Arizona Wildlife Federation Fact Sheet: Climate Action for Wildlife

Overview, Impacts, and Taking Action

Overview:

Today, hunters and anglers are on the front lines of climate change. Climate change poses an immediate and specific threat to hunting and fishing in America, challenging the traditions and values of outdoor recreationalists, their respect for the land, and the legacy they leave to future generations. Many sportsmen and women are already seeing its effects on their hunting and fishing opportunities, and are very concerned about what climate change means to the future of these traditional outdoor activities.

The Facts:

- Many wildlife species important to sportsmen and women, including big and small game, birds, and fish, are facing increasingly dangerous challenges brought on by warmer waters, shorter winters, and longer droughts.
- As climate change progresses and as wildlife populations migrate or disappear in response, outdoor activities such as hunting and fishing are impacted.
- Changes in our seasons and temperatures are contributing to an increase of insect pests, like Lyme disease-carrying deer ticks, which in turn, are a health risk to people venturing into the outdoors.
- According to NOAA, 2018 is in line for being the 4th hottest year on record (following the 3 previous years - which were hotter).
- According to the Arizona Department of Water Resources, over 90% of Arizona is classified as being in "Severe Drought." Over 50% of the state is in "Extreme Drought."

- The Arizona Game and Fish Department (with assistance from various wildlife organizations) has delivered over 1.5 million gallons of water to help wildlife around the state deal with the extreme drought.
- Scientists have shown that plant species are moving up in elevation to cope with the warmer, drier conditions in mountain ranges in southern Arizona.
- Forest closures due to wildfires have affected this year's fall hunting opportunities.
- Ticks and mosquitoes have expanded their ranges into areas of Arizona where they never before occurred.
- In Arizona, species such as bighorn sheep, mule deer, brook and cutthroat trout, pronghorn antelope and various waterfowl are all susceptible to the impacts of climate change.

Taking Action:

The science is clear: the longer we delay taking meaningful steps to reduce climate pollution, the more serious the harmful impacts will be to our outdoor traditions, including fishing and hunting. Action is needed now for the benefit of people, wildlife, and wildlife habitats. Fortunately, with the help of hunters and anglers, climate change can be addressed.

To preserve our ability to enjoy the outdoors and protect wildlife, we must call on our leaders and communities to:

Safeguard wildlife and wildlife habitat from climate change. Healthy ecosystems are more resilient to the potential effects of climate change. Management to reduce other stressors such as water pollution, extreme flooding caused by rapid high-volume runoff from impervious surfaces and agricultural areas, invasive species, and habitat fragmentations has great potential to reduce the effects of a changing climate.

Significantly expand large-scale conservation funding investments for wildlife at the national level. Greater funding will enable agencies to better manage species and the habitats they depend upon in the face of the stresses caused by climate change, saving both wildlife and taxpayer dollars from costly recovery efforts.

Support actions that reduce emissions in our transportation and energy sectors. The EPA and implementing state governments need the support of hunters, anglers, and conservationists to speak up in defense of the Clean Power Plan and the implementation of state-based clean energy solutions.

Invest in clean, wildlife-friendly energy and improve energy efficiency. We must transition to cleaner, less-polluting forms of energy. Oil, gas, coal and other fossil fuel development degrade and fragment habitat and exacerbate climate stressors for wildlife. A serious effort to reduce climate pollution must include investing in clean, wildlife-friendly energy sources such as on and offshore wind, solar, sustainable bioenergy, and geothermal.