



U.S. Fish And Wildlife Service

WETLANDS STATUS and TRENDS

Programmatic Overview

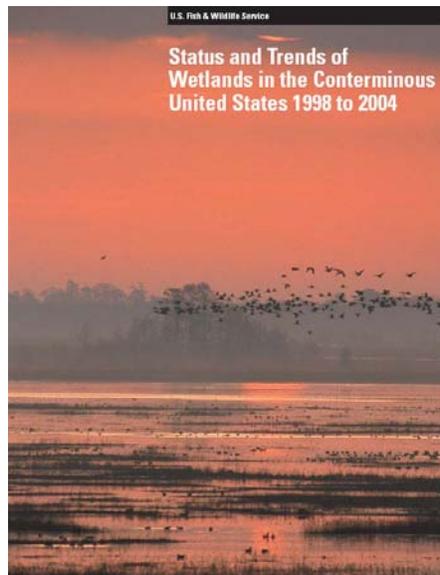
The Service's Wetlands Status and Trends

Program:

Data from status and trends provide important long-term trend information about specific changes and places and the overall status of wetlands in the United States. The historical database that the Service has developed through Status and Trends provides photographic evidence of land use and wetlands extent dating back to the 1950s. This provides an accurate record to assist in future restoration efforts.

The Service's wetland trends monitoring effort provides the only comprehensive information available to decision makers and the public. The Service has rigorously documented the historic downward trend in wetland losses since the 1950s. At that time, the average annual wetland loss rate was 458,000 acres. During the mid-1970s to mid-1980s, the loss rate had declined to 290,000 wetland acres annually. More recently, the Service reported to Congress in 2001 that the Nation's wetland loss rate was about 59,000 wetland acres annually and in 2005 wetland area gains exceeded loss by an estimated 32,000 acres per year.

The Service has produced five national reports. They are used by Federal and State agencies, the scientific community and conservation groups for planning, decision making and wetland policy formulation and assessment.



Congressional Mandate:

The Emergency Wetlands Resources Act (Public Law 99-645) was enacted to promote the conservation of our Nation's wetlands. Congress recognized that wetlands are nationally significant resources and that these resources have been affected by human activities. The Act requires the Service to conduct wetland status and trends studies of the Nation's wetlands at 10-year intervals. The Service will continue to collect wetland status and trends information at regional, State or local scales

while preparing to take advantage of technological innovations in the fields of remote sensing and computerized mapping for incorporation to the next National update report to Congress.

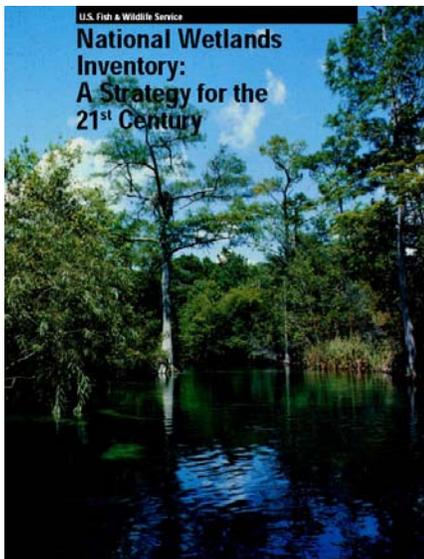
Project Profile: The goal of Wetlands Status and Trends is to produce comprehensive, statistically valid acreage estimates of wetland resources and monitor wetland habitat trends in the U.S.

Habitats Addressed: The Service's Wetlands Status and Trends study design, training and operations are aimed specifically at monitoring the nation's wetlands. The Service has specialized knowledge of wetland habitats, classification, and cover type changes. Service Status and Trends studies report on all of the Nation's wetlands regardless of ownership.

Our Strategic Plan and the Wetlands Status and Trends Component:

Contemporary scientific information on wetlands should be the bedrock of good policy. The Service's strategic plan for wetlands is focused on the development and dissemination of wetlands information to

Service resource managers and the public. The Service's wetlands expertise positions the Agency to assume an even greater future role in aquatic habitat policy development. How can the Service work with other Federal agencies and Congress to meet the no-net loss goal? What are the greatest pressures on wetlands today? Where are wetlands being lost? Can we target Federal and State partnership programs in high-risk locations?



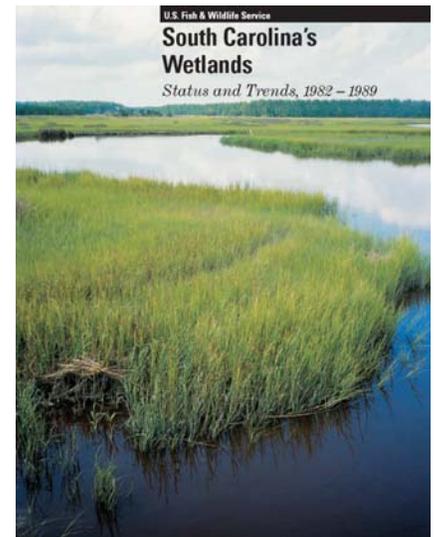
The National Strategy indicates that the Service will continue to obtain scientifically sound information on national wetland loss or change rates supplemented with strategic status and trends analyses for wetland regions of particular concern to resource managers. The Service will need to continue to produce assessments that illustrate where wetlands are most at risk, but also provide information about wetland restoration and creation that

will allow policy makers to consider conservation strategies and measure progress.

Who Uses Wetland Status and Trends Information?

An assessment recently conducted for the Service indicated that wetlands status and trends information was widely distributed and used extensively by industry, all levels of government, university researchers, educators and the public. Three hundred and seventy private businesses, 94 state government agencies, 29 Federal agencies and the Congress are actively using the wetlands information contained in recent status and trends reports or data summaries. Our wetlands data are being used in various ways. Wetland resource management activities, policy and planning represent 69% of the current uses, wetland assessment and evaluation 18% and research and education 13%.

Supplemental Regional Studies: Conducting regional analyses of aquatic habitat status and trends will enable the Service to more quickly and accurately measure change and resource conditions in key areas. The Service has produced several regional wetland status and trends studies including data for Florida, South Carolina, Coastal Texas, and the Southeastern US. The Service will pursue other wetland trends studies in areas



such as the Great Lakes Watersheds, and other regions of the country. Interest in a report addressing the status of wetlands in the North American prairie region is under consideration. The Department of the Interior and the Service are committed to E-Government, and have published wetland status and trends documents on-line. These are available at:

<http://www.fws.gov/wetlands/StatusAndTrends/index.html>

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