



United States Department of the Interior

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
Washington D.C. 20240



In Reply Refer To
FWS/AWSR/POP/073512

Memorandum

To: Aurelia Skipwith, Director

From: Assistant Director – Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Program **PAUL RAUCH**

Subject: Competitive State Wildlife Grant Program – Fiscal Year 2020

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This memorandum seeks your review and approval of awards for the Fiscal Year (FY) 2020 Competitive State Wildlife Grant (SWG) Program.

The purpose of the SWG Program is to provide wildlife conservation grants to State fish and wildlife agencies (States) and their regional associations for the development and implementation of programs that benefit wildlife and their habitats, including species that are not hunted or fished. The Service requires States to identify animal Species of Greatest Conservation Need through a collaborative process and document them in their Wildlife Action Plans, which must be updated every 10 years or less. The SWG Program has been funded annually since 2001 through appropriations of Congress.

WSFR received 37 eligible applications from 22 States and a regional association of fish and wildlife agencies in response to the published funding opportunity (see Attachment 1). A national panel consisting of Service Regional SWG Program managers scored and ranked the applications. The Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Program (WSFR) recommends funding 17 projects (see Attachment 2). These projects include timely actions such as range-wide species assessment and habitat improvement that help avert the need for new Federal listings, and that help States implement Service recovery plans to cooperatively protect and conserve species that are currently listed.

The total FY 2020 funds available for the Competitive SWG Program are \$7,398,835. The awarded Federal funds for these proposals will be matched with over \$2.8 million in non-Federal funds. This will result in approximately \$10.2 million to be expended for projects that conserve and protect species of greatest conservation need and their habitats, as described in these States' Wildlife Action Plans.

If you have questions, please contact Ms. Christina Milloy, Acting Programs Branch Chief, Division of Policy and Programs, WSFR, at (703) 862-5761.

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Attachment

Summaries of Proposed Projects

Competitive State Wildlife Grant (SWG) Program, Fiscal Year 2020

Total Amount Available: **\$7,398,835**

Recommended for Funding (17 projects):

Region 1

Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection

Title: Testing Salt Marsh Restoration Practices for Saltmarsh Sparrow Conservation

State(s): Connecticut, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, and Virginia

Project Summary: Partnering State fish and wildlife agencies and organizations will test a series of promising management actions that are likely to most effectively conserve the Saltmarsh Sparrow and the suite of tidal marsh birds that share the bird's habitat along the Atlantic coast. The Saltmarsh Sparrow is identified in the Atlantic Coast Joint Venture's Salt Marsh Bird Conservation Plan as one of the highest priority species. SWG Program funds will be combined with \$4,630,000 in existing Federal funds to restore a total of 1,667 acres of critical saltmarsh.

Federal Funds Requested: \$1,000,000; **Non-Federal Match:** \$379,377

Maryland Department of Natural Resources

Title: Wetland Habitat for Black Rail

State(s): Maryland

Project Summary: Maryland Department of Natural Resources will create and restore Eastern Black Rail habitat in six non-tidal freshwater wetlands on Maryland's Eastern Shore. Due to sea level rise and presumed nest flooding, the eastern form of the species has lost more than 90 percent of its population since the 1990s. The agency will create ideal conditions to attract and retain Eastern Black Rail in two different settings, creating a complex of wetlands in an area that has historically supported Black Rail.

Federal Funds Requested: \$250,000; **Non-Federal Match:** \$88,228

Massachusetts Department of Fish and Game

Title: Regional Conservation for Wood Turtles and Related Emydine Turtles

State(s): Connecticut, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, and Virginia

Project Summary: Wood Turtle populations have declined substantially within the past several decades as a result of habitat loss and fragmentation, dam construction, collection, severe flooding, and other threats. The partners will cooperate to stabilize Wood Turtle populations through adaptive

Attachment 1. Summaries of Proposed Projects, Fiscal Year 2020

management of key habitat features, technical assistance for private landowners, region-wide population assessments using standardized protocols, coordination to improve the effectiveness of conservation actions, and curtailment of the illegal trade in Wood Turtle.

Federal Funds Requested: \$989,992; **Non-Federal Match:** \$329,997

Region 2

South Carolina Department of Natural Resources

Title: The Suitability of Alternative Nesting Habitats for the American Horseshoe Crab

State(s): Connecticut, New Hampshire, and South Carolina

Project Summary: The South Carolina Department of Natural Resources and others are concerned about a decrease in suitable spawning habitat for Horseshoe Crab resulting from coastal erosion and shoreline armoring. The Horseshoe Crab is an important food source for migrating shorebirds, including the federally threatened Red Knot. The agency will develop a protocol to survey Horseshoe Crab spawning in traditional and alternative habitats, examine conditions in these habitats, and document embryonic development of the crab in different environmental conditions. This information is essential for the partnering agencies to understand the implications of alternative spawning habitats and to prioritize habitat management approaches for this biologically and economically important species.

