confident that early next year we will have a full debate on the Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Act. This was an excellent measure that was introduced by Senator ABRAHAM and the distinguished gentleman from Alaska (Mr. YOUNG), our full committee chairman.

Mr. Speaker, I urge an "aye" vote and I anticipate no further speakers on our side.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, as always, I want to express my appreciation to the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SAXTON), the chairman of our Subcommittee on Fisheries Conservation, Wildlife and Oceans, for his leadership and for bringing this legislation now for consideration.

Mr. Speaker, sometimes our best efforts to restore wildlife populations create unintended consequences and that seems to be the unfortunate case with mid-continent light geese. According to biologists inside and outside of the Federal Government, the population of light geese has exploded over the past decade. This has caused substantial destruction to fragile Arctic and sub-Arctic habits.

Indisputably, human actions are partly to blame for the growth of the light geese population. And for better or worse, human actions will be pivotal to the future control of these migratory birds.

H.R. 2454, the Arctic Tundra Habitat Emergency Conservation Act basically authorizes two emergency regulations that were proposed earlier this year by the Fish and Wildlife Service. These emergency measures were strongly supported by State wildlife management agencies and a broad assortment of private wildlife and conservation organizations, including Ducks Unlimited and the National Audubon Society.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased that the gentleman from Alaska (Mr. YOUNG), chairman of our Committee on Resources, and the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SAXTON) have agreed to include an expiration date of May 15, 2001, or earlier if the service files its final environmental impact statement before that date, to limit the duration of this emergency action. I am also pleased to see that the Senate amended the bill to require the Fish and Wildlife Service to develop and implement a comprehensive management plan for mid-continent light geese and their habitats.

We have also come to recognize in the version of H.R. 2454 that was reported to the Senate by the Committee on Environmental and Public Works included a second title that would have authorized a program for the conservation and management of neotropical migratory birds. But considering the changes that have been made to the bill in the committee and by the Senate, Mr. Speaker, I am satisfied that the bill has been sufficiently narrowed to limit excessive light geese mortality while the Fish and Wildlife Service

completes its environmental impact statement and develops a long-term comprehensive management plan. It is not ideal, but it is reasonable under the circumstances. And I do urge my colleagues to pass this legislation.

Mr. Speaker, sometimes our best efforts to restore wildlife populations create unintended consequences, and that seems to be the unfortunate case with mid-continent light geese. According to biologists—from inside and outside of the Federal government—the population of light geese has exploded over the past decade. This has caused substantial destruction to fragile arctic and subarctic habitats.

Indisputably, human actions are partly to blame for the growth of the light geese population. And for better or worse, human actions will be pivotal in the future control of these migratory birds.

H.R. 2454, the Arctic Tundra Habitat Emergency Conservation Act, basically authorizes two emergency regulations that were proposed earlier this year by the Fish and Wildlife Service. These emergency measures were strongly supported by State wildlife management agencies and a broad assortment of private wildlife and conservation organizations, including Ducks Unlimited and the National Audubon Society.

The Fish and Wildlife Service voluntarily withdrew these proposed regulations earlier this year after a Federal appeals court ruled that the Service needed to complete a full environmental impact statement (EIS). At that time, I joined the ranking Democrat member of the Resources Committee, Mr. MILLER, in commending the Service for pausing to recognize the need to develop a full environmental impact statement.

Mr. Speaker, it is vital for the Service to complete this EIS at the earliest possible date. More specifically, as part of this EIS, is it absolutely critical for the Service to thoroughly review all essential biological and ecological data concerning light geese. It is my understanding that additional census data and statistical analyses concerning lesser snow geese could shed new light on the status and trends of the light geese population. The Service should consider this data thoroughly as part of this EIS.

Frankly Mr. Speaker, without the best available scientific data, we will never be able to address the problem of habitat degradation in the arctic and subarctic habitats. And without that analysis, Congress can never be sure that the management and population control strategies we authorize are necessarily targeted and free of excess light geese mortality.

It also needs to be re-emphasized that Congress is legislating in this matter solely because all other administrative options available to the Fish and Wildlife Service—under NEPA or any other statute—have been exhausted. Regrettably, the only remedy remaining is a legislative fix.

Fortunately, the bill has been improved during the legislative process. Nevertheless, I remain concerned about two provisions. First, the bill would waive all procedural requirements under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). Second, the bill authorizes the use of otherwise outlawed hunting practices,

notably the use of electronic calling devices and un-plugged shotguns.

