

## Revised TWS Position Statement Firearms Legislation

Many citizens own and use firearms in recreational pursuits, such as gun collecting, hunting, target shooting, 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 and provides the major source of funding and public support for managing wildlife and their habitats. 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, through the sale of hunting and fishing licenses, stamps, and permits and the federal excise tax on firearms and ammunition, 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, impacting both game and non-game species. 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 and shooting.

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 firearm Deleted: gun  
safety and legitimate recreational uses of firearms.
4. Support the Constitution of the United States which affirms, via the Second Amendment, the private possession and ownership of firearms.