



**U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service**

# The Coastal Program

## *Caring for Our Coastal Habitats*



**The mission of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Coastal Program is to conserve healthy coastal ecosystems for the benefit of fish, wildlife, and people. It accomplishes this through cooperative partnerships that identify, restore, and protect habitat in priority coastal areas.**

### **Facts About the Coastal Program**

- Focuses exclusively on coastal and estuarine watersheds;
- Applies an ecosystem-level view to solving resource problems;
- Targets efforts for a strategic (rather than opportunistic) approach;
- Works on a variety of habitat types, from salt marsh at the ocean's edge to riparian habitats higher up in the watershed;
- Is a non-regulatory, proactive program that relies on voluntary partnership building;
- Works with a wide variety of partners, including other Federal and State agencies, local and tribal governments, businesses, conservation organizations, and private landowners;



**Right:** Coastal salt marshes provide important habitat for wading birds, migratory waterfowl and fish.



- Funds projects on private and public lands, including National Wildlife Refuge lands;
- Conducts habitat restoration and protection activities at all scales; and
- Has low administrative costs while providing a high level of on-the-ground benefits for fish and wildlife.

### **The Service's Coastal Role**

Much of the Service's work involves coastal environments. For example:

- About 40 percent of National Wildlife Refuges are coastal, covering over 60 million acres;
- More than half of the Clean Water Act (Sec. 404) and Rivers and Harbors Act (Sec. 10) permit reviews are in coastal areas;

### **Accomplishments 1994 - 2002**

Since 1994, the Coastal Program has had tremendous on-the-ground success. Our partnerships have:

- Restored 89,107 acres of coastal wetlands;
- Restored 24,076 acres of coastal upland habitat;
- Protected over 1,132,724 acres through conservation easements;
- Restored 912 miles of coastal riparian habitat; and
- Reopened 3,608 miles of coastal streams for anadromous fish passage.

**Left:** Brown pelican.

**Right:** Least tern and chick.

USFWS Photos



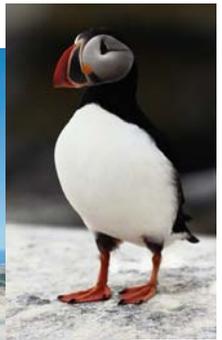
■ 75 percent of the coastline is included in migratory waterfowl Joint Venture areas, high priority habitat under the North American Waterfowl Management Plan;

■ Nearly 1,200 shoreline miles and 1.3 million acres of coastal habitat are protected by the Coastal Barrier Resources System from Federal development subsidies;

■ National Coastal Wetlands Conservation grants are available through a competitive process to coastal States and Territories; and

■ Restoration of contaminated coastal sites is achieved through the Department's Natural Resource Damage Assessment and Restoration Fund.

**Right: *The Coastal Program helps build awareness and understanding of the Nation's fragile coasts.***



### Why Care For Our Coasts?

Our Nation's coasts provide important fish and wildlife habitat far beyond their limited geographic extent. Coastal ecosystems comprise less than 10 percent of the land area, but support a much higher percentage of the Nation's:

- Wetlands;
- Migratory songbirds;
- Fish and shellfish;
- Waterfowl;
- Shorebirds; and
- Threatened and endangered species.

### Threats To Coastal Habitats

Coastal birds, fish, other animals, plants, and scenic spaces are under pressure from a combination of threats, such as:

- Urbanization due to high, and still growing, human population density;
- Fishery declines of 90 percent in some bays;
- Frequent oil spills;
- Wetland losses of 50-90 percent from historic levels;
- Nutrient over-enrichment contributing to growth of toxic microorganisms; and
- Dams, culverts and other freshwater diversions.

## Coastal Program Locations



*Note: Numbers refer to USFWS Regions*

For more information, contact the Division of Fish and Wildlife Management and Habitat Restoration, Branch of Habitat Restoration at 703/358 2201, or visit us on the Internet at <http://www.fws.gov/cep/coastweb.html>

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
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