



Dear Wisconsin Natural Resources Board Members,

The Wisconsin Society for Ornithology (WSO) would like to comment on the hunting rules proposed by the Natural Resources Board to implement Wisconsin Act 168, which authorized expansion to hunting and trapping in Wisconsin's state parks.

WSO was organized in 1939 to encourage the study of Wisconsin birds. The aims have since expanded to emphasize all of the many enjoyable aspects of birding and to support the research and habitat protection necessary to preserve Wisconsin birdlife. WSO strives to alert members and the public to situations and practices that threaten Wisconsin's bird populations.

WSO's 1000+ members include those who enjoy birds attracted to their homes by feeders and birdhouses, those who pursue field study or bird banding as a hobby, and those who engage in ornithology professionally.

Wisconsin statute 27.01 states that the purpose of state parks is "to provide areas for public recreation and for public education in conservation and nature study. An area may qualify as a state park by reason of its scenery, its plants and wildlife, or its historical, archaeological or geological interest." WSO's members, along with many other birdwatchers, both residents and non-residents, spend significant amount of time birding in our state parks. The parks natural resource base make them extremely attractive bird habitat, which in turn attracts many birders.

WSO has a serious concern with the time periods proposed by the Natural Resource Board for hunting/trapping closures in the parks. Specifically, the proposal that hunting only be allowed on state park properties from either October, 15th or November, 15th through the Thursday prior to Memorial Day.

The proposed closure period would essentially allow hunting in April and most of May. The months of April and May are the peak of the spring bird migration. They are also the peak of when birders are out in the field, attracted by the large number of migrating birds.

We understand that part of the reasoning behind the proposed hunting period is to avoid periods of high parks uses during summer and during the fall color season, to enhance the safety of the large number of people who visit the parks during those times. The large number of people birding in state parks during spring migration, along with others enjoying the colorful spring flower season, also deserves similar consideration for their safety.

Thank you for considering our serious concerns.

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Conservation Committee Chair

Wisconsin Society for Ornithology, Inc.