

News Release



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Northeast Receives Nearly \$16 Million of \$76.5 Million Wildlife Grants

Department of the Interior Secretary Ken Salazar announced today that the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service will distribute more than \$76.5 million to the fish and wildlife agencies of the 50 states, commonwealths, the District of Columbia, and territories to help conserve and recover imperiled fish and wildlife through the State Wildlife Grant Program. The \$76.5 million dollar figure represents a significant increase in funding over the 2009 levels. Since the program's inception, Congress has provided over \$573 million for conservation work on state and private lands.

The Service's 13-state Northeast Region, including the District of Columbia, received \$15.9 million, almost 21 percent, of federal State Wildlife Grants funding distributed nationwide. The funds will be distributed to individual states through an apportionment process that uses a formula based on land area and human population. Individual states and the district will apply to the Service for approval to use these funds for implementation of their State Wildlife Action Plans.

"The State Wildlife Grant program is part of the Department of the Interior's ongoing commitment to the essential conservation efforts of states," said Salazar. "In our challenging economic climate, the program ensures that states will have the necessary resources to help conserve their highest priority wildlife, plants, and habitat – an investment that will pay dividends for years to come."

In addition to state specific work, the states and the district contribute a small portion of their SWG funds to the Regional Conservation Needs (RCN) program. The RCN program was created in 2007 by the Northeast Region and its Division of Wildlife and Sports Fish Restoration, the Northeast Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies and the Wildlife Management Institute in recognition of shared conservation concerns and overlapping areas of responsibility. Many states

identified common infrastructure and logistical needs that could be better managed through collaborative funding and developing partnerships.

Last year, 11 Northeast Region states received competitive SWG funding of \$940,869 to address the emerging wildlife health threat of white-nose syndrome in bats. The grant allows states to work together and with other partners to identify and address management issues and actions including surveillance and monitoring of bats, investigating the cause of the deadly syndrome and implementing a response strategy.

A past collaborative project supported by RCN funds was the creation of a Regional Habitat Cover Map that provides a foundation for regional conservation work and pools interstate data to determine appropriate conservation actions and assess performance indicators and measures.

Five million dollars of the national SWG program are set aside for a competitive grants program. Last year, six Northeast states created a proposal to address the conservation of the New England cottontail rabbit. Competitive SWG funds will create at least 1,200 acres of habitat in the states of Connecticut, Massachusetts and New Hampshire for the endangered New England cottontail as well as coordinate and plan for their recovery in Maine, New York and Rhode Island. The habitat also supports other species of greatest conservation need in those states.

Delaware supports the Wildlife Conservation Implementation for Shorebirds program with SWG funds, which has expanded its role as an international leader in red knot conservation. The grant funded collection of shorebird migration data, monitored the food base of horseshoe crabs and studied the effects of peregrine falcons on the migrating shorebirds. Red knots are dependent upon horseshoe crab eggs during migration. The biomedicine industry also uses the horseshoe crabs' unique, blue colored blood, for research which possibly contributes to the decline in the horseshoe crab population and creating a domino-like impact on red knots.

The State Wildlife Grant Program (SWG) provides federal grant funds for the development and implementation of programs for the benefit of fish and wildlife and their habitats, including species that are not hunted or fished. For the past nine years, this grants program has provided a stable federal funding source for state fish and wildlife agencies. This stability has been critical to the recovery and resilience of many species in greatest need of conservation. This year's funds come from the Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act of 2010 (H.R. 2996).

The SWG provides grants to states through a [formula-based distribution](#) calculated using the state's land area and population. Awarded funds support activities related to both planning and implementation. Planning activities must contribute directly to the development or modification of the state's [Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Plan](#) (also known as Wildlife Action Plan) approved by the director of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Implementation activities are activities that a state intends to carry out to execute their Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Plan. All funded activities must link with species, actions, or strategies included in each state's Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Plan.

Please visit the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Program Web site at <http://wsfrprograms.fws.gov/> for state, commonwealth, and the District of Columbia territory funding allocations or for more information on the program.

The mission of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is working with others to conserve, protect, and enhance fish, wildlife, plants, and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. We are both a leader and trusted partner in fish and wildlife conservation, known for our scientific excellence, stewardship of lands and natural resources, dedicated professionals and commitment to public service. For more information on our work and the people who make it happen, visit www.fws.gov.