U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Volunteers

Helping Us Help Wildlife

Share a Wild Experience

Imagine banding birds at a national wildlife refuge, raising fish at a national fish hatchery, conducting wildlife surveys, leading a tour, or restoring fragile habitat. You can do this by volunteering at national wildlife refuges, national fish hatcheries, Ecological Services offices, and regional offices. We have field stations and offices in every state — there may be one near you.

Volunteers play a vital role in helping the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service fulfill its mission of conserving, protecting and enhancing America's fish and wildlife and their habitats.

What Do Volunteers Do?

Volunteers perform a wide variety of tasks, including:

- conducting fish and wildlife population surveys;
- leading tours and providing information and interpretation to the visiting public;
- assisting in biological monitoring; taking part in special projects, such as bird banding;
- assisting in habitat modification projects, such as developing freshwater impoundments;
- performing clerical and administrative duties;
- working with computers and other technical equipment;
- photographing a variety of natural and cultural resources.

The amount of time you volunteer is up to you. You may work full-time, a few hours per week or month, or during a particular season.

Who May Volunteer?

No special skills are needed to be a U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service volunteer. However, on the job training is provided, if needed.

While there is no age limit, anyone under 18 years must have written parental approval. Organized group participation is welcomed and encouraged. Individuals under 16 years of age may want to volunteer as part of a supervised group, such as a Scout Troop or 4H Club.

Volunteers are welcome regardless of race, religion, age, gender, nationality, or disability. U.S. citizenship is not required.

How to Apply

Write to the appropriate Regional Volunteer Coordinator listed at the end of this brochure for a list of field stations and offices in that Region and volunteer application form. Mail the completed form to the manager of the field station or office in which you are interested. You will then be contacted regarding available volunteer opportunities.

Volunteer Status and Benefits

Before you begin your volunteer responsibilities, you will be given the opportunity to help develop a volunteer position description and fill out a Volunteer Services Agreement. The Agreement and position description will describe your duties and the terms of volunteer service.

Volunteers are considered "employees" only for purposes of injury compensation and tort claims protection. Volunteer time with the Service does not count as Civil Service time. Reimbursement of some costs may be allowed by the Service.

The Internal Revenue Service allows deduction of certain expenses incurred while volunteering, such as transportation and meal costs, as a contribution on their Federal tax returns.

Your Wild Experience

Volunteers are valuable to the management of our Nation's fish and wildlife resources. You can enjoy a productive and rewarding experience as a volunteer with the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service.