Federal Funds requested: \$242,734; **Non-Federal Match:** \$88,903

Region 3

Minnesota Department of Natural Resources

Title: Upper Midwest Turtle Conservation: Phase 3

State(s): Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, and Wisconsin

Project Summary: The partners will focus on the Wood Turtle and Ornate Box Turtle in the third phase of this landscape-scale turtle conservation initiative. The wood turtle is a state-listed species in the participating States and is undergoing review for potential listing by the Service under the Endangered Species Act (ESA). Both turtles are threatened by habitat degradation and fragmentation, adult road mortality, nest depredation, and collection for the pet trade. Conservation actions to benefit these turtles include nesting and foraging habitat creation, restoration, and protection, installation of barriers to reduce road mortality, and studies to identify potential locations for new restoration efforts.

Federal Funds requested: \$997,925; **Non-Federal Match:** \$439,985

Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources

Title: Research and Augmentation of Declining Mussels in the Fox River Watershed

State(s): Illinois and Wisconsin

Project Summary: Native freshwater mussel species are undergoing rapid changes in the Fox River watershed, which spans the border between Wisconsin and Illinois. Evidence of declines highlights the need for more information to guide and assess management actions for numerous species, many of which are listed under the ESA or under review for listing. The partners will analyze species distributions and trends to identify the most significant remaining mussel assemblages in the watershed. Additional funding directed toward genetic research, habitat restoration and protection, and captive rearing will lay the groundwork for augmentation of at-risk mussel species that will help prevent regional extirpation and promote recovery.

Federal Funds Requested: \$149,245; **Non-Federal Match:** \$52,225

Region 4

Missouri Department of Conservation

Title: Broadening the Motus Wildlife Tracking Network in the Midwest and Neotropics

State(s): Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Maine, Minnesota, Missouri, and Ohio

Project Summary: Under the leadership of Missouri Department of Conservation, Motus receivers will be placed in six States and in Costa Rica, Colombia, and Mexico. The receivers provide new and accurate data on tagged migratory birds including three species of particular interest to the partners: Golden-Winged Warbler, Wood Thrush, and American Kestrel. The data will help inform the Service's status review of Golden-Winged Warbler for potential listing under the ESA. The project will also add to the strategic Motus network in the Midwest, allowing other researchers to collect new information on a wide variety of birds, bats, and insects identified in States' Wildlife Action Plans.

Federal Funds requested: \$283,266; **Non-Federal Match:** \$104,157

Region 8

Arizona Game and Fish Department

Title: Western Yellow-Billed Cuckoo Range-wide Occupancy Assessment

State(s): Arizona, California, Colorado, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, Texas, Utah, Washington, and Wyoming

Project Summary: The Western Yellow-Billed Cuckoo's dramatic decline over the last century has culminated in its listing as a threatened species under the ESA. Eleven western State fish and wildlife agencies recognize the Yellow-Billed Cuckoo as a Species of Greatest Conservation Need in their Wildlife Action Plans, and all States within the western Distinct Population Segment of the species are involved in this initiative. Partners will develop a regional habitat distribution model, collect occupancy data, assess detection methods, and create a range-wide occupancy model. This

Attachment 1. Summaries of Proposed Projects, Fiscal Year 2020

information will help optimize and direct habitat management actions which have the potential to reverse the Cuckoo's decline, leading to the partners' ultimate goal of de-listing the species.

Federal Funds Requested: \$511,237; **Non-Federal Match:** \$214,370

Region 9

Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife

Title: Advancing Northern Leopard Frog Recovery in Washington through Reintroduction and Habitat Management – Phase II

State(s): Washington

Project Summary: The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife and partners continue to implement priority recovery actions to save the last population of Northern Leopard Frogs in the State and to increase their chance of persistence by establishing additional populations. Actions include monitoring, habitat enhancement, and release of head-started frogs. Successfully recovering Northern Leopard Frog in Washington is expected to require sustained effort over a period of years. Similar efforts across the species' range are expected to help reduce the need for listing the western populations of the species under the ESA.

Federal Funds Requested: \$249,796; **Non-Federal Match:** \$87,741

Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife

Title: Western States Bumble Bee Atlas: Engaging Community Scientists to Fill Information Gaps for Species of Greatest Conservation Need

State(s): California, Idaho, Oregon, and Washington

Project Summary: Bumble bees are ecologically and economically significant pollinators and conservationists have reported substantial declines in many formerly common species. Partnering State agencies will target six bumble bee species of greatest conservation need that occur in Washington, California, Idaho, and Oregon. The partners will expand upon previous efforts to create the Western States Bumble Bee Atlas, and collect data to fill remaining distribution, abundance, habitat use, and life history data gaps. Project data will directly inform the Service's status assessment for the Western Bumble Bee and aid western States in managing populations of at-risk bees before they decline to levels requiring ESA listing.

