

## Recovery

### Program Overview

The Recovery Program carries out the primary purpose of the Endangered Species Act (ESA)--to conserve endangered and threatened species and the ecosystems upon which they depend--by preparing recovery plans that identify necessary recovery actions, and working with other Service programs, and other Federal, State, Tribal, and non-government partners to implement these recovery actions. This subactivity directly supports the Department of Interior's Resource Protection Mission Goal to Sustain Biological Communities by focusing on the conservation of the most imperiled components of these communities.

Recovery of endangered and threatened species is an ever-challenging task. The factors that lead to species imperilment, including habitat degradation through land, water, and other resource development and extraction and invasive species proliferation are increasingly complex. Addressing these factors requires coordinated action over a long period of time. Because listing species as endangered or threatened under the ESA does not immediately halt or alter these threats, species often continue to decline following listing. However, as knowledge of species and their requirements increases through the development of recovery plans and implementation of recovery actions, the status of species will often stabilize and begin to show improvement.

*In an independent study published in the Annual Review of Ecological Systematics in 1999, M.W. Schwartz estimated that without the ESA, 192 species might have been expected to become extinct during the 25-year period from 1973 to 1998; with the ESA in place, however, only 7 species are known to have become extinct during this period.*

The Department has recently finalized its Strategic Plan, and the Service has proposed mission goals and associated long-term goals consistent with the Strategic Plan. The Recovery Program contributes directly to the Department's strategic goal to sustain biological communities on Department managed and influenced lands, in the Resource Protection mission component, and the Service's proposed mission goal of "Conservation Leadership for Fish, Wildlife, and Their Habitats." The Department's relevant end outcome measure is the percent of species listed a decade or more that are in stable or improving condition. The Endangered Species Program is developing draft long-term and annual performance goals to evaluate our success in meeting these goals.

### Recovery Planning

Recovery planning - the foundation for species recovery- includes the development of recovery outlines as soon as a species is listed, preparation of draft and final recovery plans, and, as new information becomes available, revision of plans. The recovery outline - the first step in recovery planning - guides the immediate implementation of urgent recovery actions, and describes the process to be used to develop a recovery plan. The recovery plan identifies the recovery objectives, measurable recovery criteria, the strategy for achieving recovery, specific recovery actions, and methods for monitoring recovery progress. Recovery teams, consisting of species experts, federal and state agencies, non-government organizations and stakeholders, are often established to develop recovery plans. The Service has been working to increase the involvement of stakeholders in recovery planning. Stakeholder involvement early in and throughout the planning process ensures that recovery actions are feasible and establishes support for implementation of recovery actions following completion of the plan. Scientific peer review and public review of plans ensure that plans are based on the best available science and information.

By the end FY 2003, approximately 82 percent of the species that require recovery plans had them. The development of high quality recovery plans for currently listed species without plans as well as for newly listed species, and the revision of older plans, continues to be a priority for the program. Recovery plans

are essential to the effective and efficient implementation of recovery actions not only by the Recovery Program, but by other Service programs, other DOI bureaus, and other partners. Recovery planning, therefore, is critically important to the accomplishment of the DOI's draft end outcome measures for endangered species conservation under the draft Resource Protection goal to sustain biological communities.

### **Recovery Implementation**

Recovery implementation includes organizing, coordinating, funding, and overseeing the on-the-ground actions identified in recovery plans. The Service works with its other federal and state agencies, non-government organizations and the private sector and private landowners to implement recovery actions. Within its available resources, the program must balance the need to implement urgent recovery actions for species on the brink of extinction, the need to continue support for ongoing recovery programs, and the need to initiate recovery programs for newly listed species. The Service engages and encourages multiple stakeholder input throughout the recovery implementation process to develop innovative approaches and broaden support for implementation of on-the-ground actions. Involvement of as many partners as possible, especially the States, increases our ability to implement more recovery actions for more species.

The Service employs several tools that provide flexibility in meeting both species recovery objectives and human needs. The development of special rules under section 4(d) of the ESA for threatened species allows the Service to tailor protections to the needs of the species while enabling human activities to proceed consistent with the conservation of the species. Special rules have been developed for several fish species, such as the Apache trout, that allow the accidental catch of the species by anglers provided the species is returned to the water. The revenues generated from fishing in waters inhabited by the Apache trout helps to promote conservation of habitat. The establishment of experimental populations under section 10(j) of the ESA provides for flexibility in management by considering the population as threatened, regardless of its status elsewhere in its range, and allowing for the development of a special rule to provide flexibility in management of the species. The 10(j) rule developed for the gray wolf population reintroduced into the northern Rocky Mountains allows livestock producers to harass wolves that threaten livestock, and in some cases for these wolves to be killed by appropriate authorities and permitted landowners if they prey upon livestock. Controlling problem wolves helps to maintain support for wolf recovery by reducing real and potential impacts to ranchers.

