



**Testimony of  
Ginette Hemley  
Senior Vice President, Conservation Strategy and Science  
World Wildlife Fund**

**Legislative Hearing on  
H.R. 509, the Marine Turtle Conservation Reauthorization Act of 2009,  
H.R. 556, the Southern Sea Otter Recovery and Research Act, and  
H.R. 1454, the Multinational Species Conservation Funds Semipostal Stamp Act of 2009**

**before the House Subcommittee on Insular Affairs, Oceans and Wildlife  
U.S. House of Representatives**

**May 5, 2009**

Madam Chair, Mr. Ranking Member, and members of the Subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to testify today. My name is Ginette Hemley, and I am the Senior Vice President for Conservation Strategy and Science at the World Wildlife Fund (WWF). We are the largest multinational conservation organization in the world and currently sponsor conservation programs in more than 100 countries, thanks to the support of 1.2 million members in the United States and more than 5 million members worldwide. WWF is dedicated to protecting our planet's rich abundance of wildlife and natural habitats and is working around the globe to conserve the natural resources on which all of us rely for health, security and prosperity.

I am pleased to be here today to discuss H.R. 1454, the Multinational Species Conservation Funds (MSCF) Semipostal Stamp Act, and H.R. 509, the Marine Turtle Conservation (MTCA) Reauthorization Act. I will also comment briefly on H.R. 556, the Southern Otter Recovery and Research Act. All of these bills make a critical contribution to the conservation of species named in these proposed Acts.

I would like to acknowledge your leadership, Chairwoman Bordallo and Ranking Member Brown, in advancing U.S. efforts in international species conservation. Your Subcommittee moved forward bills in the 110<sup>th</sup> Congress to reauthorize the Rhinoceros and Tiger Conservation Act, the African Elephant Conservation Act, and the Asian Elephant Conservation Act, which were enacted into law. It also reported out the Great Cats and Rare Canids Conservation Act and the Crane Conservation Act, which passed the House twice and await action in the Senate. Your hearing last year on the Wildlife Without Borders Act held great promise for a new approach to regional and global wildlife conservation programs at the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

(USFWS). We await with anticipation the release of a Subcommittee draft of the Wildlife Without Borders bill for consideration later this year. We also applaud Mr. Brown's initiative in introducing H.R. 509 and H.R. 1454, which are the subjects of the hearing today.

### **The Multinational Species Conservation Funds Semipostal Stamp Act, H.R. 1454**

Congressman Brown's bill, cosponsored by Chairwoman Bordallo and 49 other Members of Congress, would allow members of the public to voluntarily support conservation of tigers, rhinos, elephants, great apes and marine turtles through purchase of a postage stamp at a price slightly above the first class mail rate. The supplement would go to the USFWS to implement Congressionally authorized programs to conserve these species. The cost of designing the stamps and administering semipostal sales at the U.S. Postal Service (USPS) would be deducted from the supplement and the bill would have no impact on the taxpayer.

The legislation would benefit five programs within the Multinational Species Conservation Fund: the African Elephant Conservation Act of 1988; the Rhinoceros and Tiger Conservation Act of 1994; the Asian Elephant Conservation Act of 1998; the Great Apes Conservation Act of 2000; and the Marine Turtle Conservation Act of 2004, which is up for reauthorization this year. These five species programs may soon be joined by the Great Cats and Rare Canids Act and the Crane Conservation Act, which have passed the House and are awaiting action in the Senate. The five existing species acts have a combined authorization of \$30 million, but were funded in FY 2009 at just \$10 million. The MSCF Semipostal Stamp Act would provide a revenue neutral mechanism for members of the public to supplement the funds from the U.S. Treasury.

The legislation is modeled on the very successful Breast Cancer Research semipostal stamp, which has sold 851 million stamps and raised \$66.1 million for breast cancer research since its introduction in 1998. Other semipostals have supported the Heroes of 2001 and Domestic Violence Prevention. All of these stamps have provided an opportunity for members of the public to partner with public agencies to accomplish common policy goals. The next semipostal needs to have at least as broad an appeal to the American public as did the first, and at least as strong a marketing base to guarantee unified support and promotion from organizations and individuals throughout the nation. The MSCF Semipostal Stamp Act will elicit the broad appeal needed to make this stamp a success.

