NATIONAL WILDLIFE FEDERATION

INSPIRING AMERICANS TO PROTECT WILDLIFE FOR OUR CHILDREN'S FUTURE.

Fact Sheet

PROTECTING AND RESTORING WILDLIFE HABITAT

Carbon Pollution: A Game Changer for America's Hunting and Fishing Heritage

CLIMATE CHANGE

Carbon pollution from coal-burning power plants, refineries, and vehicles is causing worldwide climate change. America's wildlife is threatened by these assaults unknown until modern times. Fish are disappearing from lakes and streams, big game populations are being pushed out of their historic range, and duck wetland habitats are vanishing. From sea level to the highest mountain peaks, entire ecosystems are in retreat.

Changes from carbon pollution are leading to direct habitat loss as well as more insidious changes, such as decreases in snowpack that result in a massive loss of fish spawning sites and increased summertime temperatures that will change the wildlife communities of forests and streams forever. Many wildlife species are struggling to adapt. Some never will.

In a single generation, the future of fish and game is changing. Scientists predict that rising global temperatures could move 30% of all plant and wildlife species toward extinction in the lifetime of a child born today.[1] Taking action to reduce carbon pollution and confront our climate crisis will greatly benefit wildlife and our outdoor heritage.

America has a choice: Clean air, clean water, and healthy wildlife populations, or a polluted future where the only winners are special interests. This nation's core of conservationists, hunters, and anglers has a proud legacy of working to protect wildlife and must continue to do so as our world warms.

THE CLEAN AIR ACT WORKS

Passed by Congress with overwhelming bi-partisan support 40 years ago, the Clean Air Act has been one of the starting points for our country's proud legacy of environmental protection. This act has a strong and proven track record of protecting our lakes, forests, wildlife, national parks, and other natural treasures from the devastating impacts of air pollution while allowing our economy to prosper.

Modern threats of carbon pollution will change the game for American hunters and anglers. The Clean Air Act is a critical tool that we need available to significantly reduce this carbon pollution that is wreaking havoc on wildlife.

Now, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) plans to update the nation's pollution standards to address the wildlife impacts caused by the carbon pollution that leads to climate change. It is essential that EPA move forward on this important work to protect wildlife and our outdoor heritage from the worst effects of a climate change.

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Massachusetts: Wildlife Icons at Risk

Carbon pollution from coal-burning power plants is causing world-wide climate change. In Massachusetts, climate change will include higher annual average temperatures, more frequent heavy precipitation events, and rising sea level and sea surface temperatures.[2] Changes in the earth's climate directly threaten two pastimes treasured in Massachusetts and across our nation – recreational fishing and hunting.

In 2006, 500,000 anglers and 70,000 hunters came to Massachusetts to hunt and fish on its lands and waters. Fishing and hunting are not just recreational pastimes; they are also a major contributor to the Massachusetts economy. These 570,000 sportsmen and women generated over $800 million in revenue in that year alone.[3] However, this rich community of fish and game, and the economy that depends on it, is at risk from a warming world.

Striped Bass

The comeback of the striped bass has been heralded as one of the great conservation success stories of the last 100 years. Stripers, also known as "rockfish," live as adults in the open ocean, and migrate up coastal rivers to spawn in the spring. Few gamefish require such vastly different habitats. A warming climate could lead to sea-level rise that would decimate the coastal marshes that serve as nurseries for juvenile striped bass. And warmer waters can have a cascade of ill effects on fish. Fish can bioaccumulate toxic chemicals more quickly at higher temperatures, and research has shown that striped bass with higher loads of organochlorines produced fewer viable offspring.

Black Duck

American black ducks hold a special place in the hearts of duck hunters. Big, brawny, and revered as one of the craftiest of all ducks, black ducks are considered a true trophy on the wing. But even its legendary wariness won't protect the black duck from a one-two punch of climate change and acid rain. One-third of the 165 species of wetlands breeding birds show medium or high vulnerability to climate change, and black ducks have been identified as particularly susceptible to sea-level rise associated with a warming climate.

For American hunters, anglers, and conservationists healthy populations of wildlife are necessary to support our economy and outdoor heritage. It remains critical to speak up for Massachusetts's iconic species and encourage the Environmental Protection Agency to update the nation's pollution standards.

The EPA must carry out its legal obligation to control carbon pollution that causes climate change from our country's biggest polluters and Congress must oppose all attempts to undermine Clean Air Act programs.

For more information visit the full report: www.nwf.org/gamechangers
Act to protect wildlife from climate change: www.nwf.org/cleanair

[1] Climate Change 2007: Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability. Contribution of Working Group II to the Fourth Assessment Report of the IPCC.
[2] Global Climate Change Impacts in the United States. http://downloads.globalchange.gov/usimpacts/pdfs/northeast.pdf.
[3] U.S. Department of the Interior, Fish and Wildlife Service, and U.S. Department of Commerce, U.S. Census Bureau. 2006 National Survey of Fishing, Hunting, and Wildlife-Associated Recreation – Massachusetts.