

USFWS Press Release, February 24, 2004

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**Secretary Norton Announces \$61 Million in Grants
to States to Support Wildlife and Habitats**

Interior Secretary Gale Norton said today the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service will award \$61.2 million in wildlife grants to State and Territorial wildlife agencies.

The State Wildlife Grant program is designed to assist States in the development and implementation of programs that benefit wildlife, including species not fished or hunted, and their habitats. The funds are made available through annual appropriations.

“The grant program demonstrates our commitment to conservation partnerships with State wildlife agencies,” said Interior Secretary Gale Norton. “ This program epitomizes our cooperative conservation approach by helping States to tailor their conservation efforts in a manner that best fits local conditions..”

To be eligible for State Wildlife Grant funds, each State must complete a Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Plan or Strategy by October 1, 2005. States may use the funds for project planning or implementation activities. A State may receive no more than 5 percent or less than 1 percent of the available funds. The District of Columbia and the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico will receive .5 percent and Guam, American Samoa, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Marina Islands will receive .25 percent. The apportionment is based on a formula that uses the State’s land area and population.

“Because so many issues related to wildlife conservation are not contained by borders, States and the Service must work together to coordinate efforts to conserve endangered and threatened species, manage migrating birds and ensure that the foundations for

wildlife management are good science and habitat,” said Service Director Steve Williams. “These grants continue to allow us to build a future for conservation together.”

Some examples of ongoing State Wildlife Grant projects include:

Ecology and Management of Swallow-Tailed Kites in Georgia

The Georgia Wildlife Resources Division is developing techniques to manage swallow-tailed kites in the Satilla River watershed in southeastern Georgia. The State is also working with nearby landowners for kite conservation.

Bat Protection in Pennsylvania

The Pennsylvania Game Commission is using Federal money to protect more than 30,000 bats of six species at two mines in Pennsylvania. The State will install special gates at the entrances to these bat caves – called hibernacula or winter homes - to prevent disturbance and vandalism during periods when these species are highly vulnerable.

Preble's Meadow Jumping Mouse Surveys in Colorado

The Colorado Division of Wildlife will determine the presence of the Federally listed Preble's meadow jumping mouse at previously unsurveyed locations including those along the eastern portion of its range. If these mice are discovered in new areas, the vegetation in those areas will be compared with that in areas where it is previously known to exist. The benefit of the work will be improved understanding of the species range and more accurate mapping of its populations.

Flow Modeling of Southeastern Oklahoma Rivers

The Oklahoma Department of Conservation will use the results of this instream flow study for the state's Ecologically Sustainable Water Management process for southeastern Oklahoma rivers. This process will help guide future water management and species conservation efforts in this part of the state. There are many fish and mussel species of conservation concern in the selected watersheds.

Expansion of Chiricahua Leopard Frog Populations in New Mexico

The New Mexico Department of Game and Fish is translocating and establishing Federally listed Chiricahua leopard frog populations in all available and suitable habitats on a cooperating large ranch. The successful establishment of frog populations in all available habitats in this area will help expand the current range and numbers of Chiricahua leopard frogs, provide insight into the factors involved in successful translocation, and potentially provide a source population for translocation to other suitable habitats within New Mexico.

A complete list of grants by State follows. For additional information, please visit the Service's website at <<http://www.fws.gov>>.

State Wildlife Grants Apportionment

FY 2004

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Number 15.634

<u>State</u>	<u>Amount</u>
Alabama	950,854
Alaska	3,060,095
American Samoa	153,004
Arizona	1,449,489
Arkansas	714,925
California	3,060,095
Colorado	1,270,452
Connecticut	612,020
Delaware	612,020
District of Columbia	306,009
Florida	2,592,298
Georgia	1,515,288
Guam	153,004
Hawaii	612,020

Idaho	721,085
Illinois	2,084,443
Indiana	1,076,313
Iowa	769,994
Kansas	905,720
Kentucky	821,523
Louisiana	928,044
Maine	612,020
Maryland	800,932
Massachusetts	932,424
Michigan	1,754,509
Minnesota	1,228,258
Mississippi	703,052
Missouri	1,226,536
Montana	1,078,493
N. Mariana Islands	153,004
Nebraska	738,529
Nevada	993,612
New Hampshire	612,020
New Jersey	1,215,376
New Mexico	1,040,333
New York	2,945,190
North Carolina	1,455,766
North Dakota	612,020
Ohio	1,839,503
Oklahoma	930,946
Oregon	1,102,960
Pennsylvania	1,993,755
Puerto Rico	306,009
Rhode Island	612,020
South Carolina	757,142

South Dakota	612,020
Tennessee	1,060,816
Texas	3,060,095
Utah	859,703
Vermont	612,020
Virgin Islands	153,004
Virginia	1,243,105
Washington	1,257,489
West Virginia	612,020
Wisconsin	1,106,520
Wyoming	612,020
	61,201,916

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is the principal Federal agency responsible for conserving, protecting and enhancing fish, wildlife and plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. The Service manages the 95-million-acre National Wildlife Refuge System, which encompasses 542 national wildlife refuges, thousands of small wetlands and other special management areas. It also operates 69 national fish hatcheries, 64 fishery resources offices and 81 ecological services field stations. The agency enforces federal wildlife laws, administers the Endangered Species Act, manages migratory bird populations, restores nationally significant fisheries, conserves and restores wildlife habitat such as wetlands, and helps foreign governments with their conservation efforts. It also oversees the Federal Aid program, which distributes hundreds of millions of dollars in excise taxes on fishing and hunting equipment to state fish and wildlife agencies.

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*For more information about the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service,
visit our homepage at <http://www.fws.gov>*