

# DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

news release

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## U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE PUBLISHES MANAGEMENT PLAN TO GUIDE AGENCY'S ACTIVITIES

A comprehensive management plan to assure effective conservation of the Nation's fish and wildlife resources in the 1980s has been developed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

"Rapidly changing social and economic forces have made fish, wildlife, and their habitat increasingly vulnerable to losses, as an expanding human population continues to put pressure on diminishing resources," said Service Director Lynn A. Greenwalt. "The Service's challenge is clear: if we expect to conserve our Nation's fish and wildlife resources for future generations, we must anticipate change and respond with efficient management strategies."

The new Service Management Plan is a broad-based document that sets the Service's general course of action for the next decade, laying the foundation for planning and managing all agency activities. It serves as the basis for more specific management plans (Program Management Documents) and ensuing budgets for the various Service programs through which the agency accomplishes its work.

"Guided by this plan, we can foresee changing needs of fish and wildlife resources, and take positive action to deal with major problems affecting these resources. Also, ongoing programs will benefit from clear direction toward achieving national goals," said Greenwalt.

Noting that increased competition for both renewable and non-renewable resources dictates more intensive management of fish and wildlife, Greenwalt emphasized that the Service Management Plan--the agency's first planning document to encompass all its programs--will facilitate responsive management tactics by providing initial guidance.

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The document, intended for Fish and Wildlife managers and the public, serves as a blueprint to the workings of the Service. It defines the Service's mission and lists program goals. Policies are described for fish and wildlife management, operations, and planning and decision-making processes. Strategies are outlined for ongoing activities, as well as identifying major resource problems and setting priorities to efficiently deal with them.

Outstanding features of the plan include: identification of socio-economic factors that may influence the Service's overall planning process; the plan's focus on the most critical problems affecting fish and wildlife ("Important Resource Problems"); and recognition of a broader public involvement in fish and wildlife issues.

Service officials recognize that not only has the amount of public concern for fish and wildlife increased in recent years, but also that the scope of those concerns has broadened. The plan informs the public about the direction of the Service, and calls for increased public information and education to stimulate citizen involvement in conservation issues.

Potential threats to the Nation's fish and wildlife resources are forecast by socio-economic trends discussed in the plan. For instance, development--particularly in the West where many of the Nation's energy resources are located--will significantly increase demand for water. Yet adequate water must be assured to maintain essential habitat for fish and wildlife.

The FWS has developed an innovative process for promoting a better understanding of important resource issues and identifying where they are most acute. This list of 78 "Important Resource Problems" (IRPs) ranges from depleted stocks of steelhead trout and salmon in the Northwest's Columbia River Basin to endangered species in the Florida wetlands.

IRPs are clearly defined problems associated with specific species within geographic areas. For example, the populations of several endangered species which find refuge in the south Florida wetlands and Keys are imperiled. The Florida manatee, Florida panther, American crocodile and bald eagle are among those threatened by development. The Service's goal is the eventual recovery of the listed species.

Vital concerns of the Service that are broader in scope, such as lead poisoning of migratory waterfowl, may also be included on the list of priorities, which will be brought up-to-date periodically.

One of the most common themes which runs through the list is loss or pollution of essential habitat for declining species populations, attributed to a wide range of human activities. In planning that involves IRPs, priority will be given to highly ranked problems in which there is imminent threat to a species.

Service officials emphasize that, while the list will enhance the effectiveness of the agency's programs by focusing on species and habitat-related concerns, work will continue on activities (such as predator control and law enforcement) for which the Service is responsible under its mandate to manage and protect U.S. fish and wildlife resources.

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Program Management Documents reflect the general guidance of the Service Management Plan. However, these documents set forth more specific policies and strategies by which programs can work toward Service goals. A document has been developed for each Service program or set of similar programs: Endangered Species, Migratory Birds, Fishery Resources, Mammals and Non-migratory Birds, Animal Damage Control, Habitat Preservation, Interpretation and Recreation, Federal Assistance, Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Units, Executive Direction, and Administration and Related Support Services.

Important Resource Problems are listed, as they relate to one or more programs, in the appropriate Program Management Document(s). Resource problems are often the joint responsibility of several Service areas; for instance, Endangered Species and Habitat Preservation contribute toward restoration of the bald eagle. The Service Management Plan calls for greater intra-agency cooperation to achieve goals while eliminating possible duplication of effort.

As announced in the September 29, 1980, Federal Register, limited copies of the 84-page Service Management Plan and/or copies of Program Management Documents, averaging 35 pages each, are available by writing to Director, Fish and Wildlife Service, c/o Division of Program Plans, Washington, D.C. 20240.

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