



NEWS

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State Wildlife Agencies to Receive Over \$700 Million for Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration

Secretary of the Interior Dirk Kempthorne announced today the distribution of more than \$700 million to 56 state and territorial fish and wildlife agencies to fund fish and wildlife conservation efforts, boat access, shooting ranges and hunter education. Kempthorne made the announcement at the Bassmasters Classic professional fishing tournament in Greenville, South Carolina.

The funding is made available to states and territories through the Pittman-Robertson Wildlife Restoration and Dingell-Johnson Sport Fish Restoration programs, which are administered by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Funds are generated by federal excise taxes on purchases of firearms, ammunition, archery and angling equipment, and boat motor fuels.

“Over the past 71 years, hunters and anglers have paid more than \$11 billion through these landmark programs, providing critical support for wildlife conservation efforts across North America,” said Kempthorne in making the announcement. “Many of our most important wildlife success stories would not have happened without the commitment of sportsmen and women and industry leaders, who anticipated serious conservation needs and shouldered the burden of meeting those needs.”

The Wildlife Restoration apportionment for 2008 totals nearly \$310 million, with more than \$61 million tagged for hunter education and shooting range programs. The Sport Fish Restoration apportionment totals more than \$398 million. Federal Assistance funds pay up to 75 percent of the cost of each eligible project of which the states are required to contribute at least 25 percent.

Pittman-Robertson Wildlife Restoration Act funding is apportioned through a formula based on land area and the number of hunting license holders in each state. State and territorial wildlife agencies use the money to manage wildlife, conduct habitat research,

carry out studies and surveys, acquire lands for wildlife as well as public access, conduct hunter education programs and maintain shooting ranges.

More than 62 percent of the Wildlife Restoration funds have been used to buy, develop, or operate and maintain state wildlife management areas. Since the program began, 68 million acres have been acquired through fee simple purchase, lease agreements, or easements and more than 390 million acres have been operated and maintained using this funding.

Numerous species of wildlife such as the wild turkey, white-tailed deer, pronghorn, American elk, and black bear have increased in numbers due to advances in research and habitat management funded by the Wildlife Restoration program. The state wildlife agencies have also improved more than 30 million acres of habitat and developed more than 44,000 acres of waterfowl impoundments. More than 9 million landowners have been provided with management assistance for fish and wildlife on their lands. In addition, the states have certified more than 8.9 million hunter education and safety students, with more than 3 million participating in live fire exercises on a shooting range.

The Sport Fish Restoration Program is funded through the collection of excise taxes and import duties on sport fishing equipment, motorboat and small engine fuels, and pleasure boats. These funds are allocated to the states on a formula that involves the land and water area, inland waters and the Great Lakes and marine coastal areas if applicable, and the number of fish license holders. States use the funds to pay for the stocking of fish, acquiring and improving sport fish habitat, providing aquatic resource education and conducting fisheries research. The funding is also used for construction of boat ramps and fishing piers, and for acquiring and maintaining public access facilities for recreational boaters.

Since the inception of the Sport Fish Restoration program, states have acquired 351,000 acres in fee simple, lease agreements, or easements, and have supported the operation and maintenance of more than 15.5 million acres. States have stocked over 6.5 billion fish and developed more than 2,600 boating-related facilities and renovated or improved over 6,200 boating access sites. More than 11.3 million people have taken part in aquatic resource education programs.

For additional information concerning these two important fish and wildlife conservation programs and a comprehensive list of state-by-state funding allocations, please visit the following website: <http://wsfrprograms.fws.gov>

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