



# U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

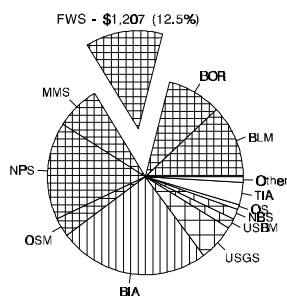
This nation's fish and wildlife resources are an important part of our natural heritage. They represent an irreplaceable natural legacy, provide numerous opportunities for recreational enjoyment, serve as indicators of environmental health, and in many ways support our livelihood. With pressures on our natural resources increasing each day, efforts to preserve them for future generations are all the more critical.

The mission of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS or Service) is to conserve, protect, and enhance fish and wildlife and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people.

Today, national wildlife refuges have been established from the Arctic Ocean to the South Pacific, from Maine to the Caribbean. Varying in size from half-acre parcels to thousands of square miles, they encompass more than 92 million acres of the nation's best wildlife habitats. The vast majority of these lands are in Alaska, with the rest spread across the rest of the United States and several U.S. territories.

National wildlife refuges play a vital role in preserving endangered and threatened species. Approximately one-fourth of the currently listed threatened and endangered species in the United States occur on refuges. Approximately 400 refuges are used by endangered species and portions of 51 are designated as critical habitat.

FY 1994 FWS Budget Authority  
(\$ in millions)



Total DOI Budget Authority - \$9,663

The FWS manages 504 national wildlife refuges and 32 wetland management districts with waterfowl production areas in 180 counties. In addition, FWS is responsible for migratory bird management, endangered species protection, law enforcement and consultation on water resource and other federal development projects.

**The National Wildlife Refuge System:** The National Wildlife Refuge System is the world's largest and most diverse collection of lands set aside specifically for wildlife. The refuge system began in 1903 when President Theodore Roosevelt designated 3-acre Pelican Island, a pelican and heron rookery in Florida, as a bird sanctuary.

National wildlife refuges offer the public a wide variety of recreational and educational opportunities. Many refuges have fishing and hunting programs, visitor centers, wildlife trails, and environmental education programs. Nationwide, some 25 million visitors annually hunt, fish, observe, and photograph wildlife or participate in interpretive activities on refuges.

**Partnerships - Key to the Future:** The Fish and Wildlife Service is reaching out to form partnerships with farmers and ranchers, state and federal agencies, Native American Tribes, corporations, conservation groups, and citizen volunteers. Working together is the key to conserving our country's important remaining wildlife habitats -- many of which are privately owned -- and to maintaining our nation's rich abundance of fish and wildlife species as we move toward the 21st century.

For example, through the Partners for Wildlife Program, the FWS provides technical and financial assistance to private landowners who want to restore valuable wildlife habitat -- primarily wetlands, riparian areas, and native prairie -- on their property.

In return, the landowners manage their lands in a

## Birds are Big Business

In comparison to the \$5.8 billion spent for movie tickets and \$5.9 billion for tickets to sporting events such as football, baseball and basketball, Americans each year spend over \$5.2 billion on birding and birdwatching. For wild birdseed alone, Americans spend an astonishing \$2 billion a year. Annually, an estimated 200,000 jobs are supported by birdwatching. In total, Americans spend an estimated \$18.1 billion each year to watch wildlife.

All indications are the birdwatching and -feeding hobby is growing fast. The number of specialty stores selling wild birdseed, feeders, and equipment has exploded in recent years, along with subscriptions to birdwatching magazines.

National wildlife refuges attract ecotourist dollars for local businesses. The estimated economic impact in 1994 of visitors on the surrounding communities ranges from over a half-million to several millions of dollars, including lodging (motels, campsites), meals, gasoline and ancillary purchases. Annually, 28 to 30 million people visit National Wildlife Refuges.

manner that will best protect wildlife. This program has been tremendously popular with private landowners. Since 1987, the FWS has developed partnerships with over 14,000 landowners and has restored over 230,000 acres of wetlands.

**Saving Endangered Species:** The decline of fish and wildlife populations is a warning signal that the environment may be in jeopardy. One of the major functions of the Fish and Wildlife Service is the identification and recovery of endangered species -- those that are in danger of extinction. The Service leads the federal effort to protect and restore animals and plants that are in danger of extinction both in the United States and worldwide.