**Challenges.** The United States Congress has determined that it is in the national public interest to provide taxpayer support for the five grant programs of the Multinational Species Conservation Fund. Elephants, rhinos, tigers, great apes, and marine turtles are much admired in the United States and have become cultural icons for generations of Americans. However, in their native lands they have been struggling for survival, as most populations of these iconic species continue to decline under pressure from expanding human needs, habitat loss, poaching for bushmeat and body parts, and persistent international smuggling.

Tigers, rhinos, elephants and great apes are becoming increasingly endangered in the wild and face serious challenges. Less than 4000 tigers remain in 14 countries in Asia. Three of the eight sub-species of tiger have become extinct in the past 50 years and a fourth is extinct in the wild

with only a few remnants in zoos. Four of the five species of rhinoceros in Africa and Asia are under intense pressure, with the rarest – the Javan Rhino – reduced to under 60 individuals. Elephant populations are also declining and there are approximately 40-45,000 Asian elephants remaining in the wild. Rhinos and tigers continue to be hunted illegally for commercially valuable body parts, and elephants have long been poached for ivory and for bushmeat to provide additional sources of protein to indigenous populations. Great apes are also sought for bushmeat and for the pet trade, and are particularly vulnerable to outbreaks of disease. Marine turtles are illegally harvested on nesting beaches for eggs and meat, and many are captured inadvertently in nets. All of these species are losing habitat throughout their range because of expanding human populations and competition for land and resources. They are also vulnerable to the effects of climate change, as rivers dry, oceans warm, and ecosystems evolve.

Congress has accepted the challenge of sustaining viable populations of these flagship species by creating the five conservation funds within the Multinational Species Conservation Fund. Although funding for these programs has increased in recent years, it does not go far enough to ensure sustainable populations in the wild. Range state governments are already stretched to meet the needs of their human populations, and resources continue to be needed to support anti-poaching efforts, habitat preservation, public education, and control of smuggling.

The semipostal stamp program is uniquely well conceived to allow members of the public to “vote with their pocketbooks” for federal programs that they support. The MSCF Semipostal Stamp Act provides a vehicle for the public to voluntarily contribute additional resources for conservation programs, and contribute to the achievement of federal agency wildlife protection objectives. In addition, every dollar raised by the stamp will generate two and a half additional dollars from conservation partners, private companies and other governments. Over the past 20 years since the program began, the USFWS has made 1370 small grants valued at \$62 million and has leveraged an additional \$141 million. With a very small investment, the United States has encouraged governments and private organizations to join in the effort to save these species from extinction.

**Benefits to Wildlife.** A Multinational Species semipostal stamp would supplement funding for the five conservation funds that were created by Congress for African elephants, Asian elephants, rhinoceros and tigers, great apes, and marine turtles. The Acts specifically authorize expenditures to help sustain viable populations of these animals in the wild by supporting conservation programs in countries where such populations are located. The additional revenues would be used by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to combat illegal poaching, resolve human-animal conflicts, protect habitat, and support conservation education programs in countries where the animals are located. Protection of flagship species benefits the habitats of many other animals and plants, and contributes to the health of ecosystems that directly sustain mankind. The funding would also promote U.S. foreign policy goals by countering global warming through forest preservation, and would contribute to local stability and security by creating local employment for rangers, tourist guides and wildlife managers.

The MSCF has been instrumental in recovering black rhino populations in Africa, which have increased from a low of 2300 individuals to nearly 4000 today. Indian rhinos, once below 100, have increased to 2650 and are being relocated to areas in India and Nepal where they have

become locally extinct. An MSCF funded survey in the Republic of Congo discovered a new population of 125,000 Western lowland gorillas, while an aerial survey of the South Sudan revealed that 8000 elephants had survived more than 40 years of civil conflict. Marine turtle surveys are underway in Gabon and Oman that will provide the basis for establishing new protected areas. Given sufficient funds, significant advances can be made in conserving threatened creatures.

**Benefits to People.** Americans of all ages have a fascination with wild animals, whether they are among the almost 300 million visitors to National Parks, the 35 million visitors to National Wildlife Refuges, the 150 million visitors to zoos, or the 61 million hunters and anglers. These enormous numbers reflect the continuing bond between man and animals in the United States and throughout the world.

