



# NEW YORK STATE ORNITHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION, INC.

*for the birds and birders of New York State since 1948*

Beth Goldstein, Natural Resources Planner  
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
300 Westgate Center Drive  
Hadley, MA 01035-9589

February 24, 2016

Dear Ms. Goldstein:

I am writing on behalf of our organization regarding the proposed Great Thicket National Wildlife Refuge. The NY State Ornithological Assoc. is the umbrella group for bird clubs and related organizations in the state with 45 member organizations and 650 individual members. Please consider this letter as our formal comment in this matter.

We support establishment of this wildlife refuge and the habitat it will provide for young forest and shrubland birds and other wildlife. Species such as Blue-winged Warbler, Brown Thrasher, Eastern Towhee, Field Sparrow and others are in long-term decline, with loss of suitable habitat a major factor. This proposal would allow acquisition and management of land in areas important for these birds, protected from development and agricultural practices that have been a cause of changes detrimental to such species.

We hope primary focus will be given to those species at highest risk, as identified by state and federal assessments, with endangered, threatened and special concern birds in New York State as such a group.

We urge USFWS to proceed with this proposal.

Sincerely,

Andrew Mason, Conservation Committee Chair

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