On behalf of our 236 accredited facilities located in 169 congressional districts, 45 states, the District of Columbia, and 10 countries, we invite you to join the Congressional Zoo and Aquarium Caucus to advance our conservation science and education mission. The goals of the Caucus are to:

- Recognize the impact of America’s zoos and aquariums as they promote science education, conservation and family recreation;
- Foster appreciation for the work of zoos and aquariums as they inspire stewardship, caring and discovery through engaging exhibits and conservation education programs; and
- Promote zoos and aquariums as centers of excellence in science and environmental education, and natural partners with public schools.

To join the Congressional Zoo and Aquarium Caucus, please contact Alexander Beckmann with Representative Lipinski at Alexander.Beckmann@mail.house.gov or Alan Feyerherm with Representative Fortenberry at Alan.Feyerherm@mail.house.gov.

For more information about the Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA), please contact AZA Vice President for Congressional Affairs, Jennifer Keaton, at jkeaton@aza.org.

Visit www.aza.org for more information.
Congressional Zoo & Aquarium Caucus
(116th Congress)

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Total: 62

www.aza.org
The **Save Vanishing Species Semipostal Stamp**, created by Congress and sold by the U.S. Postal Service (USPS), enables consumers to support wildlife conservation every time they send a letter. This stamp, commonly referred to as the “Tiger Stamp,” is used exactly like regular first-class postage, but costs just 10 cents more. Since the stamp first went on sale in 2011, almost 49 million have been sold, raising $5.4 million for international conservation efforts at no cost to US taxpayers.

The stamp was unveiled publicly by USPS in 2011 and has provided funds for more than 100 species conservation projects in 35 countries. While about 50 million printed stamps remain in stock, the USPS elected to discontinue selling them at the end of 2018. S. 652, introduced by Sens. Rob Portman (R-OH) and Tom Udall (D-NM), and H.R. 1446, introduced by Reps. William Lacy Clay (D-MO) and Jeff Fortenberry (R-NE), would extend sale of the stamp for as long as copies remain.

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**How Does The Stamp Work?**

The Tiger Stamp is a “semi-postal” first class stamp. Postal patrons can use it to send mail just like any other first class stamp. The only difference is that it costs just a little extra — currently 10 cents more than first class postage. The USPS keeps all of the first class value of every stamp sold and just enough of the additional proceeds to cover the costs of developing, printing and marketing the stamp. This assures that the Tiger Stamp is available at no additional cost to taxpayers. The remaining funds that are generated from Tiger Stamp sales are directed into supporting conservation efforts that save vulnerable species worldwide.

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**Where Does the Money Go?**

Revenues from the stamp are allocated to the Multinational Species Conservation Funds (MSCF), a group of five Congressionally-created programs dedicated to saving several iconic species, including African and Asian elephants, rhinos, tigers, great apes and sea turtles. Since the first fund was created in 1989, MSCF has awarded over 4,300 grants in over 54 countries. These funds often leverage as much as 3 dollars for every federal dollar invested. MSCF enjoys strong support from the American public and from a broad coalition including conservation groups, zoos, aquariums, circuses, sportsmen, veterinarians and animal rights organizations.
The Tiger Stamp has funded about 100 projects in 35 countries totaling about $5.4 million. This sum was matched by almost $19 million in additional leveraged funds. These projects include:

- Training and deploying dogs to track and capture elephant poachers teams in Virunga National Park, the oldest national park in Africa and one that has been hard hit by wildlife traffickers in recent years.
- Reintroduction of endangered orangutans into the landscape on the island of Borneo in Indonesia with the support of local communities and stakeholders.
- Training and equipping special operations teams to protect tigers in India, and working with local NGOs and communities to monitor the remaining tiger populations.

Please join more than 30 conservation, sportsmen, zoos, entertainment, and animal welfare organizations representing millions of constituents in support of efforts to renew the Save Vanishing Species semipostal stamp. Ensure that this critical, consumer-driven approach to funding wildlife conservation is remains available.

*Since its release in 2011, nearly 49 million stamps have been sold, raising $5.4 million for the five Multinational Species Conservation Funds.

(‘sales figures current as of September 2018)

**The Tiger Stamp:**

- Is a popular, market-based revenue source that gives the public the choice to support efforts to combat wildlife trafficking and to conserve vulnerable species.
- Has been matched more than 3-to-1 by other funding sources, including NGOs, foundations, donors, foreign governments and local communities.
- Provides an additional funding tool for U.S. Postal Service, as every unused or collected stamp is 100% profit for the postal system.
Some of the world’s most treasured wild animals are rapidly diminishing in number. Poaching, habitat loss, and other pressures continue to push them towards extinction. To save these species, Congress created the Multinational Species Conservation Fund (MSCF). Managed for 30 years by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), the five programs that make up the MSCF are helping conserve some of the world’s most iconic species: elephants, rhinos, tigers, great apes, and marine turtles. Working with partners in Africa, Asia, Latin America, and the Caribbean, these U.S. government programs are making a big difference, proving that species can recover when there is dedicated support for habitat conservation, wildlife management, public education, anti-poaching patrols, and other necessary interventions.