Aside from the recreational benefits, there is a growing realization that human welfare is served by preserving biodiversity and ensuring adequate stewardship of wildlife populations. It reflects increasing awareness that human welfare is intricately linked with the health of our natural environment, and that protection of flagship species like elephants, rhinos, tigers, great apes, and marine turtles benefits the habitats of many other animals and plants, preserves biodiversity, and contributes to the health of ecosystems that sustain mankind. Management of habitat for the benefit of these mammals and reptiles protects watersheds against unsustainable levels of logging, agricultural use and other human endeavors, and helps prevent flooding and wildfires. Protection of forest habitats ensures the oxygen generating capabilities of forests and helps to counter global warming. Efforts to preserve habitats of animals also protects the sources of as yet undiscovered medicines that may benefit mankind.

There is also an inspirational quality to certain mammals and turtles that stimulates the imagination of Americans and leads them to adopt these species as symbols of desired personal or organizational qualities. Tigers have a firm place in national culture as symbols of power and aggressive pursuit of goals. The adoption of the tiger as a corporate symbol by Exxon and Kellogg (Tony the Tiger) and many smaller corporations draws on the power of the tiger as a marketing tool for encouraging customers to identify with the attributes of tigers. The tiger is the most popular sports team mascot in the country and has been adopted by sporting teams like the Detroit Tigers and Cincinnati Bengals, by some 68 colleges and universities including Princeton, Missouri, Auburn, and Louisiana State, and by numerous high schools across America. The adoption of the elephant as a symbol of the strength and solidity of the Republican Party contributes to the welfare of that Party. Rhinos are symbols of toughness and have lent their image to heavy duty products like sport utility vehicles (Landrover, Dodge ), tires (Pirelli), or shock absorbers. Gorillas, chimpanzees and other great apes are generally cherished for their intelligence and their genealogical proximity to humans. Marine turtles are, simply some of the oldest creatures on earth, having survived the age of the dinosaurs.

**Prospects for Success.** To ensure another blockbuster success like the Breast Cancer Research Stamp, the semipostal program needs to endorse an issue with broad national appeal and proven effectiveness as a fundraiser. The MSCF Semipostal Stamp is a particularly strong candidate for ensuring this success. It not only has broad appeal across the whole spectrum of society, but it enjoys a broad network of support from conservation and animal protection groups, zoos and circuses, sportsmen's organizations, and veterinarians. The MSCF Semipostal Stamp would

appeal to the many collectors including children who specialize in animal stamps, both in this country and abroad, thereby improving retention rates and increasing “profit” for the Postal Service. We believe the MSCF Semipostal Stamp has the potential to benefit not only the species themselves, but also supporters of wildlife throughout the United States, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and the U.S. Postal Service.

As noted above, recreational visits to parks, zoos, aquariums, circuses, and wildlife refuges for viewing, photographing or hunting animals involve hundreds of millions of Americans. Interest in large mammals like rhinos, tigers, elephants and great apes is as deeply engrained in American culture as the tales of storybooks (Winnie the Pooh and Tigger, Babar the Elephant, Curious George). If asked whether they would like to help prevent tigers, rhinos, elephants, gorillas, chimpanzees, or marine turtles from becoming extinct in the wild, most Americans would respond with a resounding “Yes”. People do not want to see these animals disappear from wild habitats, and have demonstrated their concern through their membership and contributions to wildlife conservation organizations.

World Wildlife Fund is one of 24 members of the Multinational Species Coalition that have endorsed this legislation. The Coalition includes wildlife organizations, zoos, circuses, veterinarians, sportsmen, and wildlife protection groups. Membership of the organizations in the Multinational Species Coalition exceeds 20 million people, and contributions to these organizations total hundreds of millions of dollars. A recent alert to World Wildlife Fund’s most active members, seeking support for an increase in appropriations for the Multinational Species Conservation Fund, produced 29,822 emails and faxes to Members of Congress, and demonstrated the extensive membership base that can be mobilized to assist in a national promotion campaign for a Multinational Species semipostal stamp..

The Postal Service itself has noted that the “unique status that helped make the Breast Cancer Research Stamp popular and successful” was the “unified support and promotion from communities and individuals throughout the nation”. This is an important criterion for success, and the next semipostal should replicate it. World Wildlife Fund is capable of a sustained effort to assist the Postal Service in local, national and international marketing, along with members of the Multinational Species Coalition. We have members in every state of the Union, and many of us have international affiliates that can be activated to support foreign purchases of American semipostals by collectors and by conservationists, sportsmen and others wanting to donate to the protection of flagship species. We would undertake an intensive promotional campaign, using membership mail and web site solicitation, speaking engagements, media events, onsite stamp sales, and other marketing tools to sell Multinational Species semipostal stamps to collectors and consumers in this country, Canada and Europe. We would make every effort to expand our coalition of supporting organizations and to increase the combined membership base beyond the current figure of approximately 20 million.

