



U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Fish & Wildlife Management Assistance

Interjurisdictional Fisheries Assistance

Swimming Across Borders

Fish in rivers and coastal waters move across boundaries of states and nations. Individual governments are unable to effectively manage or conserve these interjurisdictional fisheries.



Striped bass (top) and red drum (bottom) are two important species managed by interstate Marine Fishery Commissions

To coordinate actions of multiple governments, interjurisdictional organizations have been formed voluntarily, by treaty, or by act of Congress. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, through the Fish and Wildlife Management Assistance program, works cooperatively with these organizations to conserve, restore, and manage fish stocks and the habitat on which they depend.

For example, the Mississippi River and its tributaries drain all or part of 30 U.S. states and 2 Canadian provinces. The river provides habitat for 241 species of fish, many of which, like sturgeon and

paddlefish, migrate up and down the Mississippi River and its tributaries. The fish communities of the Mississippi basin have been degraded by habitat destruction, dams, pollution, exotic species, and overfishing.

Interjurisdictional groups that address these common issues, include the Mississippi Interstate Cooperative Resource Association (MICRA), the Lower Mississippi River Conservation Committee (LMRCC), and the Upper Mississippi River Conservation Committee (UMRCC).

In coastal waters, organizations like the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission were formed by Congress to address interstate fisheries issues. To manage the Great Lakes fisheries more effectively, the U.S. entered into a treaty with Canada to form the Great Lakes Fishery Commission.

We work closely with these organizations to conserve interjurisdictional fisheries and restore and maintain the health of aquatic ecosystems.

Through the Fish and Wildlife Management Assistance program, the Service brings a national perspective to these organizations and helps coordinate their activities. We work across borders that traditionally limit states or other nations. The Fish and Wildlife Management Assistance program relies on about 300 biologists located across the Nation to assist and support cooperative restoration and management efforts. We survey interjurisdictional fish populations and provide technical support and coordination services for the Commissions, focusing on Federal trust species. Federal trust species include those that cross state and national borders or are listed under the *Endangered Species Act*.

Fish and Wildlife Management Assistance works with interjurisdictional commissions and other organizations, including:

- *Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission*
- *Gulf States Marine Fishery Commission*
- *Pacific States Marine Fishery Commission*
- *Great Lakes Fishery Commission*
- *Connecticut River Atlantic Salmon Commission*
- *Upper Mississippi River Conservation Committee*
- *Mississippi Interstate Cooperative Resource Association*
- *Lower Mississippi River Conservation Committee*
- *Alaska Federal Subsistence Board*
- *Klamath River Fishery Council and Task Force*
- *Trinity River Task Force*

For example, Fish and Wildlife Management Assistance biologists conduct stock assessments, genetic analysis, habitat evaluation and restoration, and hatchery product evaluation. We collect and distribute information for standardized data and statistical programs.

We administer cooperative research programs such as the Cooperative Tagging Program for striped bass, the Mark-Recapture Programs for Pacific salmon, the Mississippi River Basin Paddlefish Research Project, and the Connecticut River Atlantic Salmon Commission Tagging Program.

Our River Coordinators bring together diverse interest groups within multi-state watersheds to facilitate effective decision-making and achieve common goals.

Who Benefits?

With the Service as a partner, the Commissions and other interjurisdictional organizations can achieve large-scale restoration, conservation and management of aquatic resources.

Coordinating research, planning, management, information sharing, and public education reduces costs and improves the health of the environment.

Environmental, economic, and aesthetic benefits include restored or improved river habitats for fish and wildlife, increased fish and other aquatic populations, de-listing or precluding the need to list species as threatened or endangered, and sustained recreational and commercial fishing.



Fish & Wildlife Management Assistance cooperates with the Great Lakes Fishery Commission states, tribes, provinces and federal agencies to restore laketrout to the Great Lakes.

Charter and commercial fisheries provide major recreational and economic benefits to coastal and Great Lakes communities

Fish & Wildlife Management Assistance cooperates with states and universities to determine habitat distribution and availability of Gulf sturgeon. Spawning areas such as the above rock outcrop were identified by radio-tracking sturgeon.

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