Thanks to strong bipartisan support for the program in the House and Senate, funding in the Interior Appropriations bill has been maintained through several difficult budget years. But without continued support from Members of Congress, recent progress made to fight poaching, combat wildlife trafficking, and save these iconic species in the wild may be reversed.

The need for these programs has never been greater:

- The Great Elephant Census results released in 2016 documented about 350,000 African savanna elephants in 18 major range countries—a decline of 150,000 in just seven years.
- Fewer than 40,000 Asian elephants remain worldwide, a decline of at least 50% over the last 3 generations, as the species suffers from human-elephant conflict, habitat loss, and poaching.
- Gorilla populations declined by about 20 percent over an 8 year period according to a 2018 study, primarily due to habitat destruction, the bushmeat trade, illegal trade in live animals, and diseases such as ebola.
- Six of the seven marine turtle species are listed as endangered or threatened due to habitat loss, overfishing, and human exploitation for eggs and meat.
- Rhino poaching has skyrocketed, with more than 1,100 rhinos poached across Africa in 2017, a nearly 9,000% increase from 2007. Less than 30,000 remain.
- Fewer than 4,000 tigers remain in the wild, occupying only 7% of their historical range.

A track record of success

Although the problems are daunting, the MSCF has a strong record of successful, cost-effective partnerships. Since 1989, the FWS has provided more than 4,300 grants for international conservation totaling nearly $290 million. More than $442 million has been contributed by the agency’s nearly 900 partners in matching support for these grants, substantially increasing the impact of U.S. government funding.

In FY17 alone:
- $15 million was distributed to 196 projects spanning 3 continents.
- MSCF investments leveraged $27.3 million from partner governments, local NGOs, international conservation organizations, and private businesses, almost a 2-to-1 match of federal dollars.
- Low administrative costs ensured that more than 95% of appropriated funds were distributed through grants.
The MSCF has delivered impressive conservation results:

**African Elephant Conservation Fund (AfECF)**
In 2017, the AfECF funded efforts in partnership with the African Parks Foundation of America to protect elephants in Zakouma National Park in Chad, the largest surviving population of savanna elephants in Central Africa and the Sahel. Funds support aerial efforts to combat poaching, supply remote park personnel, and to survey and monitor elephants and other wildlife in the greater Zakouma area.

**Asian Elephant Conservation Fund (AsECF)**
Supported by AsECF and facilitated by International Elephant Foundation, IUCN’s Asian Elephant Specialist Group and others, the historic Asian Elephant Range States Meeting in 2017 provided a venue for government representatives from the 13 Asian countries which still have extant populations of wild elephants to improve cooperation in order to protect elephants in Asia as proclaimed in the resulting Jakarta Declaration For Asian Elephant Conservation.

**Rhinoceros/Tiger Conservation Fund (RTCF)**
In partnership with the International Rhino Foundation, RTCF is supporting Javan Rhino Protection Units in Ujung Kulon National Park in Indonesia, the habitat for the few dozen Javan rhinos remaining in the wild. Units play a critical role in the species’ survival, patrolling, monitoring, and surveying the full extent of the park to curtail the illegal hunting and trapping of protected wildlife and minimize the effects of human encroachment.

Habitat loss is a critical factor driving the decline of the Amur tiger, which resides in the intact forests of the Russian far east, northern China, and possibly North Korea. In partnership with the World Wildlife Fund, the RTCF is supporting an effort to develop ground teams and increasingly use technology to stop illegal logging in these forests, saving habitat for the remaining tigers and reducing the amount of illegal timber in the market, which competes with U.S. wood products in domestic and international markets.

**Great Ape Conservation Fund (GACF)**
In partnership with the Wildlife Conservation Society the GACF is supporting a 5-year project to secure the Cross River gorilla population–Africa’s most threatened great ape with fewer than 300 left–through an effective network of core protected areas and corridors linking habitat in Nigeria and Cameroon.

**Marine Turtle Conservation Fund (MTCF)**
The University of Alabama, Texas’s Gladys Porter Zoo, and other partners are working to continue and expand a long-term collaborative project on the critically endangered Kemp’s ridley sea turtle with an emphasis on evaluating the reproductive output of nesting females on beaches in Rancho Nuevo, Mexico, one of the few remaining nesting areas for the species.
Illicit wildlife trafficking is one of the top five transnational organized crimes, a multibillion-dollar illegal trade that is increasingly dominated by international criminal networks with connections to militant groups and organizations with terrorist ties. AZA-accredited facilities are working closely with government and international partners to combat the wildlife trafficking crisis.

