

troops, strengthen our schools, and protect our country.

As his tenure at the RNC ends, Mel should be proud that he has represented the best of the Republican Party and its core values. I am grateful for his leadership at the RNC, his service in my Cabinet,

and his continued service as a Member of the United States Senate.

Mike Duncan has demonstrated that he is an effective chairman who will help our party win in the next election. I have confidence in Mike's leadership and look forward to continuing to work with him.

The President's Radio Address *October 19, 2007*

Good morning. This weekend, I will join millions of Americans in one of our favorite national pastimes, fishing. I'm going to be on the Chesapeake Bay. For those who love fishing, the most important thing is not the size of your catch, but the enjoyment of the great outdoors. Every year, millions of Americans grab their tackle boxes and head out to their favorite fishing holes. No matter where they drop their lines, they build memories that last a lifetime. And in the process, they contribute billions of dollars to our economy.

My administration is committed to protecting the environment that our sportsmen depend on. We believe that to meet the environmental challenges of the 21st century, we must bring together conservationists, fishermen, sportsmen, local leaders, and Federal, State, and tribal officials in a spirit of cooperation. I call this "cooperative conservation." Instead of the old environmental debates that pit one group against another, we're moving our country toward a system where citizens and government can come together to achieve meaningful results for our environment.

One way we are practicing cooperative conservation is through our efforts to preserve our fisheries. Almost 3 years ago, I announced an ocean action plan to promote an ethic of responsible stewardship that will make our waterways cleaner, healthier, and more productive. Last year, I was proud to establish a marine conservation area in

the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands. This is the single largest conservation area in the history of our Nation and the largest protected marine area in the world. We're also working to clean up marine debris and to address harmful fishing practices in international waters that destroy corals and other vital habitats. Earlier this year, I signed a law that will help end overfishing and create market-based regulations to replenish our fish stocks so we can keep them strong for generations to come.

Prior to my fishing trip, I am signing an Executive order that will preserve two of our Nation's most popular recreational fish, striped bass and red drum. These two species were once abundant in American waters, but their stocks have been overfished. The Executive order I sign will protect striped bass and red drum caught in Federal waters by moving to prohibit their commercial sale. It will promote more accurate scientific records about fish population levels. And it will help the Federal Government work with State and local officials to find innovative ways to ensure these two species are conserved for future generations.

As we work to protect our Nation's fisheries, we're also working to help migratory birds thrive. Each year, more than 800 species of birds make their way south for the winter and then return home to their breeding grounds the following spring. Their ability to survive these long journeys

depends on stopover habitat. Unfortunately, some of the areas where birds once stopped and rested on their great migrations have been lost to development. So we're working to protect these species by restoring or replacing their stopover habitats.

One key way we're doing this is by expanding our national wildlife refuges, creating new ones, and restoring and improving hundreds of thousands of acres of habitat for migratory birds. At the same time, we're bringing together Federal, State, and tribal agencies to work with private groups and corporations to improve habitat on private lands. The Department of the Interior is also working with cities across our Nation to build stopover habitats in urban areas. And this weekend, I'm announcing new policies, including new efforts with Mexico, to foster greater habitat conservation for the migratory birds.

America's national parks also play a vital role in our conservation efforts. Earlier this week, Laura spoke at the first-ever leadership summit of the National Park Foundation. She discussed the National Parks Cen-

tennial Initiative, a public-private partnership to raise funds for the Park System's 100th anniversary in 2016. This initiative will support many vital projects to improve habitats for local wildlife, including some that will directly benefit birds.

As Americans, we've been given a beautiful country to live in, and we have an obligation to be good stewards of the environment. With the cooperative conservation policies we have put in place, we show our commitment to preserving our Nation's heritage. By making responsible choices today, we will ensure that our children and grandchildren will enjoy a cleaner and more vibrant environment.

Thank you for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 7:50 a.m. on October 19 in the Cabinet Room at the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on October 20. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on October 19. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this address.

Remarks at the Patuxent Research Refuge in Laurel, Maryland *October 20, 2007*

The President. Listen, thank you all for coming. I appreciate the hospitality you've shown us here at Patuxent Research Refuge. I want to thank all the good folks who work here from the Fish and Wildlife Service as well as the U.S. Geological Survey.

One of the things we've discussed here is a significant environmental challenge we face here in America, and that is, birds are losing the stopover habitats they need and depend on for their annual migrations. And therefore, I've come to discuss a strategy to enhance those habitats, without which many birds could become severely challenged.

To me, this is a national issue that requires national focus. And so I appreciate very much you all giving me a chance to describe our strategy and thanks for your—thanks for working for the country.

I am proud to be here with Laura, bird-watcher extraordinaire. I appreciate Secretary Dirk Kempthorne running our Interior Department. I do thank Wendy Paulson, who's joined us. She's on the board of the Cornell Lab of Ornithology. Some of the recommendations—or all the recommendations that I'm describing today were brought to our attention by Wendy and a friend of mine from Texas named Rusty Rose, both of whom serve on this