Safe Harbor Agreements allow for flexible management by providing assurances to private landowners who implement conservation measures for listed species that their actions will not lead to additional ESA restrictions. Safe Harbor Agreements have contributed significantly to the conservation of the red-cockaded woodpecker in the southeast as well as other species inhabiting private lands. Developing and implementing special rules and Safe Harbor Agreements can require considerable resources as they are often complex, cover extensive areas, and require close coordination with states, communities, and other stakeholders.

*To prevent species extinction the Service will work with partners and stakeholders to:*

- *develop recovery plans*
- *implement on-the-ground actions*
- *restore habitat*
- *find new and efficient methods for advancing species recovery*
- *enter into Safe Harbor Agreements*

Monitoring species populations and evaluating the results of recovery actions are essential to the success of recovery programs. Periodic review of all available information concerning a species' status ensures that species are properly classified, that recovery funding is appropriately prioritized, and that recovery plan recommendations remain valid. The ESA requires the Service to review the status of all listed species at least once every 5 years to determine whether a change in status (delisting or reclassification) is necessary. The Service is increasing the priority it places on conducting 5-year reviews with the intent of balancing the need to ensure that decisions are based on the best available information and the need to implement on-the-ground actions that directly further the recovery of listed species.

Delisting and reclassification are the results of recovery success and, for delistings, represent the removal of regulatory restrictions that are no longer necessary to sustain the species. Removing a species from the Endangered Species List or reclassifying it from endangered to threatened requires a formal rulemaking with the associated scientific peer review and public review. When a species has been recovered and delisted, the ESA requires the Service, in cooperation with the states, to monitor the species for a minimum of five years to assess each species' ability to sustain itself without the ESA's protective measures.

Although the Recovery Program directly implements recovery actions for many listed species, the program also plays a vital role in guiding, facilitating, supporting, and monitoring the implementation of recovery actions by other Service programs, other DOI bureaus, federal agencies, states, and other partners. The work of the Recovery Program, therefore, is critically important to the accomplishment of the DOI's end outcome measure for endangered species conservation under the Resource Protection goal to sustain biological communities.

### **2003 Program Performance Accomplishments**

For FY 2003, the Service was appropriated \$65,412,000 for the Recovery Program. Significant actions we achieved in FY2003 include:

- Delisted two species, the Hoover's woolly-star and the Douglas County, Oregon population of the Columbia white-tailed deer, due to recovery.
- Delisted one species, the Truckee barberry, due to new information.
- Downlisted two species, the Missouri bladderpod and gray wolf, from endangered to threatened.
- Proposed delisting one species, the Johnston's frankenia, due to new information,
- Completed final recovery plans for 17 species and revised final recovery plans for an additional three species, the southern sea otter, Gila trout, and red-cockaded woodpecker.
- Maintained 332 species as stable or improving.
- Established another experimental population for the black-footed ferret (Rosebud Sioux Tribe) through the issuance of section 10(j) rules.
- Issued three section 10 (a)(1)(A) enhancement of survival permits for Safe Harbor Agreements covering five species, including the San Joaquin kit fox, Hawaiian goose, southwestern willow flycatcher, California red-legged frog, and least Bell's vireo.
- Developed specifications for a Recovery Implementation Database, to monitor implementation of tasks identified in approved recovery plans and to facilitate our partners' participation in implementation of tasks.

### **2004 Planned Program Performance**

In FY 2004, the enacted budget for the Recovery program totals \$67,905,000. In part, the Service is using these funds for the following activities:

- Based on the final appropriation for the Recovery Program and other new information, complete final determinations for the delisting of 2 species due to recovery; possible examples include the gray wolf (Eastern and Western DPSes) and the Tinian monarch.
- Make final downlisting/reclassification determinations for species such as the American crocodile.
- Prepare recovery outlines for species added to the U.S. List in FY 2004 and complete final recovery plans for 17 species, increasing to 84 percent the number of species listed 2.5 years or more with approved recovery plans.
- Maintain the status of 377 species as stable or improving.
- Complete programming for Phase I of the Recovery Implementation Database to track recovery actions cited in approved recovery plans
- Where applicable, develop special 4(d) rules for threatened species, 10(j) rules for experimental populations, and 10(a)(1)(A) enhancement of survival permits for Safe Harbor Agreements.
- Build partnerships and implement recovery actions (including habitat restoration, captive propagation, and reintroduction) for all priority listed species.

