

# News Release



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## State Endangered Species Conservation Efforts Receive \$37.2 Million Boost Through Service Grants

*Hawaii awarded more than \$2 million to assist in collaborative efforts to conserve  
America's most imperiled species*

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is awarding \$37.2 million in grants to 20 states - including more than \$2 million to Hawaii - to support conservation planning and acquisition of vital habitat for threatened, endangered, and at-risk species.

“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.

In Hawaii, the grants are:

- \$1,566,875 for the Pua’ahala Watershed Project on Moloka’i. This project will secure long-term protection of Hawaii’s listed species as part of the State’s comprehensive recovery effort. The subject area contains some of the highest quality native forest habitat on Moloka’i. The acquisition of this piece of property will also protect a coastal wetland that Paialoa, the island’s largest freshwater pond. The State of Hawai‘i will own and manage the 800 acres of acquired property as a combination wetland Wildlife Sanctuary and upland Forest Reserve. This strategic acquisition will work in tandem to protect a much larger area on the south slope of Moloka‘i – a project working with partners and private land owners to control invasive species, prevent and control wildfires, and

enhance watershed health. In particular, state ownership of Pua‘ahala will facilitate the strategic fencing of an additional 1,300 acres of high quality upland forest to keep out feral ungulates that threaten native bird populations.

- \$559,990 is being awarded to coordinate and plan the Kaua‘i Seabird Habitat Conservation Program with the state’s Department of Land and Natural Resources. This conservation program will address incidental take of the endangered Hawaiian petrel, the threatened Newell’s shearwater, and band-rumped storm-petrel, a Candidate species for listing under the ESA. Landscape-scale colony management will be strategically planned and implemented to protect and conserve these native bird 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 and Director of the Arizona Game and Fish Department. “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. For a complete list of the 2015 grant awards, see [www.fws.gov/endangered/grants/index.html](http://www.fws.gov/endangered/grants/index.html).

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. To learn more about the Ecological Services Program, visit [www.fws.gov/endangered](http://www.fws.gov/endangered).