

Recovery

Program Overview

The Recovery Program carries out the primary purpose of the Endangered Species Act (ESA) conserving endangered and threatened species and the ecosystems upon which they depend. The Recovery program prepares recovery plans that identify necessary recovery actions and works 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.

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.

Recovery Planning

Recovery planning is the foundation for species recovery and 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 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 plans are based on the best available science and information.

Approximately 84 percent of the species requiring recovery plans had them by the end FY 2004. 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 and DOI bureaus, and other partners. Recovery planning, therefore, it is critical to the accomplishment of the DOI's end outcome

measures for endangered species conservation under the 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 federal and State agencies, non-government organizations and the private sector and private landowners to implement recovery actions. Within its available resources, the program balances the need to implement urgent recovery actions for species on the brink of extinction, with 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. Delistings also 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 a number of 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.

In FY 2006, the Service will continue the efforts of the "Preventing Extinction, Showing Success" initiative that began in FY 2004. This effort allowed the Service to deliver funds to 17 projects that directly supported actions that will prevent the extinction of critically endangered species. The Service also provided 9 projects with funding that will complete final recovery actions needed to downlist or delist the species. We expect to support a slightly smaller number of projects in FY 2005.

2004 Program Performance Accomplishments

For FY 2004, the Service was appropriated \$67,762,000 for the Recovery Program. Significant actions we achieved in FY 2004 include:

- Delisted one species, the Tinian monarch, due to recovery.
- Downlisted one species, the California tiger salamander from endangered to threatened.
- Proposed delisting two species, the Eggert's sunflower and the Eastern Distinct Population Segment of the gray wolf, due to recovery.
- Completed final recovery plans for 36 species and revised final recovery plans for two additional species, the Paiute cutthroat trout and Higgins eye (pearlymussel).
- Completed recovery outlines for two recently listed species, the *Nesogenes rotensus* and *Osmoxylon mariannense*, two plants from Rota (Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands).
- Maintained 338 species as stable or improving.
- Completed a 5-year review for the northern spotted owl, delta smelt, and marbled murrelet, and initiated another twelve 5-year reviews.
- Provided funds directly to support 17 projects that were carried out to prevent the extinction of critically imperiled species and 9 projects that helped to complete final recovery actions needed to downlist or delist the species.

ENDANGERED SPECIES

- Proposed allowing for more flexible management tools for the Western DPS of the gray wolf in Montana and Idaho through the issuance of a section 10(j) rule.

2005 Planned Program Performance

In FY 2005, the enacted budget for the Recovery program totals \$69,870,000. 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 4 species due to recovery; possible examples include the Eggert's sunflower and the eastern DPS of the gray wolf
- Make final downlisting/reclassification determinations for species such as the Mariana fruit bat on Guam.
- Prepare recovery outlines for species added to the U.S. List in FY 2005 and complete final recovery plans for 34 species, increasing to 86 percent the number of species listed 2.5 years or more with approved recovery plans.
- Maintain the status of 352 species as stable or improving.
- Initiated 5-year reviews for 15 for species such as the Topeka shiner, western snowy plover, bull trout, and Kuenzler hedgehog cactus.
- Complete programming and testing 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.
- Continue to fund the "Preventing Extinction, Showing Success" initiative
- Build partnerships and implement recovery actions (including habitat restoration, captive propagation, and reintroduction) for all priority listed species.

Justification of 2006 Program Changes

Subactivity		2006 Budget Request	Program Changes (+/-)
Recovery	\$(000)	64,243	-6,777
	FTE	525	-

The FY 2006 budget request for the Recovery Program is \$64,243,000 and 525 FTE, a net program decrease of \$6,777,000 and no change in FTE from the 2005 enacted level.

General Program Activities (+\$1,927,000)

The proposed general program funding increase for Recovery will allow the Service to work on completing findings on delisting and downlisting petitions, and conduct 5-year status reviews in a timely fashion. A portion of this increase will be used to focus on conducting 5-year reviews for high priority species.