I realize that we have agreed to move this bill due to the documented habitat loss and the absence of any administrative remedies. However, I continue to question whether it is ever appropriate for the Congress to pass legislation to waive NEPA or to authorize otherwise illegal, or certainly, unsportsmen-like hunting methods.

I am pleased that the Chairman of the Resources Committee, Mr. YOUNG and Mr. SAXTON agreed to include an expiration date of May 15, 2001, or earlier if the Service files its final EIS before that date, to limit the duration of this emergency action. I am also pleased to see that the Senate amended the bill to require the Fish and Wildlife Service to develop and implement a comprehensive management plan for mid-continent light geese and their habitats.

Certainly, in an ideal world it would have been far preferable to first require the Fish and Wildlife Service to complete the plan before authorizing emergency measures. But in light of the circumstances, it is my hope that an effective plan will make the need for future legislation regarding emergency management of these species unnecessary.

We have also come to recognize that the version of H.R. 2454 that was reported to the Senate by the Committee on Environment and Public Works included a second title that would have authorized a program for the conservation and management of neotropical migratory birds. This title closely resembled legislation passed by the House on April 12, H.R. 39, the Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Act. Surprisingly, this bill has not been scheduled for floor action this session.

It is my understanding that the Senate agreed to remove this second title after the Chairman of the Committee on Resources assured the Senate that he will work with his leadership to ensure that H.R. 39 is brought to the House floor next year for a vote. I sincerely hope that Chairman YOUNG can bring the Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Act before the House early next year, and I look forward to working with him to pass this important legislation.

Let me close simply by restating my concern—and the concern of many of my colleagues on this side of the aisle—that it is unfortunate that Congress is compelled to authorize these emergency actions to control the light geese population.

But considering the changes that have been made to the bill in committee and by the Senate, I am satisfied that the bill has been sufficiently narrowed to limit excessive light geese mortality while the Fish and Wildlife Service completes its EIS and develops a long-term comprehensive management plan. It is not ideal, but it is reasonable under the circumstances, and I urge my colleagues to pass this legislation.

Mr. DINGELL. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of the legislation being offered today by the gentleman from New Jersey [Mr. SAXTON]. I want to commend him and the Chairman of the full Committee [Mr. YOUNG] for their diligence in working with the other body to assure that Congress acts on this vital legislation before the end of the session.

H.R. 2454, the “Arctic Tundra Habitat Emergency Conservation Act,” quite simply is trying to head off an unmitigated conservation disaster for white geese, including greater and lesser snow geese and Ross’ geese.

During the past three decades, these mid-continent snow geese species populations have literally exploded, from an estimated 800,000 in 1969 to more than five million today.

This dramatic increase has resulted in the devastation of nearly 50,000 acres of snow geese habitat around Canada’s Hudson Bay. This tundra habitat, most of which comprises a coastal salt marsh, is vital for nesting. As the snow geese proliferate and consume this habitat, other populations of birds are also placed at risk by this loss of habitat.

A special report issued in January, 1998 by Ducks Unlimited provides a good example of the depth and the breadth of the problem. In studies conducted in Churchill, Manitoba, there were 2,000 nesting pairs in 1968. In 1997, that number grew to more than 40,000 pairs. The result is a cruel fate for the birds, particularly the thousands of orphaned, malnourished and eventually dead goslings who cannot survive on barren tundra.

Together with expected population increases is another vexing problem: recovery of habitat, destroyed by overfeeding at this far-north latitude, is expected to take at least 15 years; it will take even longer if some of the acreage continues to be foraged by geese during the recovery period.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has been working for a few years in partnership with the Canadian Wildlife Service, several state departments of Fish and Game, Ducks Unlimited, the Audubon Society and other non-governmental entities to try to address the problem. In February of this year, the Fish and Wildlife Service issued two final rules to authorize the use of additional hunting methods to reduce the population of snow geese so that a reasonable population can survive on a viable habitat. The goal was to reduce the number of mid-continent light geese in the first year by 975,000 using additional hunting methods carefully studied and approved by the Fish and Wildlife Service.

It is clear that human decision making has contributed mightily to the light geese problem through increased agricultural production, sanctuary designation, and reduction in harvest rates.

Mr. Speaker, the bill before us takes an affirmative and humane step to help assure the long-term survival of mid-continent light geese and the conservation of the habitat upon which they and other species depend. I urge my colleagues to support this important bill, and I pledge my support toward making sure the President signs it.

Mr. F.ALEOMAVAEGA. Mr. Speaker, I have no further speakers, so I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. SAXTON. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SAXTON) that the House suspend the rules and concur in the Senate amendments to the bill, H.R. 2454.