**Justification of 2005 Program Changes**

Subactivity		2005 Budget Request	Program Changes (+/-)
Recovery	\$(000)	58,154	-10,065
	FTE	533	0

The FY 2005 budget request for the Recovery Program is \$58,154,000 and 533 FTE, a net program decrease of \$10,065,000 and 0 FTE from the 2004 enacted level. Reductions to the Recovery program are more than offset by substantial increases to endangered species grant programs.

**General Program Activities (-\$1,416,000)**

The Service proposes to reduce funding for these efforts in FY 2005 in order to fund higher priority conservation activities elsewhere in the budget request. We believe that continued coordination between FWS programs will enable the Service to recover at least 2 species and maintain the status of 385 species currently stable or improving that, by the end of FY 2005, will have been listed for 10 years or more.

**Platte River Recovery (-\$982,000)**

The Platte River Recovery program focuses on protecting and restoring the Platte River ecosystem form and function for the benefit of fish and wildlife species, with emphasis on the recovery of four federally listed species -- the endangered whooping crane, Interior least tern, and pallid sturgeon, and the threatened piping plover. Other sources of funding, including the Service’s grants programs, are available to support these activities. In addition, the Service intends to use other general Recovery Program funds to continue to work on the highest priority activities. While the net effect will be a decrease in focus on the Platte River Recovery Program, we expect the highest priority activities under this program will continue to be funded and implemented, to the extent they are consistent with the Service’s overall priorities.

**Wolf Monitoring (Nez Perce Tribe) (-\$95,000)**

The Service has provided \$300,000 annually from its general program funding to the Nez Perce Tribe in Idaho, to conduct wolf management activities. In FY 2004, an additional \$100,000 was provided by Congress for wolf monitoring activities by the Nez Perce Tribe. Based on the Tribe’s previous experience in this program, the Service believes it is directing sufficient resources (in the annual \$300,000 allocation) to the Nez Perce for its participation in the wolf recovery program in Idaho.

**Wolf Monitoring (-\$1,357,000)**

[ID Office of Species Cons. - \$454,000; Snake River Basin FWS - \$99,000; Yellowstone/Frank Church - \$296,000; Montana - \$305,000; Wyoming - \$203,000]

In FY 2004, Congress provided an additional \$1,357,000 for the wolf recovery program. The funds were passed through to State wolf management authorities to support personnel and equipment, such as radio collars, capture equipment, and aircraft time. The Service proposes to discontinue funding these efforts in FY 2005 in order to fund higher priority conservation activities elsewhere in the budget request. In some instances, this funding represented one-year pass-through funding that has been continued beyond the initial year. The Service intends to continue to work with the States, local governments and landowners on depredation and ungulate issues as general program funding allows.

**Pacific Salmon Grants (-\$1,975,000)**

In FY 2004, Congress provided \$1,975,000 as a pass-through grant to the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) for salmon habitat recovery projects in the State of Washington. The Service proposes to discontinue funding these efforts in FY 2005 in order to fund higher priority conservation activities elsewhere in the budget request. Although the Service plays a role in salmon management, the National Marine Fisheries Service is the Federal agency with lead responsibility for recovery of the Pacific salmon. An array of Federal grant programs are available for species and habitat conservation, particularly programs focused on salmon and anadromous fish recovery.

**Atlantic Salmon Grants (-\$1,975,000)**

In FY 2004, Congress provided \$1,975,000 as a pass through grant to the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation for the “Atlantic Salmon Collaborative” which funds on-the ground projects to permanently protect and restore priority habitats and their buffers for Atlantic salmon. The majority of the funds were used to support voluntary, cooperative efforts with private landowners, non-government organizations, state and federal agencies to permanently protect Atlantic salmon habitat and conduct habitat restoration work benefiting Atlantic salmon. Funds were also used to provide technical assistance to the State of Maine and others to develop and implement the Recovery Plan and continue work on the State of Maine Conservation Plan. This action would be more appropriately funded through other Service grant programs such as the State and Tribal, Landowner Incentive, and Private Stewardship grant programs.

**Lahontan Cutthroat Trout (-\$494,000)**

In FY 2004, Congress provided \$494,000 to the Service for recovery of the Lahontan cutthroat trout in Nevada. The Service has used these funds to coordinate recovery implementation on an ecosystem-based scale for the Lahontan cutthroat trout. Most of the funds have been used for on-the-ground actions and landowner assistance in the Walker and Truckee River basins. The funds enabled the Service to coordinate with stakeholders affected by the trout’s listing and to involve stakeholders in the recovery planning process through the formation of a Management Oversight Group comprised of federal, state and tribal leaders to coordinate recovery efforts and revise the Recovery Plan for the Lahontan Cutthroat trout. Continued funding is not being requested since these on-the-ground actions have been implemented and the Management Oversight Group has been established; any recommendations for future actions—and the appropriate management entities to implement them—are expected to come out of the revised Recovery Plan.