H.R. 864, the “Wildlife Conservation and Anti-Trafficking Act,” would enhance the fight against wildlife trafficking by strengthening federal enforcement against poachers, traffickers, and the global trade in illegal wildlife and seafood products. The bill would:

- Direct federal agencies to finally implement authorities provided by current law to reward whistleblowers for wildlife crimes like trafficking, poaching, and black-market imports.
- Authorize the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to station law enforcement officials and agency personnel abroad in high-intensity wildlife trafficking areas, as embeds in American embassies and consulates.
- Provide monetary incentives for whistleblowers to come forward and provide actionable intelligence on global wildlife trafficking rings.
- Direct federal agencies to finally implement authorities provided by current law to reward whistleblowers for wildlife crimes like trafficking, poaching, and black-market imports.
- Direct any penalties, fines, forfeitures, and restitution paid to the U.S. government for criminal violations of the federal organized crime, racketeering, and money laundering statutes to support wildlife conservation efforts.
- Improve the Great Ape and Marine Turtle Conservation Funds, administered by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.
- Makes serious violations for illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing by foreign vessels or fraudulent seafood imports into the United States a predicate offense under the federal money laundering criminal law. According to the U.S. State Department, IUU fishing often goes hand-in-hand with transnational organized crime, human rights abuses such as human trafficking and forced labor, and weapons and drug trafficking.

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Founded in 1924, the AZA is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization dedicated to the advancement of zoos, aquariums, nature centers, and science centers in the areas of animal welfare, conservation, education, science, and recreation. The AZA is the independent accrediting organization for the premier zoos and aquariums in America and the world. AZA-accredited zoos and aquariums collectively draw more than 195 million visitors annually, generate more than $22 billion in annual economic activity, and support more than 208,000 jobs. They also spend annually $220 million on field conservation projects in 128 countries.

Visit www.aza.org for more information
The Association of Zoos and Aquariums
Supports the Endangered Species Act

- Scientists estimate that the total number of mammals, birds, reptiles, amphibians, and fish has declined by more than 50% since 1970, and many believe that we are living amidst the planet’s sixth mass extinction.

- Without critical intervention today, we are facing the very real possibility of losing some of our planet’s most magnificent creatures such as cheetahs, elephants, gorillas, sea turtles, and sharks.

- AZA-accredited zoos and aquariums have a unique responsibility to help others understand this crisis.

- The Endangered Species Act, which is recognized globally as a model for species preservation, has prevented the extinction of 99% of the species it protects since its inception in 1973.

- AZA-accredited facilities, working with partners through the Endangered Species Act, have played a significant role in bringing more than twenty-five species — including the black-footed ferret, Florida manatee, and California condor — back from the brink of extinction.

- With a reach to more than 195 million visitors annually, AZA-accredited zoos and aquariums have taken the lead on many critical issues affecting endangered species including combating wildlife trafficking.

- AZA-accredited facilities all share a deep commitment to the animals in our care and to conserving wildlife throughout the world.

- Species protection and conservation requires long-term commitment, and AZA-accredited zoos and aquariums have been working to save species for decades.

- It is through the ongoing work related to species recovery plans and protections afforded by the Endangered Species Act that we will conserve endangered and threatened species for future generations.

The AZA and its members fully support the Endangered Species Act and will work with Congress to assure that the agencies responsible for carrying out the mandates of the Act receive the necessary funding, human resource capacity, and regulatory flexibility to succeed.
North Atlantic right whales are critically endangered, with fewer than 425 whales remaining. Historically, the North Atlantic right whale population was decimated by the whaling industry. Despite protection from whaling beginning in the 1930s, the North Atlantic right whale is one of the most endangered whales in the world and has experienced a significant decline since 2010.

Even when North Atlantic right whales do not die as a result of fishing gear entanglement, those whales can still experience significant sub-lethal effects such as chronic stress and reproductive failure. North Atlantic right whales are long-lived and highly migratory. At present rates, females give birth to a single calf only once every four to ten years, and they are highly vulnerable to the impacts of human activity and habitat destruction.

H.R. 1568, the “SAVE Right Whales Act,” would establish a new grant program to fund collaborative projects among states, nongovernmental organizations, and members of the fishing and shipping industries to reduce the impacts of human activities on North Atlantic right whales. The bill would:

- Create a new grant program at the Department of Commerce to fund projects designed to reduce the impact of human activities on the North Atlantic right whale, and authorize $5 million annually from 2019-2029 in new funding.
- Specify that state and tribal agencies, research institutions, nonprofit organizations, and any other individual or entity with the expertise required for North Atlantic right whale conservation may apply for grants.
- Direct the Secretary of Commerce to prioritize projects specifically designed to reduce the lethal and sub-lethal effects of human activities on the whales while also prioritizing collaborative projects with members of the fishing and shipping industries.
- Require annual reports to Congress on the results and effectiveness of the grant program.