Federal Funds Requested: \$666,000; **Non-Federal Match:** \$288,667

Region 12

Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI) – Department of Lands and Natural Resources

Title: Preventing Extirpation of Partulid Snails through Direct Management

State(s): CNMI

Project Summary: Three species of native tree snail inhabit the CNMI archipelago. They are listed as Species of Greatest Conservation Need in the CNMI Wildlife Action Plan and are in immediate danger of extirpation from the southern islands. The species include Humped Tree Snail and Fragile Tree Snail, which are federally listed as endangered. The project also targets the Rota Tree Snail, a novel species that has yet to be formally described. These three species are present in only 13 remaining sites on the islands of Rota and Saipan. Through a combination of monitoring, direct management, evaluation of predator control measures, and planning, the agency and its partners will chart a course for long-term recovery of these imperiled snails.

Federal Funds Requested: \$249,086; **Non-Federal Match:** \$0

Hawaii Department of Lands and Natural Resources

Title: Building Hawaii's Largest Rodent Control Grid for Ten Avian Species

State(s): Hawaii

Project Summary: The Hawaii Department of Land and Natural Resources and the University of Hawaii will help recover a suite of Hawaiian birds in Pu'u Maka'ala Natural Area Reserve, including six endemic species that are federally listed as endangered or threatened. Efforts are focused on reducing mammalian predators and are expected to reduce egg, nestling, and adult predation. Current predator management for forest birds by the Oahu Army Natural Resources Program has demonstrated that large-scale control grids are a cost-effective method for long-term predator abatement. The partners will install a predator control grid across 400 acres of some of the most endangered species-rich habitat within the reserve. Evaluation of this control method will help build the groundwork for recovery of 'Akiapōlā'au, 'Alawī, 'Ākepa, 'Iiwi, 'Alalā, Nēnē, and other birds in Hawaii.

Federal Funds requested: \$347,744; **Non-Federal Match:** \$243,777

Hawaii Department of Lands and Natural Resources

Title: Comparing Avian Malaria Conditions on Kauai, Maui, and Hawaii Islands to Inform the Design of Recovery Actions for Four Forest Bird Species of Greatest Conservation Need

State(s): Hawaii

Project Summary: Hawaiian forest birds are highly vulnerable to mosquito-borne diseases such as avian malaria, and many extinctions have occurred since mosquitoes were introduced to Hawaii. This project will compare non-native mosquito abundances and the prevalence of avian malaria in high-elevation forest bird habitat on Kauai, Maui, and Hawaii Islands. Targeted species include four endemic honeycreepers that are particularly susceptible to avian malaria: 'Akikiki, 'Akeke'e, Kiwīkiu, and 'Ākohekohe. Together, these species number fewer than 1,800 individuals. Information produced in this research will be used to inform the design and implementation of a landscape-scale mosquito control technique. Project results will also provide critical information on habitat suitability and disease risk for determining feasibility of translocation options.

Federal Funds requested: \$499,999; **Non-Federal Match:** \$166,695

Hawaii Department of Lands and Natural Resources

Title: Increasing Island Population Resilience for the Endangered Laysan Duck

State(s): Hawaii

Project Summary: Previously widely distributed across the Hawaiian archipelago, today a global population of approximately 400-500 potentially breeding pairs of Laysan Ducks persists only on three small atolls in the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands. This project will support a supplemental translocation of 10-25 additional wild Laysan Ducks from Midway Atoll to Kure Atoll, to fulfill recommendations of the Service's 2009 recovery plan for the species. This translocation strategy helps create population resilience that will reduce the risk that a catastrophic event would cause extinction of the Laysan Duck.

Federal Funds requested: \$150,500; **Non-Federal Match:** \$50,536

Hawaii Department of Lands and Natural Resources

Title: Pathogen and Parasitic Infection in Rare and Endangered Hawaiian Land Snails

State(s): Hawaii

Project Summary: Recent mass mortality events observed in federally endangered native Hawaiian land snails, linked to a pathogen or parasite infection, underscore the urgent need to understand and mitigate this threat. The Hawaii Department of Lands and Natural Resources will partner with the Bishop Museum's Pacific Center for Molecular Biodiversity and the Museum's Malacology Department to systematically assess rare snails for diseases using DNA analysis. Using this information, the partners will develop molecular markers for a rapid and affordable diagnostic tool to screen snails for disease. The markers will be used to screen 60 snail populations slated for reintroduction, as well as non-native snails and slugs at reintroduction sites.

