



U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

# The Service Protects and Restores Wetlands



*Fragrant Water Lilies*

Wetlands are the cornerstone of many important and complex ecosystems. Their health and distribution in watersheds provide countless benefits for fish, wildlife, and people. Over the last 200 years, more than 50 percent of our nation's wetlands have been lost and many of the over 100 million acres of remaining wetlands are degraded. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service works with others in many ways to protect and restore wetlands.

## Identifying and Mapping Wetlands

The Service maps and studies the status and trends of wetlands. The Service also provides lists of wetland plants, identification software, wetlands and riparian habitat classification standards, and many reports about wetlands. For more information, go to <http://wetlands.fws.gov>.

## Reducing Development Impacts

The Service works with permit and license applicants, developers, and

Federal agencies to evaluate impacts of proposed water resource development and other projects that affect wetlands. Early project reviews provide the opportunity for the Service to recommend ways to conserve and restore wetland resources and habitats. Avoiding and minimizing impacts to wetlands is the preferred way to lessen loss of scarce wetlands. The Service recommends the replacement or restoration of wetland habitats that may be unavoidably lost or damaged. See: <http://habitat.fws.gov>.

## Wetland Homes for Wildlife

National Wildlife Refuges have an important role in protecting and restoring wetland habitat. Many Refuges were established to protect large wetland ecosystems such as the Okefenokee NWR in Georgia, Laguna Acosta NWR in Texas, Salton Sea NWR in California, and Yukon Delta NWR in Alaska. There are more than 530 Refuges that protect wetlands and

other habitats important to fish and wildlife. For more information see: <http://refuges.fws.gov/>.

## Partnering Up

The Service's Partners for Fish and Wildlife program has worked with more than 27,000 farmers, ranchers, and other landowners who want to restore wetlands on their land. The program benefits the landowner and the public by improving or providing habitat for fish, wildlife and plants, improving water quality and watershed health, and reducing pollution. The Service enlists the assistance of a wide variety of other partners to restore habitat on private lands. For information see: <http://partners.fws.gov/index.htm>



*Before wetland restoration, PA field*



*After restoration of wetland*

## Protecting our Coasts

The Coastal Program works with other Federal and non-federal partners to conserve and restore coastal habitats.

Working in 15 high-priority coastal ecosystems, the Service and partners have restored wetlands, protected coastal habitats through easements, reopened coastal streams for fish passage, and restored stream-side habitat. To learn more: <http://www.fws.gov/cep/cepcode.html>.

The Service provides grants to States and Territories for coastal wetlands conservation. Between \$11 and 15 million is awarded annually through a competitive process. See: <http://www.fws.gov/cep/cwgcover.html>.



*Salt Marsh, St. Simons, GA*

### Saving Wetlands with Stamps

The sale of Duck Stamps buys lands and waters for National Wildlife Refuges. The sale of Junior Duck Stamps funds wetlands conservation and education. The Federal Duck Stamp and the Junior Duck Stamp contests are the only Federal art contests. The Duck Stamp is one of the most successful wetland conservation ventures in existence. For information: <http://duckstamps.fws.gov/>



*Black-necked Stilt*

### Migratory Bird Habitat

Over 50% of breeding North American bird species depend on wetlands for survival. Currently 200 bird species

are in trouble. Of these, 72 are wetland-dependent species already on the endangered list. The Service has programs to regulate waterfowl hunting, to protect neotropical migrants, and to protect and restore bird habitats. Under the North American Wetlands Conservation Act, the Service administers a grant program to fund partnerships involved in wetlands conservation. See: <http://birds.fws.gov>.



*Removing a dam, to restore fish passage and wetlands*

### Managing Fish Habitat

Wetlands play a critical role in the life cycle of fish species. Today, 37% of U.S. fish species are imperiled, with 116 listed as endangered or threatened. To protect declining fish species the Service works closely with people, States, and Tribes to conserve and rehabilitate wetlands and aquatic habitats. For projects see: <http://fisheries.fws.gov/>.



*Saltmarsh harvest mouse*

### Endangered Species Recovery

The Service estimates that 46% of U.S. endangered plants and animals depend on wetlands for their survival. In addition to wetlands-dependent birds and fish, 72% of freshwater mussels are imperiled and 40% of amphibians are imperiled or vulnerable. In working with others to recover endangered species, the Service is also protecting and restoring the wetlands

on which they depend. Read more at: <http://endangered.fws.gov/>.



*Nutria Enclosure - showing wetland damage outside the fence, Blackwater National Wildlife Refuge*

### Stopping Invasive Species

Non-native plants and animals severely impact our Nation's lands and waters, including habitat resources within the National Wildlife Refuge System. The Service is working to prevent and control invasive species that can displace native species, radically change the habitats they invade, and impact human health by transmitting disease. See: <http://invasives.fws.gov/>.

### Preventing Pollution

Pollution is one of the American public's greatest environmental concerns, and wetlands have been severely affected. The Service is dedicated to protecting wildlife and their habitat from pollution's harmful effects. Service professionals specialize in detecting toxic chemicals; assessing their effects; and preventing harm to fish, wildlife, and their habitats for the enjoyment of people. For more information, see: <http://contaminants.fws.gov/>.



*Discharge from pipe*

U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
1/800-344-WILD  
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