

# News Release

## Pacific Southwest Region

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## California to Receive Nearly \$16 Million in Grants to Boost Endangered Species Conservation Efforts

*Service grants of \$37.2 million to 20 States will help collaborative efforts to conserve imperiled species*

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is awarding \$37.2 million in grants to 20 states - including nearly \$16 million to California - to support conservation planning and acquisition of vital habitat for threatened and endangered species across the nation. The grants, awarded through the Cooperative Endangered Species Conservation Fund (CESCF), will benefit numerous species, ranging from the coastal California gnatcatcher to the Karner blue butterfly. For a complete list of the 2015 grant awards and project descriptions, see [www.fws.gov/endangered/grants/index.html](http://www.fws.gov/endangered/grants/index.html).

“Private landowners and natural resource managers play a vital role in conserving our nation’s most imperiled wildlife,” said Service Director Dan Ashe. “By cultivating partnerships between federal, state and local governments, private organizations and individuals, we can establish creative and effective solutions to some of the greatest conservation challenges of our time. These grants are one of many tools available under the Endangered Species Act, and we look forward to providing continued guidance and support for these programs.”

Authorized under Section 6 of the Endangered Species Act (ESA), these competitive grants enable states to work with private landowners, conservation groups and other government agencies to initiate conservation planning efforts and acquire or protect habitat for the conservation of threatened and endangered species.

The grants are funded in part by the Land and Water Conservation Fund, which was established by Congress in 1964. The fund promotes access to outdoor recreation resources for present and future generations, and provides money to federal, state and local governments to purchase land, water and wetlands for the benefit of all Americans. For the past 50 years, the fund has supported more than 40,000 conservation and outdoor recreation projects nationwide. Without action from Congress, authorization for the program will expire in September. President Obama has proposed to fully and permanently fund the program.

“These grants enable the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to tap into the considerable capacity of the state fish and wildlife agencies and their partners to advance the stewardship of our nation’s fish and wildlife resources,” said Larry Voyles, President of the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies. “The states’ proactive, science-based conservation programs and partnerships to restore vital habitats are more effective and less costly to American taxpayers than an emergency room approach to save species in peril.”

CESCF grant funding is provided through three programs that advance creative partnerships for the recovery of imperiled species: the Habitat Conservation Planning Assistance Grants Program, Habitat Conservation Plan Land Acquisition Grants Program, and Recovery Land Acquisition Grants Program.

This year, the Habitat Conservation Planning Assistance Grants Program will provide \$4.7 million in grants - \$1.7 million to California - to support the development of Habitat Conservation Plans (HCPs) through funding of baseline surveys and inventories, document preparation, outreach and similar planning activities. HCPs are agreements between the Service and private landowners, states or counties that allow certain activities to take place that may impact one or more ESA-listed species. In return, landowners agree to conservation measures designed to avoid, minimize and mitigate the impact of those actions. In California, the grants will help fund development of the Placer County Conservation Plan, Placer County Conservation Plan, Yuba Sutter Regional Conservation Plan, Upper Santa Ana River Watershed HCP, United Water Conservation District Multiple Species HCP and the City of Santee Multiple Species Conservation Program.

Nearly \$20.3 million will be awarded this year under the HCP Land Acquisition Grants Program, which provides grants to states or territories for land acquisitions that complement the conservation objectives of approved HCPs. California will receive \$12 million to fund acquisition of lands in support of locally-driven Habitat Conservation Plans in Contra Costa, Los Angeles, Riverside and San Diego counties. For example, the Western Riverside County Multiple Species Conservation Plan (MSHCP) will receive \$2 million to support the acquisition of approximately 1,025 acres of land in Riverside County that will benefit numerous sensitive species including the California gnatcatcher, arroyo toad and Quino checkerspot butterfly. The acquisition will support the assembly of a 500,000-acre preserve that is part of the Western Riverside County MSHCP by protecting large blocks of coastal sage scrub, chaparral and grassland habitats.

California will also receive two grants totaling more than \$2.3 million under the Recovery Land Acquisition Grants Program which provides funds to states and territories to acquire habitat for endangered and threatened species with approved recovery plans. Habitat acquisition to secure long-term protection often is an essential element of a comprehensive recovery effort for a listed species.

The ESA provides a critical safety net for America's native fish, wildlife and plants. The Service is working to actively engage conservation partners and the public in the search for improved and innovative ways to conserve and recover imperiled species. For more information visit [www.fws.gov/endangered](http://www.fws.gov/endangered).

*The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service works with others to conserve, protect, and enhance fish, wildlife, plants, and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. For more information on our work in California, Nevada and Southern Oregon, visit <http://www.fws.gov/cno>. Connect with our [Facebook page](#), follow our [tweets](#), watch our [YouTube Channel](#), and download photos from our [Flickr page](#).*