



## **Statement on Wetlands Legislation (HB0541/SB0670)**

For the last two years, the conservation and wildlife community have been working at the General Assembly to ensure our state maintains common sense measures to conserve wetlands. As hunters, anglers, and outdoor enthusiasts, we rely on the value these wetlands provide to wildlife and water quality. Maintaining protection of the vast majority of these areas was crucial in our work this year.

The bill as initially filed would have impacted over 300,000 acres of vital wetland habitat in the state. Through diligent work, and with the help of Sen. Page Walley (R-Savannah) and Sen. Shane Reeves (R-Murfreesboro), the conservation community was able to amend that bill to bring this impact down to an estimated 70,000 acres across Tennessee.

A number of conservation organizations working in Tennessee and across the country, including the Tennessee Wildlife Federation, the National Wildlife Federation, Ducks Unlimited, The Nature Conservancy in Tennessee, Wolf River Conservancy, TennGreen Land Conservancy, The Open Space Institute, Safari Club International, Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation, and the American Sportfishing Association—made maintaining these common sense measures for wetlands a top priority in the 2025 legislative session.

While no legislation is ever perfect, we believe this compromise is a significant improvement over previous versions and should help prevent large scale loss of our remaining isolated wetlands. Under the compromise, wetlands of smaller size and lower resource value will fall under a less restrictive regulatory framework than they do under current law, while leaving larger wetlands and those of higher habitat value under appropriately strict regulatory frameworks.

Thank you to our supporters and allies who worked to protect our Tennessee wildlife and habitat. We will continue our work in this important effort.