



THE WILDLIFE SOCIETY

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In accordance with TWS policy, The Wildlife Society Council seeks member review and comment on the following revised position statement prior to renewing it. Comments must be received by **15 July 2009** to be considered in a final position statement. Please send comments to: **Laura Bies, Director of Government Affairs, The Wildlife Society, 5410 Grosvenor Lane, Suite 200, Bethesda, MD 20814-2144, or via email to laura@wildlife.org.**

Revised TWS Position Statement

Firearms Legislation

Many citizens own and use firearms in recreational pursuits, such as gun collecting, hunting, and competitive shooting. Common sense and equity demand that legal means be used to reduce criminal use of firearms--not to reduce ownership and legitimate use of firearms by responsible citizens.

Legal responsible ownership and use of firearms is an enduring tradition, and maintaining this tradition is key to connecting future generations to their heritage. Firearms are essential to recreational hunting, an activity that stimulates the economy of many communities. A hunter's deep personal interest in wildlife resources has provided the keystone to modern wildlife management, the North American Model of Wildlife Conservation. Continuing financial support derived from the hunting public has provided the most important impetus for wildlife research and for acquisition and management of public lands for wildlife. Hunters have financed many major programs in wildlife conservation. Therefore, restrictive gun-control measures that discourage ownership of guns by law-abiding citizens for the purposes of hunting can only be counter-productive for wildlife conservation. Unwarranted measures would not only curtail essential conservation programs but also reduce opportunities for recreational hunting.

The policy of The Wildlife Society in regard to firearms legislation is to:

1. Oppose legislative programs that prohibit or unnecessarily discourage ownership and use of firearms by responsible citizens for purposes related to hunting and other legitimate recreational uses.
2. Support legislative programs that provide stringent and mandatory punishment for criminal use of firearms.
3. Encourage development and continuation of educational programs involving gun safety and legitimate recreational uses of firearms.