

# Mountain-Prairie

## Region 6

### Overview of the Service's Mountain-Prairie Region



Bison grazing at National Bison Range / USFWS

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Mountain-Prairie Region consists of 8 states in the heart of the American west: Colorado, Kansas, Montana, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota, Utah and Wyoming. The region is defined by three distinct landscapes: in the east lie the central and northern Great Plains, primarily the vast mixed- and short-grass prairies; to the west rise the Rocky Mountains and the intermountain areas beyond the Continental Divide, including parts of the sprawling Colorado Plateau and the Great Basin; and, the northeastern part of the Region contains millions of shallow wetlands known as the “prairie potholes,” which produce a large portion of the continent’s waterfowl. Some of the nation’s greatest rivers rise in the Region: the Missouri, the Colorado, and the Platte. The fish and wildlife that make their home on the Region’s prairies and in its mountains are among the nation’s most iconic species: grizzly bear, gray wolf, the American bison, and cutthroat trout.



Arapaho National Wildlife Refuge / USFWS

People, too, live here and are an active presence on the land. The Region includes 36 Indian tribes, many of whom manage large land holdings, as do other federal agencies such as the Department of Defense. Livestock production, energy development, and urbanization all exert influences on the Region’s landscapes.



Grizzly bear / USFWS

#### Resource Facts and Figures

- Approximately 5,444,000 acres protected by the National Wildlife Refuge System, including both fee title and easement lands. This includes 122 national wildlife refuges, 18 coordination areas, and numerous waterfowl production areas in 118 different counties.
- 2,827,584 visitors to NWRS lands in Fiscal Year 2009.
- 12 units of the National Fish Hatchery System, including D.C. Booth, a National Historic Fish Hatchery in Spearfish, SD; two fisheries offices (one in Grand Junction, CO and one in Vernal, UT) that implement the recovery of endangered fish in

the Colorado River; a National Fish Technology Center and National Fish Health Center, both located in Bozeman, MT; and seven Fish & Wildlife Conservation Offices.

- 82 species listed as threatened or endangered under the Endangered Species Act; 18 species that are candidates for listing under the Act.
- 1,178 employees.

#### Regional Demographics

Land area: 737,884 square miles (468,573,000 acres)  
Population: 15,403,172 (Roughly 2.5 to 1 urban to rural ratio)  
Members of Congress: 37  
Federally Recognized Indian Tribes: 36  
Public land: 137,024,000 acres (federal and state)  
Wildlife-dependent recreation: 7, 513,000 people\* (hunting, fishing, and wildlife watching)  
\* USDA Economic Research Service  
\*\*National Survey of Fishing, Hunting, and Wildlife-Associated Recreation

#### Key Habitats and Ecosystems

The Mountain-Prairie Region contains some of the last large, intact and ecologically functional landscapes in the lower 48 states. Using an integrated, cross-programmatic approach that combines land acquisition and



*Greenback cutthroat trout / USFWS*

management, technical assistance and grant funding, public-private partnerships, and other cooperative measures, the Service is working to establish community-based conservation programs that seek to maintain rural economies and landscape integrity throughout the Region, including the Rocky Mountain Front of north-central Montana, where virtually every wildlife species encountered by Lewis and Clark – from grizzly bears to wolverine to Sandhill cranes - persists; the Prairie Pothole Region of the Dakotas and eastern Montana, known as America’s “Duck Factory”; and, the playa wetlands of south-central Nebraska’s Rainwater Basin, which provide essential resting and refueling habitat for millions of migratory waterfowl. In addition, the Service is actively working with a diverse array of partners to recover and conserve fish and wildlife and habitat in three major river systems: the Missouri, the Platte and the Upper Colorado.

**Regional Budget**

In Fiscal Year 2010, the Region’s budget was \$451,735,089 (This figure represents all available sources: appropriated, permanent, partnerships, and includes funding for our grant programs). The Region disbursed a total of \$142,934,959 in grants to states, tribes, and other partners during Fiscal Year 2010.

**Conservation Successes and Challenges**

The Mountain-Prairie Region and our partners have achieved significant conservation successes in

recent years, including the biological recovery of the grizzly bear in the Yellowstone ecosystem and the Northern Rocky Mountain population of gray wolf. The Region has also implemented a successful program to enhance genetic conservation for American bison on National Wildlife Refuge System lands and pioneered innovative methods to target land acquisition for waterfowl conservation. Current and future challenges include addressing the impacts of intensive energy development – from oil and gas to wind - on habitat and trust species, managing water for imperiled aquatic species such as pallid sturgeon and native Colorado River fishes in the face of increasing water demand from urbanizing areas and a changing climate. To meet these challenges, the Region is employing a strategic, landscape-level approach to identify and prioritize conservation actions to restore and maintain sustainable populations of trust species.

**Landscape Conservation Cooperatives**

The region continues to implement strategic habitat conservation at a landscape scale, using Landscape Conservation Cooperatives as the vehicle for delivery. Landscape Conservation Cooperatives are science partnerships as well as conservation alliances between federal, state, tribal, local government and nongovernmental management partners. LCCs are true partnerships and are formed and directed by land, water, wildlife and cultural resource managers and interested public and nongovernmental organizations and are based upon geographically similar regions. Employees of the region work daily with conservation partners to align the region’s six shared LCCs with other landscape-level programs and conservation delivery initiatives. LCCs are and

will continue to assist resource management agencies and organizations in collaborating across landscapes.

**Connect with the Mountain-Prairie Region**

- Regional website address: [www.fws.gov/mountain-prairie/](http://www.fws.gov/mountain-prairie/)
- Website: [www.fws.gov/mountain-prairie/](http://www.fws.gov/mountain-prairie/)
- Twitter: <http://twitter.com/USFWSMtnPrairie>
- Facebook: [www.facebook.com/#!/USFWSMountainPrairie](http://www.facebook.com/#!/USFWSMountainPrairie)
- Flickr: [www.flickr.com/photos/usfwsmtnp/#!/](http://www.flickr.com/photos/usfwsmtnp/#!/)
- News Releases: [www.fws.gov/mountain-prairie/pressrel/](http://www.fws.gov/mountain-prairie/pressrel/)



*Northern shoveler*

Courtesy of U.S. Army

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