



January 24, 2022

## **HB0015: Invasive and Native Plants—Classification, Listing, Use, and Sales and Use Tax**

### **Position: Support: HB0015**

The Maryland Ornithological Society (MOS) asks that the House Ways and Means Committee give a favorable report of HB0015 and move it to the full House.

MOS supports this bill as it will promote the use of native plants over non-native. Studies have confirmed that native bird species prefer, and prosper in habitats with native plants, and suffer in those dominated by non-native plants. Wood Thrush and Veery, species of greatest conservation need, respond positively to increased native vegetation.<sup>1</sup> Nonnative plant landscapes also negatively affect reproduction in birds.<sup>2</sup> For these reasons, we support the bill, as it would promote native plantings, and benefit the birds we admire and seek to protect.

A recent study showed that North America lost 3 billion birds, 29% of its total bird population, since the 1970s.<sup>3</sup> According to the Maryland Bird Conservation Partnership (MBCP), “Maryland (has) features that support an impressive diversity of ecosystems, habitats, and species...(and) due to a variety of threats, some 143 species of birds have been recognized as ‘Species of Greatest Conservation Need’”<sup>4</sup>.

The diversity of bird species and their habitats is under increasing threat. Unless concerted efforts are taken in the near future Maryland will lose some of its greatest assets – healthy natural systems and the wide range of birds, plants, and other wildlife that they support. Maryland risks economic impact as well as a decrease in quality of life. An estimated 900,000 residents and non-residents enjoy birding in the state. While Marylanders generated \$483 million from wildlife-watching

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<sup>1</sup> Conover, A., et al, Effects of Nonnative Plants on Bird Communities in Suburban Forest Fragments, 07/17/2019,  
[https://www.nrs.fs.fed.us/disturbance/invasive\\_species/nonnative\\_plants\\_birds/](https://www.nrs.fs.fed.us/disturbance/invasive_species/nonnative_plants_birds/)

<sup>2</sup> Narango, L. et al, Nonnative plants reduce population growth of an insectivorous bird., PNAS, November 6, 2018,  
<https://www.pnas.org/content/pnas/115/45/11549.full.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> Rosenberg, et al, Decline of the North American Avifauna, Science, vol 366, issue 6461, pp. 120-124, 4 October 2019,  
<https://science.sciencemag.org/content/366/6461/120>

<sup>4</sup> Maryland Bird Conservation Partnership, Maryland Species of Greatest Conservation Need, <https://marylandbirds.org/md-species-of-concern>

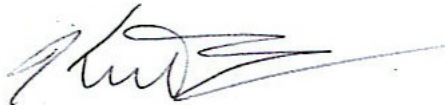
activities in 2011, the Total Industrial Output (TIO), which includes, direct, indirect, and induced effects, totaled over \$909 million, produced 10,807 full- and part-time jobs, and generated \$88.4 million in state and local tax revenue. Nationally, Americans who watch and feed birds contribute \$41 billion to the nation's economy every year.<sup>5</sup>

Birds provide invaluable ecological services in areas of pest control, seed dispersal, and pollination. The immediate threats to their survival and a disruption to our symbiotic relationship with them are matters of great importance for a variety of reasons.

We therefore ask you to support and pass the Invasive and Native Plants bill HB0015.

MOS is a Maryland-based volunteer organization of some 1800 members, with 15 chapters in Maryland. We are devoted to the study and preservation of birds and their habitat.

Sincerely,



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<sup>5</sup> US Fish and Wildlife Service, Economic Impact: Birds, Birdwatching and the U.S. Economy, November 16, 2017, <https://www.fws.gov/birds/bird-enthusiasts/bird-watching/valuing-birds.php>