

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. SAXTON. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on H.R. 4337, the bill just passed.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from New Jersey?

There was no objection.

MIGRATORY BIRD HUNTING AND CONSERVATION STAMP PROMOTION ACT

Mr. SAXTON. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 4248) to authorize the use of receipts from the sale of the Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation Stamps to promote additional stamp purchases, as amended.

The Clerk read as follows:

H.R. 4248

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation Stamp Promotion Act".

SEC. 2. PROMOTION OF STAMP SALES.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 4 of the Act of March 16, 1934 (chapter 71; 16 U.S.C. 718d), popularly known as the Migratory Bird Hunting Stamp Act, is amended—

(1) in subsection (b) by striking "subsection (c)" and inserting "subsections (c) and (d)"; and

(2) by adding at the end the following:

"(d) PROMOTION OF STAMP SALES.—(1) The Secretary of the Interior may utilize funds from the sale of migratory-bird hunting and conservation stamps, not to exceed \$1,000,000 in each of fiscal years 1999, 2000, 2001, 2002, and 2003, for the promotion of additional sales of those stamps, in accordance with a Migratory Bird Conservation Commission-approved annual marketing plan. Such promotion shall include the preparation of reports, brochures, or other appropriate materials to be made available to the public that describe the benefits to wildlife derived from stamp sales.

"(2) The Secretary of the Interior shall include in each annual report of the Commission under section 3 of the Migratory Bird Conservation Act (16 U.S.C. 715b) a description of activities conducted under this subsection in the year covered by the report."

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SAXTON) and the gentleman from American Samoa (Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SAXTON).

□ 1230

Mr. SAXTON. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 4248, the Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation Stamp Promotion Act. This bill was introduced primarily by our colleague the gentleman from California (Mr. CUNNINGHAM), who has done such a great job and has been such a great advocate of the bill. He is the primary reason that we are here today.

Joining him is of course the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. DINGELL), the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. TANNER), and the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. WELDON), who also were very, very hard workers on the bill.

The bill was the subject of a subcommittee hearing on July 16th. At that time, every witness testified in strong support of trying to promote additional duck stamp purchases. In fact, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, which has endorsed the bill, testified that additional opportunities to increase revenues to the Migratory Bird Conservation Fund from increased duck stamp sales do exist, and this bill is a good route to get that done.

Since Congress approved the Migratory Bird Hunting Stamp Act of 1934, every waterfowl hunter 16 years and older has been required to purchase a valid Federal duck stamp. The cost of the stamp has increased from \$1 to its present cost of \$15. These funds, which exceed a total of \$500 million, have been used to purchase some 5 million acres of prime wildlife habitat. This habitat is essential to literally millions of migratory birds.

Unfortunately, the sale of duck stamps has declined in recent years. In fact, nearly 1 million less duck stamps were sold last year than two decades ago.

H.R. 4248 is designed to reverse that trend. Under the terms of this legislation, up to \$1 million per year in duck stamp receipts would be spent to create a promotional program to increase the sale of duck stamps. This promotional program would be crafted to appeal to a growing number of bird watchers, wildlife artists, stamp collectors, and those Americans who simply enjoy wildlife.

If successful, this program will generate millions of dollars in new revenues which would be used to buy additional waterfowl habitat in the United States.

Mr. Speaker, this bill is strongly supported by many conservation organizations, including Ducks Unlimited, the Izaak Walton League, and the Wildlife Legislative Fund of America.

I urge an "aye" vote on the bill.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

(Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, again, my sincere thanks and appreciation to the chairman of the Subcommittee on Fisheries Conservation, Wildlife and Oceans, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SAXTON) for bringing this legislation to the floor. I also want to commend my good friend the gentleman from California (Mr. CUNNINGHAM) for his primary sponsorship of this legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I might add, this does have bipartisan support, especially

friends from this side of the aisle, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. DINGELL) and the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. TANNER).

Mr. Speaker, the Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation Stamp Promotion Act is a sound piece of legislation. This bill will allow the Fish and Wildlife Service to spend \$1 million a year in revenues from the migratory bird hunting stamp to promote sales of those stamps to a broader range of users, including bird watchers, photographers, and other conservationists.

It is estimated that as many as 25 million Americans enjoy observing birds and spend as much as \$20 billion a year to do so. They travel to see over 800 species of birds that reside in the United States. I might add, Mr. Speaker, I invite all my fellow Americans and bird watchers of America to come and observe the only bat that flies during the day like a bird, and it is the flying fox in the Samoan Islands.

Many of these birds are undergoing serious conservation problems. These problems are no less serious than the declines of game birds in the 1920s which inspired hunters, conservationists and Federal lawmakers to pass the Migratory Bird Conservation Act of 1929. That act, Mr. Speaker, authorized the duck stamp program.

Since that time, Mr. Speaker, the program has been enormously successful and has helped protect some 5 million acres of land for habitat. Many waterfowl populations have recovered tremendously. Millions of acres of habitat have been protected. But even as duck stamp sales to hunters have begun to level off, the need to continue to acquire and protect habitat for wildlife has increased tremendously.

Mr. Speaker, an amendment in this bill would encourage the Fish and Wildlife Service to describe the benefits to wildlife which are derived from the sales of these stamps. By demonstrating to bird watchers and conservationists just how these funds contribute to the recovery and relief of some of the many species of wildlife which continue to decline, the Service can be assured of finding a growing number of Americans who are willing to contribute to the protection of habitat for their future.

I am confident that the Fish and Wildlife Service, Mr. Speaker, and the conservation community can work together to make this bill a success and continue to protect valuable habitat for all of those who enjoy this Nation's natural resources.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this legislation, and, again, I commend my good friend, the gentleman from California, for his prime sponsorship of this bill.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve will balance of my time.

Mr. SAXTON. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from San Diego, California (Mr. CUNNINGHAM) who has worked so hard and in such a dedicated way to