**Postal Service experience.** The Postal Service has its own indicator of national appeal in its frequent issues of wildlife commemorative stamps. Wildlife stamps have been among the best sellers of all time, both in terms of print runs and of retention rates by collectors. The 1982 State Birds and Flowers stamps and the 1987 North American Wildlife stamps had print runs of 667 million and 646 million respectively, compared to 517 million for the most popular of all stamps,

the Elvis Presley stamp of 1993. An average print run at the time was 150 million stamps. The Breast Cancer Research stamp has sold 851 million stamps over its ten year run. We would expect that a MSCF semipostal stamp featuring elephants, tigers, rhinos, great apes, and marine turtles, promoted vigorously by the Postal Service and private individuals and organizations, would do very well with a general public interested in animals and with a past history of willingness to buy wildlife stamps.

A Multinational Species semipostal stamp could also benefit the U.S. Postal Service. USPS keeps records of stamps retained by members of the public who set aside stamps rather than using them to carry mail. A stamp that is never used creates a financial benefit to the Postal Service, because a fee is collected without a corresponding service being provided. According to the American Philatelic Society, wildlife stamp collectors are one of the largest and most enthusiastic groups in the industry. Wildlife commemorative stamps are well represented in the top ten list of U.S. Postal Service retentions (Appendix A). The fifth highest retention rate of all time (after Elvis Presley) was the Wildflowers issue of 1992, with 76.2 million retained. The ninth highest was the Insects and Spiders issue of 1999, with 60.9 million retained and a “profit” to the Postal Service of \$20.1 million. The Endangered Species stamps of 1997 resulted in 28.8 million retained, with very little promotional effort compared to what would be given to a semipostal stamp. Five other wildlife stamps in the late 1990s and ten stamps since then in the Our Nature of America series averaged 28 million retentions and about \$10 million each in retention “profit” for the U.S. Postal Service (Appendix B). Thus, the benefits to the Postal Service from retention of Multinational Species Stamps could well exceed the revenues generated for wildlife conservation.

**International Experience.** It is useful to refer to other countries’ experience with semipostals, where an increasing number have chosen wildlife motifs to market general welfare causes. As early as 1962, Germany featured butterflies on a semipostal issue benefiting youth programs. It followed with 19 additional issues featuring wildlife, birds, insects and flowers. All issues were earmarked for youth programs or independent welfare organizations rather than conservation, indicating the power of wildlife as a marketing draw for fundraising stamps. Argentina (12 issues), Belgium (7 issues), Finland (26 issues), Indonesia (8 issues), Luxembourg (9 issues), Netherlands (10 issues), New Zealand (10 issues), Switzerland (5 issues), Russia (4 issues), and Turkey (6 issues) have all featured animals, birds, insects or flowers on stamps intended to benefit cultural or social organizations, philately, or youth programs. Japan featured a tiger on a 1998 issue for general causes. In addition, at least two countries have issued conservation related semipostals: Russia in 1992 illustrated a tiger to benefit nature preservation programs; and India in 2000 featured animals, birds and plants on a semipostal souvenir sheet benefiting Himalayan Ecology.

We conclude that wild animals, birds, insects, and plants draw the attention of stamp buyers and induce them to pay extra for semipostal stamps, even when the causes they support have little to do with wildlife. We expect this phenomenon will be repeated in the United States where a Multinational Species semipostal would be popular in its appeal to a broad spectrum of society.

**Conclusions.** We believe that members of the public would welcome alternate ways to raise money for wildlife conservation and would give strong support to a Multinational Species

semipostal stamp. Stamp collectors have a good record of supporting wildlife issues, and we would anticipate that normal collector interest and an enthusiastic conservation community would create the potential for significant revenues for the beneficiary agencies and substantial income for the U.S. Postal Service.

The Multinational Species semipostal stamp would provide a strong opportunity to build on the success of the Breast Cancer Research Stamp and would maintain the momentum and credibility of the semipostal stamp program. The Multinational Species stamp would have broad national appeal, would benefit a program that is supported by Congress and the Administration, and would further human welfare through its contribution to the environment that sustains us all.

