

August 26, 2025

Dear Representative,

I write as a biologist and conservation scientist and as a concerned citizen that you represent about the plan to kill 500,000 barred owls to protect spotted owls. Sadly, as species ranges change both naturally and unnaturally, species interactions are common, resulting in one species (in this case, spotted owls) being outcompeted by the other species (barred owls). This is a particularly fraught situation because both species are magnificent and important predators and because this is just one of many natural range expansions that are almost certainly creating new interspecific interactions where there are both winners and losers.

Aside from being very costly (estimates start at \$3000/killed owl), the plan simply won't work. It is likely impossible to eliminate competition across a wide swath of spotted owl range by killing barred owls. The area is too vast, and there are no barriers to entry to dispersing barred owls. Once the resident barred owl is killed in a spotted owl's territory, another one will simply move in. It *might* be possible to work to provide safe islands of spotted owl habitat, but at a never-ending welfare cost to the barred owls and to taxpayers. Our policy decisions on wildlife management must be weighed against these practical considerations.

Rather, by better protecting old-growth forests that are the key habitat for spotted owls, and by identifying the best locations to protect, we can ensure that spotted owls stand a chance of surviving this natural competition between two magnificent predators. Shooting the barred owls, on this scale and across such a long time horizon, is a strategy that should be rejected. I urge support for HJR 111 and SJR 69.

Sincerely Yours,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'DTB', followed by a long horizontal flourish.

Daniel T. Blumstein, Professor

Department of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology

The Institute of the Environment and Sustainability

University of California Los Angeles

marmots@ucla.edu