

Sample Letter to the Editor: Migratory Bird Treaty Act

Note: Newspapers often have individual guidelines on word counts for letters to the editor. We encourage you to check the guidelines of your local paper and adjust your letter to these limits.

This year marks the 100th anniversary of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act. In 1918, the Audubon Society and other conservationists helped pass the law to stem the decline of bird populations, kicking off the great progress our nation has made toward bird conservation.

We can thank the MBTA when we experience the migration of Sandhill Cranes or spot a Snowy Egret in a marsh, which were near extinction before the MBTA. In fact, the MBTA protects nearly all of our native birds, from Northern Cardinals in our backyards to the rare and declining Cerulean Warbler.

Yet, as we celebrate this anniversary, some are attempting to gut the MBTA. Birds still face numerous man-made threats that the law helps address. Millions of birds die unnecessary deaths every year from industrial threats like oil waste pits, even when there are simple measures to prevent it.

The Trump administration announced it will not hold industries accountable for these deaths, while a House bill, H.R. 4239, would make this change permanent. If this policy were in effect after the Gulf oil spill, BP would have been off the hook for one million bird deaths and its \$100 million fine to restore bird habitat.

Let's take the opportunity this year to reflect on the gains we've made and recommit to protecting the birds that we all enjoy. I urge our elected officials to do the same, and forcefully defend the Migratory Bird Treaty Act.