**Alaska Sea Life Center – Eider Recovery (-\$889,000)**

In FY 2004, Congress provided an \$889,000 pass through for the Alaska Sea Life Center to continue a recovery research program for the threatened spectacled eider and Steller’s eider. Specifically, these funds were used to identify and implement a recovery research agenda for these species. The Service is currently collaborating with the Sea Life Center as well as the North Slope governments and the State of Alaska. Past funding and effective partnerships make this pass-through unnecessary in FY 2005. It may be appropriate to support additional activities with the Alaska Sea Life Center through Service grant programs, including possibly the traditional conservation grants program under the Cooperative

Endangered Species Conservation Fund, the Landowner Incentive Program, and the Private Stewardship Grants Program.

**Colorado Fish (-\$691,000)**

The Upper Colorado River Recovery Program is a partnership of entities located in the upper Colorado River basin. The partnership includes the Service, the Bureau of Reclamation, State and local agencies, and water users. All participants of the Colorado River Fish Recovery program are expected to implement and assist in recovery strategies for the endangered humpback chub, Colorado pikeminnow, razorback sucker, and bonytail chub. Other sources of funding, including the Service's grants programs, may be available to support some of these activities, if they rank highly enough against other needs and priorities.

**White Sulphur Springs WV Mussel Recovery (-\$148,000)**

In FY 2004, Congress provided funding to restore and recover multiple Federal and State protected native mussels in West Virginia. The funding was for the White Sulphur Springs National Fish Hatchery to develop propagation techniques for freshwater mussels, which have undergone tremendous declines in recent decades due to habitat destruction, poor water quality, and competition from exotic species. The Service proposes to discontinue funding these efforts in FY 2005 in order to fund higher priority conservation activities elsewhere in the budget request.

**Federal Vehicle Fleet (-\$43,000)**

According to recent Office of Management and Budget statistics, among civilian agencies Interior has the third largest motor vehicle fleet. Vehicles are used by Interior employees and authorized volunteers to support multiple mission activities, many in remote areas. In some locations, government vehicles are provided to support service contractors. Over 4,000 vehicles are used seasonally (i.e., only in winter or summer), or for special purposes, such as law enforcement or fire fighting. Nearly 90 percent of the fleet vehicles are trucks, vans, buses and ambulances, and 10 percent are sedans and station wagons.

In 2004, the Department and the bureaus began a collaborative effort to improve the management of vehicle fleets including examination of the infrastructure for fleet management within each bureau, the identification of best practices that could be used Department-wide, and the development of action plans to improve fleet management and realize cost savings.

In anticipation of improved fleet management and the resultant savings, the 2005 budget proposes a reduction in funding. To achieve these savings, the bureau will undertake fleet reductions and cost-savings by: (1) reducing the size of the fleet; (2) employ energy saving practices by fleet operators; (3) acquire more efficient vehicles; (4) acquire the minimum sized vehicle to accomplish the mission; (5) dispose of underutilized vehicles; (6) freeze the acquisition of vehicles from the General Services Administration (GSA) Excess Vehicle program; and (7) explore and develop the use of inter-bureau motor pools.

## Program Performance Summary

End Outcome Goal 1.2: Resource Protection. Sustain Biological Communities							
End Outcome Measures	2002 Actual	2003 Actual	2004 Plan/Budget	2004 Revised Final Plan	2005 Plan	Change in Performance - 2004 to Planned 2005	Long-term Target (2008)
Percent of threatened or endangered species listed a decade or more that are stabilized or improved. (SP) <sup>a</sup>	44% (320/705)	42% (332/789)	42% (377/894)	42% (377/894)	41% (385/940)	-1%	TBD
Percent of candidate species where listing is unnecessary as a result of conservation actions or agreements (SP) <sup>b</sup>	1.15% (3/260)	1.56% (4/256)	1.56% (4/256)	1.56% (4/256)	1.43% (4/280)	-0.13%	TBD

<sup>a</sup> In FY2002 and FY2003 the Service reported this measure as the number of species listed a decade or more than had stable or improving status. Starting in FY2004 the Service has been requested to report this number as a percentage to be consistent with DOI reporting requirements. This percentage is expressed as the number of species listed a decade or more that had a stable or improving status divided by the total number of species listed a decade or more.

<sup>b</sup> As stated above the Service has reported this measure in previous years as a number, beginning in FY2004 the Service has been requested to report as a percentage.