



Shareable media promoting conservation from the Outdoor Industry Communication Council (OICC) – see below for more details.

Herd Mentality: Nonprofits Dedicated to the Conservation of Specific Species have Outsized Benefits for Adjacent Species and Entire Ecosystems.

There's a membership organization, or two, dedicated to the conservation of just about every species of North American wildlife you can imagine. Some examples; Wild turkeys? Yep, the National Wild Turkey Federation advocates for what some have called America's bird. Mule deer? Sure, the Mule Deer Foundation looks out for this iconic Western deer species.

Same with elk (Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation), waterfowl (both Ducks Unlimited and Delta Waterfowl), pheasant and bobwhite quail (Pheasants and Quail Forever), trout (Trout Unlimited), white-tailed deer (National Deer Association and Whitetails Unlimited), and even inshore sport fish (Bonefish & Tarpon Trust). Other groups advocate for wild sheep, forest grouse, salmon and steelhead, mountain goats, walleye, striped bass, tortoises, and butterflies. Even carp.

This menagerie of non-profit groups and their attendant species is one of the main legs of America's conservation stool, along with industry manufacturers, state and federal agencies and citizen participants, from hunters, anglers, trappers and shooters (HATS) to bird-watchers and public-land advocates.

But if you think the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation (RMEF) is only interested in elk, you'd be wrong, just as Trout Unlimited is interested in far more than fish. One of the great values of these "critter groups" is that their impact extends beyond their totemic species. Every habitat project that RMEF funds not only benefits elk but other species on the landscape, which might include bighorn sheep and mountain grouse, wild turkeys and native plants. Same with the habitat work conducted by National Wild Turkey Federation (NWTf) and its partners. Forest-health projects funded by the NWTf benefit salamanders and native trees, monarch butterflies and red fox.

Most of these groups originated from a small group of passionate citizens who banded together to raise money and advocate for their namesake critter. But over time, the most forward-looking of these groups have enlarged their conservation footprint and ambition. Think Ducks Unlimited is interested only in ducks? No, it has expanded to be a very effective water-quality organization, and its work benefits huge expanses of aquatic habitat, as well as humans who rely on clean water. Pheasants Forever has become a grasslands conservation group, invested in habitat work that benefits pheasants with additional



benefits for native birds, bees, butterflies, earthworms, and the farmers who rely on healthy soils and sustainable landscapes. Trout Unlimited is less an angling club than it is a cold-water habitat organization. Work underwritten by the Mule Deer Foundation benefits pronghorn antelope, sage grouse, and other residents of America's vast Western lands, along with conserving ancient migration routes used by big-game species for millennia.

Beyond raising the visibility of their signature species, funds raised by these non-profit groups are often leveraged by public funds, amplifying their conservation impact. Many critter groups employ staff biologists and land-acquisition experts who work closely with their state and federal counterparts to broaden the groups' impact from single properties to wider landscapes.

But the engine of these conservation groups remains committed volunteers who donate their time, funds, and enthusiasm to boost the populations and visibility of their adored species. Consider joining a non-profit that aligns with your favorite species, or if it doesn't already exist, create one. Last we looked, there's no conservation organization devoted to squirrels, badgers or mosquitoes.

About the Outdoor Industry Communication Council (OICC):

Formed around the commitment to educate all Americans about the origins of conservation funding in America, the Outdoor Industry Communication Council (OICC) is managed by Outdoor Stewards of Conservation Foundation (OSCF) and Wildlife Management Institute (WMI). OICC works with outdoor writers to develop informative content that is available to all outdoor organizations and media at no cost. A primary goal of the OICC is to better inform and promote the positive contributions that wildlife agencies, industry manufacturers, NGO's and end users such as hunters, anglers, trappers and target shooters make to conservation. Outdoor organizations interested in conservation are welcome to use any OICC content to expand the reach of messages created by the OICC. To become a member of the Outdoor Industry Communication Council, contact Jim Curcuruto of OSCF (203) 450-7202 jim@stewardsofconservation.org or Jon Gassett of WMI at (502) 330-9025 jgassett@wildlifemgt.org. There are no costs involved to become a member of the OICC. Members may utilize OICC materials as they see fit with no restrictions. For additional information visit <https://www.outdoorstewards.org/outdoor-industry-communication-council-oicc/>

This project is funded by the Multistate Conservation Grant Program (F23AP00404), a program supported with funds from the Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Program and jointly managed by the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.