In addition, with the proposed increase, the Service will continue the efforts of the "Preventing Extinction, Showing Success" initiative started that began in FY 2004. This effort allows the Service to deliver funds directly to projects that support actions preventing the extinction of critically endangered species and to provide funding to projects that complete final recovery actions needed to downlist or delist the species. At the end of FY 2004, the Service identified 74 species whose status was considered "improving", and another 339 species with a status of "stable". The funds associated with the Showing Success portion of the initiative would be used to fund downlisting or delisting activities such as the brown tree snake quarantine barrier that was built at

the Tinian airport in FY 2004, allowing the delisting rule for the Tinian monarch to be finalized. In addition, the Service identified that 279 species had a status of “declining” and 519 species had a status of “uncertain” at the end of FY 2004. To prevent the status of these species declining further, the Service could use the funding associated with the Preventing Extinction portion of the initiative for actions such as developing and stocking a refugium for the critically endangered Pahranaagat roundtail chub, which has a population in wild of less than 20.

We believe that the increase will also help us complete a number of recovery plans. Many of these plans will be multiple species/ecosystem plans that cover a variety of different species. While these plans are more efficient in the long run, they require more up front work due to the complexity of issue and stakeholders involved.

These activities will support the Department’s draft end outcome measures for endangered species conservation found under the Resource Protection goal to Sustain Biological Communities and the associated Resource Protection mission goal.

Tamarisk Removal (+\$1,000,000)

Tamarisk or saltcedar is a harmful exotic (non-native) woody shrub or small tree that grows along rivers and streams in the West. The plant was initially introduced into Southern California and Arizona as a streambank stabilizer and ornamental shrub in the early 1800s. Since its introduction, tamarisk has quickly spread into natural wetlands and riparian areas, where it tends to form dense thickets along streams and springs, displacing native trees such as cottonwood, willow and mesquite. Tamarisk has invaded almost all watercourses and other wetland habitats throughout the southwest, taking over more than 1.5 million acres. This invasive plant has caused the decline and is considered a threat for many endangered and threatened species that reside in riparian habitats in the southwest, including the Pecos sunflower, and the southwestern willow flycatcher. Tamarisk uses more water than native plants, siphoning off water that would otherwise be available for fish and wildlife, farmers, and urban faucets. It is also a unique wildfire risk, as it burns easily even when green.

Tamarisk management is best done in combination with restoration of native riparian plant species. The funding will be used for tamarisk removal and riparian habitat restoration activities in the southwest in close cooperation with State and local government partners, tribes and pueblos, non-profits and the private sector, and will support approved recovery plans for other species including the southwest willow flycatcher. The Service proposes to establish a methodology to select projects based on the Team Tamarisk Guiding Principles adopted through a west-wide conference convened in Albuquerque, New Mexico in April 2004. These principles, endorsed by Secretary Norton in letters to the Governor of California, Nevada, Arizona, Utah, Colorado, New Mexico, Texas and Oklahoma, exemplify the Secretary’s 4 Cs vision.

Forest Plan (+\$136,000); Everglades (+\$20,000); Pacific Northwest Salmon (+\$17,000); Peregrine Fund/Condor Recovery (+\$2,000)

The fiscal year 2005 Omnibus Appropriations Act (P.L. 108-447) included two across the board rescissions, netting a 1.3 percent reduction to all Service programs. These increases will restore funding to the 2004 enacted level and will allow the Service to maintain performance and base program capability. The Northwest Forest Plan, initiated in 1994, is a comprehensive federal effort to resolve forest practices in the Pacific Northwest. The Forest Plan includes a large-scale 100-year forest management plan covering 24 million acres of federal lands, and approaches for addressing related forest resource issues on 30 million acres of non-federal lands. The Service has funded the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (CERP) which is a cooperative effort with the Corps

and other interagency partners. The Service provides technical assistance and needed expertise during the planning, design, construction and adaptive assessment of this unprecedented restoration program. The Service integrally involved in providing staff and assistance to meet several Congressional mandates contained in the *Water Resources Development Act of 2000*. The Pacific Northwest Salmon project will further the recovery of the bull trout and Kootenai white sturgeon in the Columbia River Basin. The Peregrine Fund/Condor Recovery funding will applied to the on-going implementation of the condor recovery plan which calls for establishing two self-sustaining geographically separate wild populations.

Platte River Recovery (-\$986,000)

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) (-\$45,000)

In FY 2005 Congress provided \$343,000 for wolf monitoring activities by the Nez Perce Tribe in Idaho. Based on the Tribe's previous experience in this program, the Service believes that directing the proposed \$298,000 provides sufficient resources to the Nez Perce for their participation in the wolf recovery program in Idaho.