The Multinational Species stamp would be immensely popular, as are all wildlife stamps issued by the U.S. Postal Service, and will appeal to all ages and segments of society. The breadth and depth of the Multinational Species Coalition will ensure broad-based promotion from organizations across the country, and the size of our membership and visitor base guarantees individual support for the stamp. The Multinational Species stamp would benefit the species and would allow supporters of wildlife in the United States to “get involved” in a personal way.

**Recommendations.** We recommend that the MSCF Semipostal Stamp Act specify that future additions to the Multinational Species Conservation Fund become eligible beneficiaries for funding from the revenues raised by the stamp. The House of Representatives has passed two bills that would establish conservation funds for Great Cats and Rare Canids and for Cranes. These and any future additions to the Multinational Species Conservation Fund should qualify for funding received from the semipostal stamp. We also recommend that the bill specify, as for previous semipostals, that “the special rate of postage of an individual stamp shall be an amount that is evenly divisible by 5”. The Breast Cancer Research Stamp currently on sale is offered at 55 cents, producing a 13 cent increment over the 42 cent first class mail rate. We would hope that the Postal Service would sell the Multinational Species stamp at the same rate as the BCRS.

### **Marine Turtle Conservation Reauthorization Act, H.R. 509**

Congressional passage of the Marine Turtle Conservation Act (MTCA) of 2004 was a landmark step forward in conservation of marine turtles. These “ancient mariners” have been traversing the oceans for more than 100 million years and are survivors from the age of the dinosaurs. Today, six of the seven species of marine turtle are threatened with extinction, as a result of over-exploitation for eggs and food, and for shell and leather. They are also killed as bycatch in many fisheries, and habitats key to their survival are rapidly being degraded. Because they live for decades, mature relatively late, and migrate long distances, marine turtles are particularly vulnerable to the impacts of human exploitation and habitat loss.

Pacific leatherbacks continue on their steep decline since the early 1990s and there is as yet no sign of recovery. The breeding population of the Eastern Pacific has declined by 95 percent over the past 20 years. These gentle giants, frequently six feet long and weighing up to 1000 pounds, return after many years at sea to the nesting areas where they were hatched. In addition to natural threats to hatchlings from terrestrial and marine predators, the long established human

practice of collecting almost 100 percent of their eggs has caused the population to crash. Some beaches that have produced hatchlings for thousands of years are no longer receiving visits from nesting females, signaling the local extinction of the species. Nesting beach protection is clearly a critical element of a comprehensive, effective strategy to stop the slide toward extinction of these extraordinary animals.

The MTCA has been instrumental in securing the recruitment of hatchlings into the sea, after decades of rampant egg poaching throughout the Eastern Pacific coast. In Junquillal beach, in Costa Rica, an MTCA grant in 2006 contributed to the protection of more than 19,000 marine turtle hatchlings over the last three years by helping to change dramatically the community's attitude towards turtles through education and hands-on conservation. An MTCA grant is also helping consolidate marine turtle conservation efforts in Gabon, where one of the largest nesting populations of Atlantic leatherbacks is found. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is helping international and local conservationists to monitor beaches during the nesting period, and to help reduce bycatch of turtles.

In Oman, which hosts one of the two largest and most important nesting populations of loggerhead turtles on the planet, an MTCA grant has helped local rangers conduct the first systematic survey of turtle abundance and population trends. Satellite tracking has helped determine post-nesting migrations and foraging grounds, and has provided critical support and justification for the development of new national protected areas. The MTCA has also supported conservation programs for hawksbill turtles, a species that is still considered critically endangered by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN). Along the Caribbean coast of Panama, the MTCA has had remarkable success in increasing hawksbill nesting at Chiriqui Beach, once considered the species' most important beach in the Western Atlantic, from dozens of turtles to more than 100 by protecting the adults that come ashore from year to year. Illegal take of tortoise shell in South-East Asia and some parts of the Caribbean for national and international trade continues as a threat to this species.

