

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Wildlife Without Borders

Regional Programs



“With the world’s most valuable species and ecosystems disappearing rapidly, regional efforts like those sponsored by the Service’s Wildlife Without Borders-Regional Programs are needed more than ever. Wildlife — and people — across the globe could benefit from more initiatives like these.”

Diane Jukofsky
Board Member and a Founder of the Rainforest Alliance



Scott Schliebe/USFWS

Making a Difference

Conservation of wildlife is a global responsibility and priority, with the survival of wildlife species largely dependent on habitats extending beyond political boundaries. In light of significant pressures from the expanding human population and corresponding increases in development, pollution, and consumption of natural resources, the need for international collaboration in conserving wildlife has never been greater.

The U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (Service) has a mandate through numerous statutes and international treaties to support the conservation of species of international concern. To address this mandate and help stem rising threats to global biodiversity, the Service's Division of International Conservation developed the *Wildlife Without Borders*-Regional Programs.

The mission of the Service's *Wildlife Without Borders*-Regional Programs is to develop locally adapted wildlife management and conservation programs to maintain global species diversity. By partnering with international and local non-governmental organizations, governments, private enterprises, and community leaders, the Service uses a small amount of funding to leverage commitments of financial and human resources in order to make significant strides in wildlife conservation.

The *Wildlife Without Borders*-Regional Programs currently focus on five areas: Latin America and the Caribbean, Mexico, India, China, and Russia. These programs are funded in the appropriations process under the Service's "International Conservation" budget. The *Wildlife Without Borders*-Regional Programs, although tailored to meet the needs of the individual countries in which they work, have consistent strategic areas of conservation focus, all of the *Wildlife Without Borders* Programs share common conservation principles: capacity building for long-term in-country wildlife management; endangered and migratory species conservation; strategic habitat conservation and natural areas; and environmental education and outreach.

By working on the ground around the world to conserve biodiversity and help other countries better manage their wildlife resources, the *Wildlife Without Borders*-Regional Programs continue to support the Service's mission to work with others to conserve, protect and enhance fish, wildlife and plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people.



David Pitkin/USFWS

“Assistance provided by the United States Fish and Wildlife Service Wildlife Without Borders-Regional Programs for capacity building has been highly instrumental and successful in creating skilled wildlife conservation experts in South and Central America.”

Carlos Manuel Rodriguez Echandi
Costa Rican Minister of the Environment and Energy



Latin America *& the* Caribbean

By supporting academic and technical training, capacity building, information exchange, and species and habitat conservation projects, *Wildlife Without Borders*-Latin America and the Caribbean empowers local people to balance community needs with the conservation and sustainable use of wildlife resources. Funding of projects such as graduate programs in wildlife management and continued monitoring of threatened species has resulted in many successful efforts for Latin America and the Caribbean and in improved and enhanced conservation initiatives throughout the region.

Latin America and Caribbean Regional Program at work:

- Providing funding for training programs throughout the region, as well as scholarships, specialized courses, thesis work, visiting professors, equipment, materials, and Biological Documentation Centers. Programs offer graduate level education and training to regional students, many of whom have gone on to play key roles as government officials, university professors, and NGO representatives after graduating.
- Designing and conducting training courses for U.S. and Latin American decision makers and wildlife managers, to underscore the significance of people and culture to natural resource conservation in the tropics.
- Controlling osprey mortality at fish farms in collaboration with the Colombian government, research institutions, and farmers by designing and using nets and other deterrents to reduce bird predation on fish.
- Building public support for conservation issues through the RARE Center's PRIDE campaign activities in Caribbean and Central America. Efforts continue to raise awareness and widespread grass-roots support for wildlife conservation by focusing on wildlife symbols of national pride.
- Supporting exhibitions on Bolivia's biodiversity at museums in La Paz and Santa Cruz, Bolivia. The exhibitions' goals include increasing visitor awareness of Bolivia's biological and cultural diversity, exploring the role of traditional uses of Bolivia's natural resources, and illustrating the importance of conserving biodiversity.
- Minimizing seabird mortality in longline fisheries through a project jointly developed with NGOs, academia, fishing companies, and the government of Argentina, in order to increase fishing profits while decreasing the number of seabird deaths.





“Not only do the United States and Mexico share the same mountains, deserts, oceans and air; but we frequently share the same wildlife which migrate and move across our borders. As neighbors of this biologically wealthy nation, we should be working together to conserve species and ensure a future for wildlife in both our countries.”

Duane Shroufe
Director of Arizona Game and Fish Department

Mexico

The concept of “megadiversity” is applicable to few countries in the world — those that harbor an extraordinary percentage of the planet’s biodiversity —and Mexico is at the top of this very special category. In addition to its resident species, Mexico provides vital stop-over and wintering habitat for numerous migratory species from all over the Western Hemisphere. Managing this shared natural wealth requires collaborative international efforts. The *Wildlife Without Borders*-Mexico program has successfully helped strengthen Mexico’s capacity to manage key natural resources shared with the United States, and serves as a tool to increase understanding of conservation policies and practices in both countries.

