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THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

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# HOUSE RESOLUTION

No. 497 Session of  
2017

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INTRODUCED BY McCARTER, DEAN, HENNESSEY, KINSEY, DIGIROLAMO,  
MURT, VITALI, FRANKEL, BIZZARRO, MILLARD, NEILSON, SCHWEYER,  
CALTAGIRONE, READSHAW, WATSON, ROZZI AND MARSICO,  
SEPTEMBER 25, 2017

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INTRODUCED AS NONCONTROVERSIAL RESOLUTION UNDER RULE 35,  
SEPTEMBER 25, 2017

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## A RESOLUTION

1 Designating the month of October 2017 as "Biodiversity Awareness  
2 Month" in Pennsylvania.

3 WHEREAS, According to the American Heritage Science  
4 Dictionary, biodiversity is defined as "the number, variety, and  
5 genetic variation of different organisms found within a  
6 specified geographic region"; and

7 WHEREAS, Use of the term biodiversity can encompass several  
8 aspects of the natural world; and

9 WHEREAS, Beyond the total number of different and distinct  
10 species, biodiversity can be used to describe an ecosystem,  
11 which refers to a system, or a group of interconnected elements,  
12 formed by the interaction of a community of organisms with their  
13 environment; and

14 WHEREAS, Biodiversity may also refer to the distinct genetic  
15 differences among a particular species in which some members  
16 have developed certain unique characteristics based on their

geographic location and environment establishing certain endemic species that only live within a specific area; and

WHEREAS, According to the National Geographic Society, scientists located throughout the world have identified nearly 1.75 million species to date, including more than 950,000 species of insects, 270,000 species of plants, 19,000 species of fish, 9,000 species of birds, 4,000 species of mammals and countless other species such as fungi, arachnids and mollusks; and

WHEREAS, The term "biological diversity" was first used and popularized by entomologist Edward O. Wilson in his 1992 book, *The Diversity of Life*, in which he referred to the totality of Earth's organisms and their interdependence based on interactions between different species and their habitats; and

WHEREAS, The 2014 World Wildlife Fund (WWF) publication, *Living Planet Report*, found that wildlife populations of vertebrate species have declined by 52% over the past 40 years; and

WHEREAS, The WWF has referred to the consequences of human activities as being directly responsible for the alarming decline and in some cases the extinction of certain species; and

WHEREAS, Climate change, the clearing of natural habitats due to increased human development and the expansion of agriculture, overfishing, poaching and illegal wildlife trafficking have all contributed to the decrease in species' populations throughout the world; and

WHEREAS, The loss of a species may have an impact beyond that of the environment in which it lives; and

WHEREAS, The ecological loss of species may negatively impact a region's economy due to a loss of tourism and may be adverse

1 to native people and cultures that often consider an animal or a  
2 species to be of particular importance to their heritage; and

3 WHEREAS, Based on scientific models and collected data, the  
4 National Audubon Society's 2014 Climate Change Report indicates  
5 that of North America's 588 bird species, 314 could lose more  
6 than 50% of their current climatic range by the year 2080; and

7 WHEREAS, According to the report, many of North America's  
8 bird species are currently experiencing population declines for  
9 a variety of reasons, including shifting climatic ranges; and

10 WHEREAS, As climatic ranges shift, native bird species could  
11 face an increase in competition for food and other resources  
12 from invasive species; and

13 WHEREAS, When a species with a shrinking population is faced  
14 with a sudden increase in competition for resources by one or  
15 more invasive species, its likelihood of survival further  
16 diminishes; and

17 WHEREAS, A species whose total population decreases is less  
18 likely to adapt and survive in a changing environment; and

19 WHEREAS, As a species' total population decreases, there is  
20 less genetic diversity carried forward by new offspring, making  
21 the overall population more susceptible to illness and disease;  
22 and

23 WHEREAS, In her recently published book, *The Sixth*  
24 *Extinction: An Unnatural History*, author Elizabeth Kolbert  
25 states that there have been five mass extinctions in the history  
26 of life on Earth; and

27 WHEREAS, According to Ms. Kolbert, the world may currently be  
28 facing a possible sixth extinction, a mass die-off of a  
29 multitude of species due to manmade activities; and

30 WHEREAS, It is vital that people be educated about the

1 importance of biodiversity and commit to working toward  
2 maintaining the Earth's unique and fascinating species;  
3 therefore be it

4       RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives designate the  
5 month of October 2017 as "Biodiversity Awareness Month" in  
6 Pennsylvania.