

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 2602

As Reported By House Committee On:
Fisheries & Wildlife

Title: An act relating to ornithological research.

Brief Description: Creating an advisory committee to develop an ornithological research plan.

Sponsors: Representatives Jacobsen and Wang.

Brief History:

Reported by House Committee on:
Fisheries & Wildlife, February 3, 1994, DPA.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FISHERIES & WILDLIFE

Majority Report: Do pass as amended. Signed by 8 members: Representatives King, Chair; Orr, Vice Chair; Sehlin, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Basich; Chappell; Foreman; Quall and Scott.

Staff: Keitlyn Watson (786-7310).

Background: The Department of Wildlife (WDW) conducts its own limited research on bird populations of concern (i.e., threatened or endangered), and participates in coordinated ornithological research projects and planning with other agencies including the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The WDW also participates in "Partners in Flight," the Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Program, a public-private cooperative endeavor under the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation which began in 1990 and involves a number of federal, state and provincial agencies as well as private organizations, universities, amateurs and volunteers. The WDW does not currently utilize a citizen advisory group in planning its ornithological research program statewide.

Summary of Amended Bill: An advisory committee is created to develop an ornithological research plan. The director of the Department of Fish and Wildlife is directed to appoint nine members to this committee, including but not limited to representatives of the following groups: noted Washington ornithologists, academics, amateur birdwatchers, Ducks Unlimited, federal, state and local agencies, Indian tribes,

and environmentalists. Members of the committee receive no compensation beyond travel expenses.

Amended Bill Compared to Original Bill: The amended bill adds a representative from Ducks Unlimited to the advisory committee .

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date of Amended Bill: July 1, 1994.

Testimony For: There is a need for research on many birds that live in or migrate through Washington. Even basic research on many species has not been done. The state's many amateur birdwatchers should be utilized in a structured way by the WDW. The views of bird watchers need greater representation in WDW planning, relative to those of hunters and fishers. The bill would help the agency make more effective use of volunteers. Public-private partnership is a way to meet needs when government is scaling back on spending. Statewide coordination and planning could introduce efficiencies and offset current costs to the WDW. The bill costs only \$8,000 to implement and would bring far greater financial benefit in the future.

Testimony Against: None.

Witnesses: Representative Ken Jacobsen, prime sponsor (pro); Fred Bird and Tom Schooley, Washington Ornithological Society (pro); Eugene Hunn, Seattle Audubon Society (pro); David Jennings, Black Hills Audubon Society (pro); and Lesley Brines and John Pierce, Department of Wildlife (neutral, with concerns: state coordination should be consistent with WDW's participation in national program; limiting the bill to research will preclude the advisory committee's work on monitoring and habitat work).