The Service works with other Federal and state

agencies, university scientists, and others to identify vulnerable species and take proactive measures to keep them from declining to the point where they need listing as endangered. For those species that require listing, the Service helps identify and carry out recovery actions to rebuild their populations. The Service consults with other Federal agencies to avoid impacts to endangered species. Of more than 94,000 such consultations carried out from 1987-1992, only 54 projects or activities were eventually withdrawn or terminated due to endangered species concerns. The Service also works with private landowners to develop "habitat conservation plans" that accommodate the landowner's desire to develop with the conservation needs of listed species.

**Enforcing Wildlife Laws:** The Fish and Wildlife Service employs about 200 special agents

## Recovery Program for Endangered and Threatened Species

The goal of the endangered species program is to restore species to the point where they are no longer endangered or threatened. The process, called "recovery," aims at reestablishing secure, self-sustaining wild populations. When this aim has been achieved, the species may be removed from the list of endangered and threatened animals and plants.

The key to effective recovery programs is coordination among federal, state and local agencies, academic researchers, conservation organizations, private individuals and major land users. In its role as coordinator of the recovery process, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service must emphasize cooperation and teamwork among all the involved parties. Public participation in reviewing plans and implementing recovery actions is encouraged.

Recovering an endangered species can be challenging. Sometimes the causes of a species' decline are not well understood and must be researched. Some species have declined to very low population numbers or reproduce slowly, while others face multiple threats. Nevertheless, the Endangered Species Program has succeeded in stabilizing and recovering highly vulnerable species.

To date, eleven species have been recovered throughout all or significant portions of their range, and 18 others have been downlisted from endangered to the less dire category of "threatened." Some 38 percent of all species now on the list are either stable or improving, critical important steps on the road to recovery.

and wildlife inspectors who enforce federal wildlife laws protecting endangered species, migratory birds, and marine mammals, as well as laws that prohibit interstate commerce in species protected by state laws. Special agents investigate cases ranging from individual migratory bird hunting violations to large-scale poaching and commercial trade in protected wildlife.

**Restoring Fisheries:** Restoring nationally significant fisheries that have been depleted by overfishing, pollution, or other habitat damage is a major effort of the Fish and Wildlife Service. Currently, Service fishery specialists are devoting



*Marshes, swamps, potholes, and other wetlands support more wildlife species than any other habitat types. They also help control floods, recharge groundwater, and cleanse pollutants from groundwater supplies. More than 4 million acres of wetlands in the National Wildlife Refuge System have been acquired through the Service's Federal Duck Stamp Program. All waterfowl hunters must buy a Duck Stamp each year; however, many other people who wish to contribute to wildlife and habitat conservation also buy Duck Stamps. Out of each \$15 Duck Stamp, \$14.70 goes directly to buy wetlands for the National Wildlife Refuge System. Since the program began in 1934, more than \$450 million worth of Duck Stamps have been sold.*

much of their efforts to helping four important species -- the lake trout in the upper Great Lakes; the striped bass of the Chesapeake Bay region and the Gulf Coast; the Atlantic salmon of New England; and the major salmonid species (chinook, coho, and steelhead) of the Pacific Northwest. As part of this program, nearly 80 national fish

hatcheries produce some 60 species of fish. The Service stocks more than 200 million fish annually. Through the Recreational Fisheries Stewardship Initiative, the Service is working to strengthen the partnership among state, federal, and tribal governments, the fishing industry, and private fishery conservation groups to conserve and enhance the nation's recreational fisheries.

**Federal Aid:** Two laws administered by the Fish and Wildlife Service -- the Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration Act and the Federal Aid in Sport Fisheries Restoration Act -- have created some of the most successful programs in the history of fish

and wildlife conservation. With money raised from federal excise taxes on sporting arms and ammunition, archery equipment, sport fishing tackle, and motor boat fuels, these programs provide federal grant money to support specific projects carried out by state fish and wildlife agencies. Through the taxes paid on hunting and fishing equipment, American sportsmen and women have provided more than \$2 billion for these conservation programs since they first began.

The wildlife program, since 1939, has succeeded in restoring many species that were in danger of

vanishing in the early 1900s, such as the white-tailed deer, black bear, and wild turkey. The fish program, in operation since 1952, has provided millions of Americans with angling opportunities by enhancing populations of such species as rainbow trout, channel catfish, and largemouth bass.