

Opening Statement
The Honorable Madeleine Z. Bordallo
Chairwoman
Subcommittee on Insular Affairs, Oceans and Wildlife
Thursday, March 4, 2010
Oversight Hearing on the President's Fiscal Year 2011 Budget Request for the United
States Fish and Wildlife Service

Before we begin, I would note that this hearing was originally scheduled for last Wednesday. As everyone here knows, however, the Director of the Service, the Honorable Sam D. Hamilton, passed away the weekend before, and Mr. Rowan Gould has stepped in to serve as the Acting Director. On behalf of myself, Mr. Brown, and the entire Committee, I would again like to express my deepest sympathies to the family and friends of Director Hamilton and to you Mr. Gould and all of your colleagues at the Fish and Wildlife Service, who, I am sure, will continue to be inspired by Director Hamilton's legacy and commitment to conservation.

Turning to today's business, the budget request for Fish and Wildlife Service programs cuts \$4.6 million from the enacted level for Fiscal Year 2010. Despite these fiscally austere times, the Fish and Wildlife Service has proposed a \$20 million increase for the Land and Water Conservation Fund and \$18.8 million increase to address conservation challenges related to climate change. I commend the Administration's efforts to finally develop a comprehensive strategy to confront the realities of climate change, and I know Director Hamilton was a leader in this effort.

However, I continue to remain concerned with the long-term operations and maintenance budget backlog facing the National Wildlife Refuge System, the flat funding of the Endangered Species Program, which was long neglected under the previous Administration, and the cuts to the Neotropical Migratory Bird and Multinational Species Conservation Programs. Furthermore, I am deeply disappointed in the Administration's failure to request any funding to support the management of the Pacific Marine National Monuments. I recognize that we face a difficult funding climate, not only in the coming year, but most likely for many years ahead, and we will have to strike the right balance in supporting the programs that we care about and those that provide the greatest conservation benefits.

With that, I look forward to hearing from our witness today and looking more deeply into these issues.