



We need your help to defeat four bills that threaten some of Maine's most important habitats: significant vernal pools; important wetlands for ducks, geese, and wading birds; and shorebird feeding and roosting areas.

**Background**

Two years ago, there was a major effort to gut the laws that protect some of Maine's most important wildlife habitats, including:



- Significant vernal pools—seasonal wetlands important for creatures from deer to frogs and salamanders. Vernal pools provide feeding and breeding areas for many animals and birds and help prevent flooding by holding water during the wettest times of year.
- Wetlands for ducks, geese, and wading birds, such as herons, which require high-quality wetlands for breeding and raising their young. These wetland areas also filter pollutants from run-off, thereby helping to protect Maine's groundwater and surface water.
- Shorebird feeding and roosting areas, which provide resting and feeding areas for sandpipers, plovers, and other birds, allowing them to store up fat reserves for successful nonstop flights over open ocean during migration.

With your help, we defeated most of those bad bills, but unfortunately, four similar bad bills are back at the State House during this legislative session.

[LD 674, An Act To Clarify the Natural Resources Protection Act](#), would reduce the protected area around all three of the above habitat types from 250 feet to 75 feet. This would seriously damage the quality of these habitats and threaten some of Maine's most beautiful wildlife species such as Great Blue Herons, Wood Ducks, and Blue-winged Teal. LD 674 goes even further by requiring Maine people to reimburse landowners who are required to comply with

any habitat protections stricter than the ones in this bill. This would invite huge numbers of lawsuits against the state just for protecting wildlife habitat!

[LD 824, Resolve, Directing the Department of Environmental Protection to Develop a Rural Land Use Development Process](#), would exempt vernal pools, waterfowl wetlands, and shorebird feeding and roosting areas in rural parts of the state from protection. Since most of Maine is rural, this bill would eliminate protections for these habitats in most of the state.

[LD 793, An Act Clarifying the Department of Environmental Protection's Authority Relating to Compensation for Development Activity Under the Natural Resources Protection Act](#), would limit the ability of the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) to require monetary compensation for valuable habitat that developers destroy if they choose to develop in important habitat areas. This compensation is not only fair but also essential to Maine's ability to gather funds to purchase important habitat. The DEP's authority to collect these funds should not be limited as proposed in LD 793.

[LD 794, An Act to Amend Setback Requirements and Standards Related to Species Migration Under the Laws Regulating Development Near Vernal Pools](#), would let developers avoid protecting areas around significant vernal pools where they can demonstrate that the amphibians migrating out of the pools appear to only go in one direction. Although there is some science to demonstrate that amphibians may migrate directionally from some vernal pools, this varies greatly from pool to pool and may change with changing weather and climate conditions. Also, it takes very intensive research over a long period of time to track amphibians well enough to determine whether they migrate directionally. This sort of research is impossible to do within the deadlines required by permits and developers' bottom lines. Developers should not be allowed to increase their development footprint based on unproven claims that amphibians are only going to go in one direction.

Healthy vernal pools, wetlands, and shorebird habitat are essential for Maine's wildlife and the tourist dollars they generate for Maine's economy. These areas are also critical to keep Maine's hunting and fishing heritage strong. Current laws protecting these habitats are appropriately balanced and based on sound science.

Please help stop bad legislation from tipping the balance and speak up against these harmful bills. With your help, we can ensure that protections for Maine's essential natural areas remain in place for Maine's wildlife, now and for generations to come. Please take action today!

If you have questions about this legislation, you can contact NRCM at [nrcm@nrcm.org](mailto:nrcm@nrcm.org).