The MTCA is a timely and urgently needed source of support for marine turtle conservation in the light of the habitat changes anticipated from climate change. Climate change is a new threat to marine turtles worldwide. As reptiles, these species are particularly sensitive to increases in temperature which shift their sex ratio to females during incubation in the sand, and in some cases lead to embryo mortality from overheating. Sea level rise may erode away some of the prime nesting beaches of marine turtles, when infrastructure (roads, buildings, seawalls, etc.) or natural obstacles hinder the beaches from shifting inland. Coral reefs, the feeding habitat of hawksbills, are increasingly diminishing as bleaching events become stronger and more frequent. Marine turtle conservation requires efforts to increase the resilience of turtles and their habitats to best withstand the impacts of climate change.

As well as playing important roles in balancing coastal ecosystems, marine turtles play a significant role in many coastal economies. Increasingly, communities are finding ways to benefit from turtles economically while also conserving them. 'Sea turtle tourism', in which visitors come to watch sea turtles lay their eggs and hatchlings make their way to the sea, is a recent phenomenon, only becoming widespread in the 1990s. Worldwide, hundreds of thousands of visitors visit turtle beaches and volunteer for sea turtle projects each year. Marine



turtle-based tourism brings in more than twice as much money for coastal areas and developing countries as the sale of sea turtle products like meat, leather and eggs, according to the results of an economic analysis commissioned by WWF. The study confirms what we've long suspected – sea turtles are worth more to local economies alive than dead.

From FY2005 to FY2008, the Marine Turtle Conservation Fund made total grants of \$2.24 million and generated an additional \$3.74 million in matching funds from private partners and other governments. The provision of seed money by the Fish and Wildlife Service has drawn interest and support from these other partners, and has enhanced the benefit from the modest investment of U.S. Government resources. Despite enormous need, as the newest fund the MTCA receives a smaller appropriation than the other Multinational Species Conservation Funds. MTCA funding in FY 2009 increased to \$1.5 million, but lagged behind the programs for African and Asian elephants and great apes by \$500,000 each, and for rhinos and tigers by \$1 million. Perhaps because the funding levels have not reached parity with other programs, the MTCA has the highest ratio of unfulfilled applications of any of the Funds. Only 78 grants have been made out of a total of 291 proposals since the inception of the program, leaving many qualified proposals unfunded. We urge that funding levels be increased in future years to meet these unfulfilled needs.

The long-term survival of marine turtles is in serious jeopardy. The Marine Turtle Conservation Act is an important opportunity to support international conservation of threatened sea turtles abroad. It will ensure that the successes of ongoing sea turtle conservation efforts in the United States are not lost when the animals travel overseas. The Act will advance conservation goals, build conservation partnerships and leverage significant resources from private and other sources and build goodwill abroad. WWF wholeheartedly endorses the reauthorization of this critical legislation, which has already done so much to ensure the survival of these ancient mariners.

## **Tortoises and Freshwater Turtles**

Although not part of the MTCA, the outlook for tortoises and freshwater turtles is becoming increasingly dire, as demand increases for food and for traditional medicines in China and other parts of Asia. Chinese turtle populations have been driven to near extinction by decades of over-exploitation, and imports of turtles from Southeast Asia have grown enormously to meet Chinese demand. With some 13 million freshwater turtles being traded every year, populations have crashed in Asia, and the demand for turtles is now reaching North America and Africa. Extensive degradation of turtle habitats through pollution and development, in addition to the growing international pet trade, has added to the pressure on these species. As a result some 43 percent of the 310 turtle species in the world are threatened with extinction, according to the 2008 IUCN Red List. The percentage of threatened species is expected to rise above 50 percent as more species are fully evaluated.

Already 10 species or subspecies of turtles have gone extinct in modern times, most of them giant tortoises from the Galapagos and Indian Ocean islands. One subspecies of giant tortoise in the Galapagos is represented by a single individual and the giant Yangtze softshell turtle is down to four individuals living in Chinese zoos. The ploughshare tortoise of Madagascar has a wild

population of under 200, but is being poached for the pet trade where a single animal can sell for \$10,000.

The demand for turtles of all species is completely unsustainable, and for the most part is unregulated. It is not an exaggeration to say that freshwater turtles and tortoises are in crisis around the world, and that further extinctions will be inevitable without intervention and financial support. A few small organizations like the Turtle Conservation Fund and the Chelonian Research Foundation have made grants to support turtle research and conservation, but each has very limited resources. For this reason, WWF believes that the Marine Turtle Conservation Act should be amended to include a modest program for freshwater turtles and tortoises, to channel much needed grant funds to the most critical cases and to leverage additional funds from potential partners. As noted above, the MTCA has elicited almost twice as many dollars from matching grants as it has invested on its own. This leveraging effect would be an extremely important component of an expanded eligibility provision for freshwater turtles and tortoises in the MTCA.