Please cosponsor H.R. 1568, the “SAVE Right Whales Act,” to help conserve this critically endangered species.

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Visit www.aza.org for more information
The Endangered Species Act (ESA), which is recognized globally as a model for species preservation, has prevented the extinction of 99% of the species it protects since its inception in 1973. AZA-accredited facilities, working with partners through the ESA, have played a significant role in bringing more than twenty-five species — including the black-footed ferret, Florida manatee, and California condor — back from the brink of extinction.

Other successful ongoing recovery and reintroduction initiatives with AZA members include the American Burying Beetle, the Golden Lion Tamarin, the American red wolf, the Karner blue butterfly, multiple fresh water mussels species, and many others. The unique expertise and experience of our members is unparalleled and has proved extremely valuable to species recovery.

The ESA Recovery Challenge Grant program was created in FY2018 in recognition of the critically important role of nonprofit partners in the US Fish and Wildlife Service’s endangered species recovery efforts. The program is a mechanism, through merit-based matching grants, to provide funding in a more commensurate manner to support and enhance these efforts. ESA Recovery Challenge Grants are limited to nonprofit organizations implementing the highest priority recovery actions identified in recovery plans, such as for genetically-sound breeding, rearing, and reintroduction programs.

The AZA supports the inclusion of $8,000,000 for the ESA Recovery Challenge Grant program in the FY2020 Interior Environment, and Related Agencies appropriations bill. This funding will enable critical recovery partnerships to sustain their work so that we can realize the goal of full recovery for critically endangered species.

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The Marine Mammal Rescue Assistance Act of 2000 amended the Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA) to establish the Prescott Grant Program. Eligible applicants are currently active, authorized participants or researchers in the National Marine Mammal Stranding Network.

The John H. Prescott Marine Mammal Rescue Assistance Grant Program, or Prescott Grant Program, provides grants or cooperative agreements to eligible stranding network participants for:

- recovery and treatment (i.e., rehabilitation) of stranded marine mammals,
- data collection from living or dead stranded marine mammals, and
- facility upgrades, operation costs, and staffing needs directly related to the recovery and treatment of stranded marine mammals and collection of data from living or dead stranded marine mammals

The Prescott Grant Program coordinates the response to marine mammals in distress; determines disease, injury and potential cause(s) of death; and supports emergency response for marine mammals during oil spills, outbreaks of diseases, and unusual mortality events. Without this funding, network partners may not have the funds or the ability to respond to some stranding events, leaving animals at risk for prolonged exposure and likely death. This program allows for the critical ability to monitor marine mammal health trends, collect scientific data, and perform analysis will also be diminished. Information on the causes of marine mammal strandings is useful to the public because marine mammals can serve as an indicator of ocean health, giving insight into larger environmental issues that also have implications for human health and welfare.

**Recommendation**

Appropriate $4,000,000 under the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, National Marine Fisheries Services for the John H. Prescott Marine Mammal Rescue Assistance Grant Program
Background

The Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) defines museums to “include aquariums, arboretums and botanical gardens, art museums, youth museums, general museums, historic houses and sites, history museums, nature centers, natural history and anthropology museums, planetariums, science and technology centers, specialized museums, and zoological parks. Federally operated and for-profit museums may not apply for IMLS funds. Museums that are eligible for IMLS grants must be:

- Either a unit of state or local government or a private not-for-profit organization that has tax-exempt status under the Internal Revenue Code;
- Located in one of the fifty states of the United States of America, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, Guam, American Samoa, the Virgin Islands, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia, or the Republic of Palau; and
- A museum that, using a professional staff, (1) is organized on a permanent basis for essentially educational or aesthetic purposes; (2) owns or uses tangible objects, either animate or inanimate; (3) cares for these objects; and (4) exhibits these objects to the general public on a regular basis through facilities which it owns or operates.

Funding

The IMLS is the primary federal agency responsible for supporting the nation’s 17,500+ museums. The IMLS was established in 1996 by the Museum and Library Services Act of 1996 and reauthorized in December 2018 (P.L. 115-410). Its Office of Museum Services (OMS) awards grants to museums to support them as institutions of learning and exploration, and keepers of our cultural, historical, and scientific heritages. Grants are awarded in a number of areas including educational programming, professional development, and collections management, among others.

Current funding has allowed the agency to fund only a small fraction of all highly-rated grant applications. Despite this funding shortfall, zoo and aquarium attendance has increased and the educational services zoos and aquariums provide to schools and communities are in greater demand than ever.

We urge Congress to support at least $38.6 million for the Office of Museum Services within IMLS for FY2020.