Mexico Regional program at work:

- Training and equipping fishermen, fishery observers, and enforcement personnel to reduce sea turtle bycatch, safely release turtles, and monitor and report fishery-sea turtle interactions on Mexico’s Pacific coast.
- Providing funds to research the life cycle and habitat uses of reintroduced condors, and creating educational materials about the importance of the survival of the condor in its former range in Baja California.
- Providing natural resource managers the tools to reduce conflict and social problems common in protected areas of southern Mexico through the implementation of short-term certificate courses specializing in outreach for officers from Mexico’s Natural Protected Areas Council.
- Increasing and enhancing U.S. state wildlife agencies’ involvement in such initiatives as project evaluation and monitoring, and participation in the Canada/Mexico/U.S. Trilateral Meeting for Wildlife and Ecosystem Conservation and Management, the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands of International Importance, and the Bonn Convention on Migratory Species.
- Supporting borderlands bat conservation by producing and distributing cave owner stewardship materials, conducting a bat conservation and management workshop, and identifying previously undocumented migratory bat routes and caves on the U.S.-Mexico border.
- Promoting the long-term conservation of wintering habitat of the monarch butterfly through natural resource management training for local communities of the Monarch Butterfly Biosphere Reserve.
- Providing training in sustainable natural resource management for peasant farmer communities in the dry forest of Guerrero, and the rainforest of Chiapas, Mexico, and restoring habitat in these key biodiversity areas.



“The continued success of programs supported by Wildlife Without Borders-India help to facilitate and forge vital relationships among conservationists, organizations and decision makers in India. These partnerships are crucial to ensure survival of wildlife in the country in the face of mounting challenges.”

Dr. P.R. Sinha
Director Wildlife Institute of India

K.S. Gopi Sundar/ICWWG

India

Home to animals such as cranes, tigers, elephants, rhinoceroses, dholes, gibbons, lions, and many more charismatic species, India is widely recognized as extremely important to Earth's diverse wildlife heritage. The *Wildlife Without Borders-India* program's long-term commitment to conservation has spawned significant improvements for wildlife, despite the challenge of balancing the needs of wildlife, with those of India's expanding human population.

India Regional Program at Work:

- Supporting research on the ecology of endangered species of wildlife and their habitats in India through a series of projects with the Bombay Natural History Society. Imperiled animals studied include the great Indian bustard, Asian elephant, mountain quail, pink-headed duck, and Blewitts owl. Jerdon's courser, a nocturnal shorebird not seen for 86 years, was rediscovered through these studies, and the area where the bird was found was declared a sanctuary.
- Developing a national institute for wildlife training and research by training faculty at the Wildlife Institute of India in ten different subject areas and subsequently supporting seven multi-year activities to consolidate the information learned and expand the application of modern wildlife research and management techniques. Every forest officer in India now takes wildlife training at this center.
- Supporting a study on the ecology and management of large carnivores (tiger, leopard, and dhole) in a South Indian national park, and the ecological status and conservation of tigers in India as a whole.
- Establishing a permanent research center in Keoladeo National Park in Bharatpur to address systems function, the role of livestock and people, and the development of more effective management practices. Studies produced baseline data, an understanding of the dynamics of the system, and recommendations for management, and served as the foundation to train 29 Indian scientists.
- Initiating an Indo-US program to develop centers for primate field ecological studies leading to conservation strategies to benefit primates and other wildlife. The results of this cooperative program produced new researchers, amassed a wealth of information on endangered primates and their habitats, and revealed the magnitude of the threats to primates regionally.

“Environmental problems can only be solved through international cooperative efforts. The Wildlife Without Borders-China program provides the United States and China with a unique opportunity to share and apply the scientific knowledge that will help various unique wildlife species and their habitats to survive.”

**George B. Schaller,
Wildlife Conservation Society**



China

To help preserve China's diverse landscapes the Service forged relationships with that country's wildlife managers and decision makers. The *Wildlife Without Borders*-Regional Program's goal is to facilitate exchange of information among specialists to address wildlife issues as well as management of refuges, wetlands, rivers, and fishery resources. In addition, the Service provides grants for Asian elephant, tiger, and gibbon conservation in China through the Multinational Species Conservation Funds. Operating under the aegis of the 1986 U.S.-P.R.C. Protocol on Cooperation and Exchanges in the Field of Conservation of Nature, the *Wildlife Without Borders*-China program seeks to facilitate the implementation of the best possible biodiversity conservation practices in the world's most populous country.