**Recommendation.** WWF recommends that the MTCA Reauthorization Act be amended to authorize the addition of all families of chelonians to the list of eligible species. In order to avoid siphoning funds from marine turtles, grants for freshwater turtle and tortoises should be limited to 20 percent of the annual appropriation in excess of \$1 million. In FY 2009, when \$1.5 million was appropriated for marine turtles, this formula would have provided \$100,000 for freshwater turtles and tortoises. The selection of species most in need would be at the discretion of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and would give its staff the flexibility to address the most critical cases with a small number of grants. The grants made will have a positive impact on the survival chances of the species selected and for some may be the difference between extinction and survival. Please see Appendix D for recommended language to accomplish this change.

## Conclusion

I thank you again for the opportunity to testify before you today. WWF would like to endorse H.R. 1454 with the suggested changes mentioned earlier in my testimony. The Multinational Species Conservation Funds Semipostal Stamp Act is a creative approach to involving the public in direct support for a Federal Government program, and would provide benefits not only to threatened species, but also to U.S. Government conservation goals and to the Postal Service bottom line. We also endorse the reauthorization of H.R. 509, which has done so much already to help marine turtles survive in the wild. We strongly recommend that the bill be amended to include a small number of grants for tortoises and freshwater turtles, many of which are at serious risk of extinction. We also endorse without comment H.R. 556, the Southern Sea Otter Recovery and Research Act.

Madam Chair, Mr. Ranking Member, thank you for your leadership on wildlife conservation issues generally and on these proposed bills in particular. I cannot emphasize how important your work has been in protecting some of the world's most endangered and iconic species. We look forward to working with you, other members of the Subcommittee, and your respective staff, on these most important efforts.

## **Appendices**

- A. Most Popular Commemorative Stamps
- B. Wildlife Stamp Retentions
- C. Multinational Species Coalition Membership
- D. Recommended Changes to MTCA

**APPENDIX A**

**MOST POPULAR COMMEMORATIVE STAMPS**

(Source – U.S. Postal Service)

<b>STAMP SUBJECT</b>	<b>YEAR</b>	<b>STAMPS SAVED</b>	<b>VALUE TO USPS</b>
Elvis Presley	1993	124.1 million	
Wonders of America	2006	87.5 million	
Marvel Super Heroes	2007	85.5 million	
Star Wars	2007	80.8 million	
*Wildflowers	1992	76.1 million	
Rock and Roll	1993	75.9 million	
DC Comic Super Heroes	2006	73.0 million	
Greetings from America	2002	71.4 million	
*Insects and Spiders	1999	60.9 million	\$20.1 million
Art of Disney: Romance	2006	57.2 million	

**APPENDIX B**

**WILDLIFE STAMP RETENTIONS**

STAMP SUBJECT	STAMPS SAVED	VALUE TO USPS
Sonoran Desert	33.6 million stamps	\$11.1 million
Pacific Coast Rain Forest	29.0 million stamps	\$9.6 million
Endangered Species	28.8 million stamps	Est. \$9.5 million
Arctic Animals	25.4 million stamps	\$8.4 million
Aquarium Fish	24.2 million stamps	\$8.2 million
Our Nature of America series (10 issues)	28 million average	Est. \$10 million average

## APPENDIX C

### MULTINATIONAL SPECIES COALITION MEMBERS - 2009

1. African Wildlife Foundation
2. American Bird Conservancy
3. American Veterinary Medical Association
4. Association of Zoos and Aquariums
5. Born Free USA
6. Caribbean Conservation Corporation
7. Conservation International
8. Defenders of Wildlife
9. Dian Fossey Gorilla Fund International
10. Fauna and Flora International
11. Feld Entertainment
12. Humane Society International
13. Humane Society of the United States
14. International Cheetah Foundation
15. International Crane Foundation
16. International Elephant Foundation
17. Internat'l Fund for Animal Welfare
18. International Rhino Foundation
19. Jane Goodall Institute
20. National Audubon Society
21. National Wildlife Federation
22. The Nature Conservancy
23. The Ocean Conservancy
24. Safari Club International
25. Sierra Club
26. The WILD Foundation
27. Wildlife Alliance
28. Wildlife Conservation Society
29. Wildlife Management Institute
30. World Wildlife Fund

## APPENDIX D

# RECOMMENDED CHANGES TO MTCA

To assist in the conservation of marine turtles and the nesting habitats of marine turtles in foreign countries.