Federal Funds requested: \$311,408; **Non-Federal Match:** \$103,803

Hawaii Department of Lands and Natural Resources

Title: Preventing Extinction of Endangered Hawaiian Damselflies through Captive Rearing, Habitat Creation, and Reintroduction

State(s): Hawaii

Project Summary: Endemic Hawaiian Damselflies have been heavily impacted by loss or conversion of aquatic habitat coupled with the introduction of invasive freshwater fish. This project targets two federally endangered Damselfly species that persist only in small, fragmented populations in the Hawaiian Islands. The Hawaii Department of Lands and Natural Resources will identify and protect streams that are free of non-native species and habitat alterations, implement

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captive breeding and relocation or translocation of the two species, and collect critical information on life histories of these species.

Federal Funds requested: \$249,990; **Non-Federal Match:** \$84,979

Hawaii Department of Lands and Natural Resources

Title: Rare Seabird Recovery and Monitoring on Two Kauai Offshore Islets

State(s): Hawaii

Project Summary: The Hawaii Department of Lands and Natural Resources and the University of Hawaii – Pacific Cooperative Studies Unit seek to increase knowledge and breeding success of the federally endangered Band-rumped Storm Petrel and Bulwer’s Petrel. Activities focus on the two offshore seabird sanctuaries of Lehua Islet and Moku’ae’ae Rock Islet. The partners will increase breeding success of Band-rumped Storm Petrels by deploying artificial nest boxes and a social attraction system at Lehua Islet. Similar methods will be used to increase the breeding success of Bulwer’s Petrel and to create a new colony of Band-rumped Storm Petrels at Moku’ae’ae Rock Islet.

Federal Funds requested: \$249,913; **Non-Federal Match:** \$83,305

Interior Unified Region	Lead State	Project Title	SWG Federal Share	Non-Federal Match	Total Project Cost
1	Connecticut	Testing Salt Marsh Restoration Practices for Saltmarsh Sparrow Conservation	\$ 1,000,000	\$379,377	\$1,379,377
1	Maryland	Wetland Habitat for Black Rails	\$ 250,000	\$88,228	\$338,228
1	Massachusetts	Regional Conservation for Wood Turtles and Related Emydine Turtles	\$ 989,992	\$329,997	\$1,319,989
2	South Carolina	The Suitability of Alternative Nesting Habitats for the American Horseshoe Crab	\$ 242,734	\$88,903	\$331,637
3	Minnesota	Upper Midwest Turtle Conservation: Phase 3	\$ 997,925	\$439,985	\$1,437,910
3	Wisconsin	Research and Augmentation of Declining Mussels in the Fox River Watershed	\$ 149,245	\$52,225	\$201,470
4	Missouri	Broadening the Motus Wildlife Tracking Network in the Midwest and Neotropics	\$ 283,266	\$104,157	\$387,423
8	Arizona	Western Yellow-billed Cuckoo Range-wide Occupancy Assessment	\$ 511,237	\$214,370	\$725,607
9	Washington	Advancing Northern Leopard Frog Recovery	\$ 249,796	\$87,741	\$337,537
9	Washington	Western States Bumble Bee Atlas	\$ 666,000	\$288,667	\$954,667
12	CNMI	Preventing Extirpation of Partulid Snails Through Direct Management	\$ 249,086	\$0*	\$249,086
12	Hawaii	Building Hawaii's Largest Rodent Control Grid for Ten Avian Species	\$ 347,744	\$243,777	\$591,521
12	Hawaii	Comparing Avian Malaria Conditions on Kauai, Maui, and Hawaii Islands	\$ 499,999	\$166,695	\$666,694
12	Hawaii	Increasing Island Population Resilience for the Endangered Laysan Duck	\$ 150,500	\$50,536	\$201,036
12	Hawaii	Pathogen and Parasitic Infection in Rare and Endangered Hawaiian Land Snails	\$ 311,408	\$103,803	\$415,211
12	Hawaii	Preventing Extinction of Endangered Hawaiian Damselflies	\$ 249,990	\$84,979	\$334,969
12	Hawaii	Rare Seabird Recovery and Monitoring on Two Kauai Offshore Islets	\$ 249,913	\$83,305	\$333,218
		Totals	\$7,398,835	\$2,806,745	\$10,205,580
* In accordance with 48 U.S.C.1469(a), Amendment of Subsection (d), the Regional Director shall waive up to \$200,000 of the required match for each grant awarded to the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI) and the Territories of American Samoa, Guam, and the U.S. Virgin Islands.					
Projects are listed by Interior Unified Region.					