China Regional Program at Work:

- Exchanging wildlife biologists working to conserve threatened or endangered wildlife species, such as black-footed ferrets, sea turtles, snow leopards, argali sheep, and red-crowned cranes.
- Organizing exchanges of Chinese and American wetlands specialists to share methods for managing and restoring wetlands, including prevention of contamination.
- Conducting multi-year tagging and monitoring of Chinese sturgeon in the Yangtze River with the goal of using new technologies to reverse declines in spawning numbers of this endangered species. Chinese sturgeon are imperiled in part due to hydroelectric dams and other water control projects.
- Arranging short-term exchanges of U.S. and Chinese protected area managers responsible for visitor facilities, services, and safety on refuges and nature reserves. Both countries are experiencing sharp increases in tourism.
- Providing training to Chinese personnel responsible for implementation and enforcement of China's obligations under the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), resulting in enhanced ability to regulate lawful wildlife commerce to help conserve imperiled species.
- Providing guidance on managing rivers and wetlands for public safety, water quality, and wildlife habitat following disastrous floods that killed thousands of Chinese citizens in the 1990s.



Steve Kohl/USFWS

“Cooperation in the conservation of such prominent species as polar bears and Amur tigers is a symbol of the shared interest and responsibility of the United States and the Russian Federation in combining our two countries’ formidable conservation capabilities to promote the protection of Russia’s globally important wildlife and their habitats.”

Honorable Alexander Vershbow
U.S. Ambassador to Russia



Russia

To better manage and conserve wildlife populations and species, the Service engages in a number of cooperative conservation activities with Russia. These include information sharing, joint scientific studies, training opportunities, and a small grants program to assist Russia's nature reserves and national parks. With awards averaging about \$7,500 each, the *Wildlife Without Borders*-Russia program supports a remarkable range of activities and illustrates the ability of Russia's resource managers to accomplish much with modest funds.

Russia Regional Program at work:

- Purchasing mobile radio units to cut response time on threats to unique species such as sturgeon, Dalmatian pelican, and white-tailed eagle on the Astrakhan Reserve in the Volga River Delta.
- Providing grants for the conservation of saiga antelope, a species declared critically endangered by the World Conservation Union in 2002 after its numbers plummeted from more than one million in the 1990s to fewer than 30,000 throughout Central Asia in 2005. The saiga is poached for its horns, which are then illegally traded and processed as aphrodisiacs for Asian traditional medicines.
- Providing grants to Russia's national bird banding center for the purchase of bird bands used to track migration of birds over vast distances, including between Siberia and the United States. The opening of the Russian Far East following decades of isolation provided new opportunities for Russian and American biologists to solve many of the migratory bird mysteries of the Bering Sea region. In some Siberian Arctic villages, Alaskan biologists were the first Americans to visit since the 1940s.
- Purchasing patrol snowmobiles for protection of the only remaining 300 year old oak forest in western Russia, making it possible to monitor and protect against unauthorized utilization of forest resources.
- Installing new communications systems to improve ranger capability to protect Amur tiger, Asiatic black bear, mandarin duck, and Japanese yew in the Lazovskiy Reserve on the Pacific Coast.
- Building remote ranger posts for enhanced protection of snow leopards, musk deer, and argali sheep in the Sayano-Shushenskiy Reserve in southern Siberia.
- Promoting the negotiation and signing of a US-Russia bilateral agreement to continue to conserve polar bears and their habitat. The agreement has helped to improve information sharing between Russia and the U.S and has increased ecosystem/habitat protection and monitoring, specifically by native peoples, and strengthened both governments' commitment to conserve polar bears.



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Maggie Tieger/USFWS



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Addressing the Future

The plight of wildlife across the globe continues to worsen as the human population grows and undisturbed habitat becomes more and more scarce. This crisis is only exacerbated by a need for more trained wildlife professionals and environmental stewards — particularly in regions that are home to some of the world's richest biodiversity.

The ongoing work of the *Wildlife Without Borders*-Regional Programs creates a sustainable model for wildlife conservation that acknowledges the needs of local people and the realities of regional cultures, traditions, and practices. This combination of passionate commitment to conservation and understanding and respect for local values makes the program a success.

Other regions of the world that harbor abundant biodiversity but currently lack the existing infrastructure for long-term wildlife conservation and management practices include Africa, Southeast Asia, and the Middle East. As the Service continues to work globally on conservation and capacity building, it will explore opportunities to work with governments, NGOs and the private sector to initiate and facilitate efforts in these important wildlife areas as well as in other regions that would benefit from such support. Working together, the United States and wildlife conservation stakeholders worldwide can ensure wildlife has a permanent space to live and thrive on this planet.





U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
Division of International Conservation
4401 North Fairfax Drive
Room 730
Arlington, VA 22203-1610

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