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

### **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

This Act may be cited as the “Marine Turtle Conservation Act of 2004”.

### **SEC. 2. FINDINGS AND PURPOSES.**

(a) FINDINGS.—The Congress finds that—

- (1) marine turtle populations have declined to the point that the long-term survival of the loggerhead, green, hawksbill, Kemp’s ridley, olive ridley, and leatherback turtle in the wild is in serious jeopardy;
- (2) 6 of the 7 recognized species of marine turtles are listed as threatened or endangered species under the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (16 U.S.C. 1531 et seq.), and all 7 species have been included in Appendix I of CITES;
- (3) because marine turtles are long-lived, late-maturing, and highly migratory, marine turtles are particularly vulnerable to the impacts of human exploitation and habitat loss;
- (4) illegal international trade seriously threatens wild populations of some marine turtle species, particularly the hawksbill turtle;
- (5) the challenges facing marine turtles are immense, and the resources available have not been sufficient to cope with the continued loss of nesting habitats caused by human activities and the consequent diminution of marine turtle populations;
- (6) because marine turtles are flagship species for the ecosystems in which marine turtles are found, sustaining healthy populations of marine turtles provides benefits to many other species of wildlife, including many other threatened or endangered species;
- (7) marine turtles are important components of the ecosystems that they inhabit, and studies of wild populations of marine turtles have provided important biological insights;
- (8) changes in marine turtle populations are most reliably indicated by changes in the numbers of nests and nesting females; and
- (9) the reduction, removal, or other effective addressing of the threats to the long-term viability of populations of marine turtles will require the joint commitment and effort of—
  - (A) countries that have within their boundaries marine turtle nesting habitats and
  - (B) persons with expertise in the conservation of marine turtles.

(b) PURPOSE.—The purpose of this Act is to assist in the conservation of marine turtles and the nesting habitats of marine turtles in foreign countries by supporting and providing financial resources for projects to conserve the nesting habitats, conserve

marine turtles in those habitats, and address other threats to the survival of marine turtles. **In addition, up to 20 percent of the annual appropriation for the Act in excess of \$1,000,000 may be used for grants to assist the conservation of other species within the Order Testudines**

### **SEC. 3. DEFINITIONS.**

In this Act:

(1) CITES.—The term “CITES” means the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (27 UST 1087; TIAS 8249).

(2) CONSERVATION.—The term “conservation” means the use of all methods and procedures necessary to protect critical habitats of turtles in foreign countries and of turtles in those habitats, including—

(A) protection, restoration, and management of nesting habitats;

(B) onsite research and monitoring of nesting populations, nesting habitats, annual reproduction, and species population trends;

(C) assistance in the development, implementation, and improvement of national and regional management plans for nesting habitat ranges;

(D) enforcement and implementation of CITES and laws of foreign countries to—

(i) protect and manage nesting populations and nesting habitats; and

(ii) prevent illegal trade of marine turtles;

(E) training of local law enforcement officials in the interdiction and prevention of—

(i) the illegal killing of marine turtles on nesting habitat; and

(ii) illegal trade in marine turtles;

(F) initiatives to resolve conflicts between humans and marine turtles over habitat used by marine turtles for nesting;

(G) community outreach and education; and

(H) strengthening of the ability of local communities to implement nesting population and nesting habitat conservation programs.

(3) FUND.—The term “Fund” means the Marine Turtle Conservation Fund established by section 5.

(4) MARINE TURTLE.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—

(i) The term “marine turtle” means any member of the family Cheloniidae or Dermochelyidae.

(B) INCLUSIONS.—The term “marine turtle” includes—

(i) any part, product, egg, or offspring of a turtle described in subparagraph (A); and

(ii) a carcass of such a turtle.

**(5) ORDER TESTUDINES means, in addition to any family of marine turtle, any family of freshwater turtle or tortoise.**

(6) MULTINATIONAL SPECIES CONSERVATION FUND.—The term “Multinational Species Conservation Fund” means the fund established under the heading “multinational species conservation fund” in title I of the Department of the Interior and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 1999 (16 U.S.C. 4246).

(7) SECRETARY.—The term “Secretary” means the Secretary.....