



## Carbon Pollution: A Game Changer for America's Hunting and Fishing Heritage

### CLIMATE CHANGE

Carbon pollution from coal-burning power plants, refineries, and vehicles is causing worldwide climate change. America's wildlife is threatened by these assaults unknown until modern times. Fish are disappearing from lakes and streams, big game populations are being pushed out of their historic range, and duck wetland habitats are vanishing. From sea level to the highest mountain peaks, entire ecosystems are in retreat.

Changes from carbon pollution are leading to direct habitat loss as well as more insidious changes, such as decreases in snowpack that result in a massive loss of fish spawning sites and increased summertime temperatures that will change the wildlife communities of forests and streams forever. Many wildlife species are struggling to adapt. Some never will.

In a single generation, the future of fish and game is changing. Scientists predict that rising global temperatures could move 30% of all plant and wildlife species toward extinction in the lifetime of a child born today.<sup>1</sup> Taking action to reduce carbon pollution and confront our climate crisis will greatly benefit wildlife and our outdoor heritage.

America has a choice: Clean air, clean water, and healthy wildlife populations, or a polluted future where the only winners are special interests. This nation's core of conservationists, hunters, and anglers has a proud legacy of working to protect wildlife and must continue to do so as our world warms.

### THE CLEAN AIR ACT WORKS

Passed by Congress with overwhelming bi-partisan support 40 years ago, the Clean Air Act has been one of the starting points for our country's proud legacy of environmental protection. This act has a strong and proven track record of protecting our lakes, forests, wildlife, national parks, and other natural treasures from the devastating impacts of air pollution while allowing our economy to prosper.

Modern threats of carbon pollution will change the game for American hunters and anglers. The Clean Air Act is a critical tool that we need available to significantly reduce this carbon pollution that is wreaking havoc on wildlife.

Now, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) plans to update the nation's pollution standards to address the wildlife impacts caused by the carbon pollution that leads to climate change. It is essential that EPA move forward on this important work to protect wildlife and our outdoor heritage from the worst effects of a climate change.

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## Virginia: Wildlife Icons at Risk

**Carbon pollution from coal-burning power plants is causing world-wide climate change.** In Virginia, climate change will include higher annual average temperatures, more frequent heavy precipitation events, and an increased percentage of moderate to severe droughts.<sup>2</sup> Changes in the earth's climate directly threaten two pastimes treasured in Virginia and across our nation – recreational fishing and hunting.

In 2006, 858,000 anglers and 413,000 hunters came to Virginia to hunt and fish on its lands and waters. Fishing and hunting are not just recreational pastimes; they are also a major contributor to the Virginia economy. These 1.2 million sportsmen and women generated over \$1.2 billion in revenue in that year alone.<sup>3</sup> However, this rich community of fish and game, and the economy that depends on it, is at risk from a warming world.



### Largemouth Bass

The vicious surface strikes and headshaking leaps of the largemouth bass make it America's favorite gamefish – but those predatory behaviors also make the largemouth highly susceptible to America's serious water quality issues. Climate change is an increasingly concerning issue for largemouth bass. A warming climate may bring faster growth rates for bass and scientists warn that warming waters threatens to alter entire aquatic food webs, and could destabilize entire ecosystems. Habitat loss, from a greater number and greater intensity of hurricanes, and as rising seas inundate freshwater marshes along the coast, is also predicted with climate change.

### Black Duck

American black ducks hold a special place in the hearts of duck hunters. Big, brawny, and revered as one of the craftiest of all ducks, black ducks are considered a true trophy on the wing. But even its legendary wariness won't protect the black duck from a one-two punch of climate change and acid rain. One-third of the 165 species of wetlands breeding birds show medium or high vulnerability to climate change, and black ducks have been identified as particularly susceptible to sea-level rise associated with a warming climate.



**For American hunters, anglers, and conservationists healthy populations of wildlife are necessary to support our economy and outdoor heritage. It remains critical to speak up for Virginia's iconic species and encourage the Environmental Protection Agency to update the nation's pollution standards.**

The EPA must carry out its legal obligation to control carbon pollution that causes climate change from our country's biggest polluters and Congress must oppose all attempts to undermine Clean Air Act programs.

For more information visit the full report: [www.nwf.org/gamechangers](http://www.nwf.org/gamechangers)  
Act to protect wildlife from climate change: [www.nwf.org/cleanair](http://www.nwf.org/cleanair)

<sup>1</sup> Climate Change 2007: Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability. Contribution of Working Group II to the Fourth Assessment Report of the IPCC.

<sup>2</sup> Global Climate Change Impacts in the United States. <http://downloads.globalchange.gov/usimpacts/pdfs/southeast.pdf>.

<sup>3</sup> U.S. Department of the Interior, Fish and Wildlife Service, and U.S. Department of Commerce, U.S. Census Bureau. 2006 National Survey of Fishing, Hunting, and Wildlife-Associated Recreation – Virginia.