



SUSQUEHANNOCK WILDLIFE SOCIETY



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February 26, 2024

Delegate Ruth et al.
Maryland House of Delegates
251 Taylor House Office Building
6 Bladen Street
Annapolis, MD 21401

Dear Delegate Ruth, Stein, Palakovich Carr, Allen, Ebersole, Fair, Foley, Lehman, Terrasa, Vogel, Watson, Ziegler, and members of the Environment and Transportation Committee,

I am writing on the behalf of Susquehannock Wildlife Society, to express the need for the Wildlife - Protections and Road Crossings Bill (HB 1129), sponsored by Delegate Ruth, to move this bill favorably from committee.

Most people have experienced seeing a wild animal scurry across a road or have seen a hawk fly over the interstate at some point in their lives. These experiences are how most of the population interacts with wild animals, and it may seem that wildlife is living in harmony with human-made structures, such as roads when we have these experiences. Unfortunately, this is far from the truth because roads are affecting populations of wild animals in many detrimental ways.

Roads threaten the persistence of wild animal populations and their habitats in many direct and indirect ways. Roads directly cause increased numbers of deaths among wild animal populations when individuals attempt to cross roads and are crushed by vehicles. Unfortunately, death on roads can cause wild animal populations to decline. In some species, such as turtles, females are disproportionately killed on road because they travel long distances to nesting sites; this can lead to skewed sex ratios, throwing off the balance of a population, leading to local extinction. Some species are killed on roads more often than others due to their sensitivity to disturbance and population structures, which may make them more susceptible to population declines caused by additive death of reproductive adults. For example, reptiles and amphibians are more likely to experience population declines due to roads, compared to other species, because they migrate seasonally on land, are small bodied and therefore may be overlooked by drivers, and their populations are typically sensitive to increased mortality rates. Indirectly, roads affect animal

populations by restricting the exchange of individuals between populations and altering the hydrology of the aquatic systems that they bisect, which can lead to increased amounts of runoff that may contain harmful chemicals, salts, and heavy metals that can affect the survival of wild animals and the environments they inhabit in many ways. Since roads pose an amalgam of threats to wild animal populations, it is crucial that we take action to eliminate and minimize these threats so we can maintain the biodiversity that adds so much beauty and depth to the unique State of Maryland.

Susquehannock Wildlife Society exists to protect wildlife through public education, conservation efforts, rescue, research or legislation, and we will stand as a helping hand and voice for wildlife. We believe that conserving wild animal populations is pertinent to maintaining the magnificence of natural communities in Maryland and fully supports the Wildlife - Protections and Road Crossings (HB 1129) bill because it has such high potential to positively impact the fauna of Maryland by reducing wild animal deaths on roads and mitigating the threats roads have on wild animals.

Fortunately, The Wildlife - Protections and Road Crossings (HB 1129) will enable the State of Maryland to implement wildlife crossings and other adaptive management strategies that have proven to be successful at reducing roadkill in other states and countries. This bill presents a unique and felicitous opportunity for the State of Maryland to invest in the future of our natural history and assure that future generations of Maryland residents will have the privilege of experiencing the grandeur of witnessing a hawk soar over the interstate, a turtle crossing the road, and a fox dashing along the median with its pups.

I appreciate your time and thank you for considering my written testimony on this very important topic.

I implore you to support The Wildlife - Protections and Road Crossings (HB 1129) Bill.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John Garrison". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "John" being more prominent than the last name "Garrison".

John Garrison
Conservation Director
Susquehannock Wildlife Society
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