

**Department of the Interior
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
Pacific Regional Office
911 NE 11th Avenue
Portland, Oregon 97232-4181
Phone: 503/231-6121
Fax: 503/231-2122
<http://pacific.fws.gov>**

News Release



Date: April 5, 2007

RO# 07-26

Contact: Amy Gaskill, 503.231.6874

State Wildlife Agencies to Receive More Than \$600 Million For Sport Fish and Wildlife Restoration

Interior Department Secretary Dirk Kempthorne announced today that more than \$600 million will be distributed to 56 state and territorial wildlife agencies to fund conservation efforts, shooting ranges and hunter education. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Pacific Region states (OR, WA, ID & HI) combined received more than \$56 million. This funding results from an excise tax paid by firearm, ammunition, archery and angling equipment manufacturers as well as boat motor fuels through the Federal Aid in Sport Fish and Wildlife Restoration programs.

"Since establishment of these federal programs more than a half century ago, manufacturers of firearms, ammunition, archery, fishing and boating equipment have paid more than \$10.5 billion in excise taxes, which has been used by state wildlife agencies to maintain and restore fish and wildlife resources, educate hunters and fund sport shooting ranges nationwide," said Kempthorne. "By paying these excise taxes, the manufacturers and sportsmen and women continue to provide critical funding for wildlife conservation in North America."

The Wildlife Restoration apportionment for 2007 totals nearly \$267 million, with more than \$50 million tagged for hunter education and shooting range programs. The Sport Fish Restoration apportionment for 2007 totals more than \$349 million. Federal Assistance funds pay up to 75 percent of the cost of each eligible project while the states are required to contribute at least 25 percent.

"In the 1930s, after an era of massive habitat degradation and commercial hunting had decimated game populations, sportsmen stood up and said, 'We want to restore the numbers of game and we know someone has to pay to do it,'" said H. Dale Hall, Director of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. "Then they suggested something that was virtually unprecedented, the establishment of a tax."

"In 1937 sportsmen called for passage of the Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration Act, and in 1950, the Federal Aid in Sportfish Restoration Act. As the Wildlife Restoration Act approaches its 70th anniversary in September, it's an ideal time to take stock of the extraordinary accomplishments of these two programs," Hall added.

Wildlife Restoration Act funding is made available to states through a formula based on land area, including inland waters and the number of hunting license holders in each state. States use the money to manage wildlife populations, conduct habitat research, surveys and inventories, and administer hunter education programs.

More than 62 percent of Wildlife Restoration funds are used to buy, develop, maintain, and operate wildlife management areas. Since the program began, 68 million acres of land have been purchased and more than 350 million acres managed for wildlife.

Numerous species such as the wild turkey, white-tailed deer, pronghorn antelope, American elk and mountain lion have increased in population due to improved research and habitat management funded by Wildlife Restoration. In the program's history, more than 9 million landowners were provided management assistance for wildlife and fish. State wildlife agencies have improved more than 26 million acres of habitat and developed more than 43,000 acres of waterfowl impoundments.

Sport Fish Restoration is funded by the collection of excise taxes and import duties on sport fishing equipment, motorboat and small engine fuels, and pleasure boats. Sport Fish Restoration funds are allocated to the states based on a formula that includes the land and water area, inland waters and the Great Lakes and marine coastal areas where applicable, and the number of fishing license holders. States use the funds to pay for stocking fish; acquiring and improving sport fish habitat; providing aquatic resource education opportunities; conducting fisheries research; and the construction at boat ramps, fishing piers, and other facilities for recreational boating access.

States have bought about 150,000 acres for public fishing areas and maintained more than 15 million acres since the program began.

Please visit the Service's Division of Federal Assistance Website at <http://federalaid.fws.gov> for state-by-state funding allocations.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is the principal Federal agency responsible for conserving, protecting and enhancing fish, wildlife and plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. The Service manages the 95-million-acre National Wildlife Refuge System, which encompasses 547 national wildlife refuges, thousands of small wetlands and other special management areas. It also operates 69 national fish hatcheries, 64 fishery resources offices, and 81 ecological services field stations. The agency enforces Federal wildlife laws, administers the Endangered Species Act, manages migratory bird populations, restores nationally significant fisheries, conserves and restores wildlife habitat such as wetlands, and helps foreign and Native American Tribal governments with their conservation efforts. It also oversees the Federal Assistance program, which distributes hundreds of millions of dollars in excise taxes on fishing and hunting equipment to State fish and wildlife agencies.