Wolf Monitoring (-\$1,135,000) [ID Office of Species Cons. - \$720,000; Snake River Basin FWS - \$99,000; State of Montana - \$316,000]

In FY 2005, Congress provided an additional \$1,135,000 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. In FY 2005, the Service promulgated a new regulation under section 10(j) of the Endangered Species Act, as amended, that expands the authority of States and Native American Tribes with Service-approved wolf management plans to manage gray wolves. Given that the States will be increasing the management of wolves in the Northern Rockies, the Service proposes to discontinue funding these efforts in FY 2006, 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 (-\$1,972,000)

In FY 2005, Congress provided \$1,972,000 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 (-\$1,972,000)

In FY 2005, Congress provided \$1,972,000 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 (-\$493,000)

In FY 2005, Congress provided \$493,000 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 (-\$1,281,000)

In FY 2005, Congress provided an \$1,775,000 pass through for the Alaska Sea Life Center to continue a recovery research program for the threatened spectacled eider, Steller's eider (\$1,050,000) and the Alaska Sea Otter Recovery (\$750,000). Specifically, these funds were used to identify and implement a recovery research agenda for these species. In FY 2006, the Service has reduced the amount of pass through funding to \$494,000 for this effort, which will likely be used for collaboration between the Service and the Alaska Sea Life Center to continue coordination of the eider recovery team and applied studies on sea otter and eider biology, physiology, and ecology in order to provide managers with key answers to craft effective recovery strategies; and continue outreach and education efforts involving Alaska Natives and other rural residents in eider conservation efforts. The Service has proposed to reduce the funding to a level that will allow flexibility to fund higher priority projects elsewhere in the budget request.

Colorado River Fish (-\$690,000)

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 (-\$345,000)

In FY 2005, 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 2006 in order to preserve the flexibility to fund the highest priority conservation activities.

Manatee Protection and Recovery (-487,000)

In FY 2005, Congress provided a total of \$487,000 for manatee protection and recovery. The funding was used to specifically focus on enforcing boater compliance with manatee speed zones, developing additional manatee refuges and sanctuaries, and addressing issues associated with maintaining adequate warm water refugia (wintering sites) such as natural springs and power plant discharges. The Service has designated 17 additional manatee refuges and sanctuaries since FY 2001 and we continue to work with the State of Florida to refine boundaries to improve boater safety, increase signage in waterways to reduce boat speeds, and enforce boater compliance. The Service does not contemplate further additions to the current system of federal manatee refuges and sanctuaries and has completed placement of most permanent boundary signs, therefore these funds are no longer needed. The Service intends to continue to work with the States, local governments and landowners on manatee issues as general program funding allows.

Florida Manatee, rescue and carcass salvage (-197,000)

Data from injured and dead manatees have been key to determining the primary threats to manatee recovery (boat strikes) and identifying where to most effectively place manatee sanctuary and refuges in order to reduce manatee mortalities due to boat strikes. These data will continue to be essential for confirming the effectiveness of the refuge and sanctuary networks that have now been established by both the Service and the State of Florida. However, Service and the State are working closely together on manatee management and recovery. Implementation of the Manatee Rescue and Carcass Salvage Program is shared between the Service, State and other local agencies. We anticipate continuing to work in this partnership as needed, using general funding.

Concho Water Snake Delisting (-\$247,000)

In FY 2005, Congress provided \$247,000 to allow for additional coordination and implementation on an local agreement that will help to move forward the recovery and eventual delisting of the Concho water snake. In addition, these funds were to be used to begin the development and of a post delisting monitoring plan including a pilot project for the monitoring program. The funds represent the total amount necessary to fully address these needs; therefore, continued funding by the Service is no longer necessary.

Vehicle Reduction (-\$29,000)

The 2006 budget proposes a reduction of \$29,000 in the Endangered Species Recovery program to recognize expected savings to be achieved through improved fleet management within the Service and across the Department of Interior.

Program Performance Summary

End Outcome Goal 1.2: Resource Protection. Sustain Biological Communities							
End Outcome Measures	2003 Actual	2004 Actual	2005 Plan/Budget	2005 Revised Final Plan	2006 Plan	Change in Performance - 2005 to Planned 2006	Long-term Target (2009)
Percent of threatened or endangered species listed a decade or more that are stabilized or improved. (SP) ¹	42% (332/789)	38% (338/892)	41% (385/940)	37% (352/940)	38% (356/945)	+1%	33% (389/1178)

¹ 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.

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