



U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

# The Coastal Program

## *Success in Alaska*



### *Caring for Our Coastal Habitats*

#### Importance of Coastal Resources

Nationwide, coastal ecosystems make up about 10 percent of the land area, but 80 percent of the nation's waterfowl and migratory bird species depend on these areas for nesting, foraging and resting habitats.

Alaska's world famous anadromous fishery and shellfish industry depend on coastal ecosystems. Estuaries, nearshore marine waters, and coastal wetlands are also vital to the State's spectacular seabird and shorebird populations. All of Alaska's threatened and endangered animals live in or near coastal or marine habitats.



**Black oystercatcher.**

Photo: Jill Parker, USFWS



**Children enjoying one of Alaska's many coastal beaches.**

Photo: Corel Corp.

#### *Why Do Alaska's Coastal Habitats Need Help?*

More than half of Alaska's residents live in south central coastal ecosystems. These systems support a diversity of fish and wildlife, while at the same time providing jobs, subsistence foods, and recreational opportunities. As the coastal population continues to increase, there is a growing need to protect the functions of these irreplaceable ecosystems and restore degraded ones.

Alaska's coastal fish and wildlife resources are under pressure from:

- Increasing populations and urbanization;
- Rapid expansion of recreational and commercial enterprise, such as fishing, tourism, and aquaculture;
- Increases in harbor activities and facilities necessary to support increased use; and
- Oil and fuel spills.

partnership building to protect and restore a variety of wetland, riparian, and upland coastal habitats. The Coastal Program achieves these goals by:

- Developing habitat projects on both private and public lands;
- Working closely with a variety of partners, including other Federal, State, Native, and local government agencies, conservation organizations, businesses, and private landowners;
- Providing partners with technical and financial assistance to produce on-the-ground results that benefit fish and wildlife resources in coastal areas;
- Leveraging Service contributions to increase our ability to conserve important habitats; and
- Assisting partners in locating, requesting and applying for other sources of funding and assistance.

#### **Coastal Program Facts**

The Coastal Program is a non-regulatory program that relies on

## What Does the Coastal Program Do?

In Alaska, the Coastal Program provides staff, funds and assistance to implement:

- Habitat protection and restoration
- Essential data compilation and analysis
- Information and education programs.

## Project Criteria

Projects that contribute toward the goals of Alaska's Coastal Program include:

- Restoration of streamside and coastal habitats in southcentral Alaska watersheds
- Improvements to fish passage
- Control of exotic invasive animal and plant species
- Opportunities to gather information about threats to coastal resources, and to develop potential solutions to these threats;
- Outreach projects that inform the public about the values of coastal habitats and low-impact methods of access, use or development; and
- Other work with partners to protect important habitats such as undeveloped coastal mud flats, tidal marshes, wetlands, and riparian areas.

## Accomplishments

Alaska's Coastal Program was established in 2000. To date, the Program has cooperated on more than 30 projects, including partnerships with diverse agencies and organizations. On-going projects include:

**Habitat Protection Funding** - The Coastal Program has become an information clearinghouse for partners in pursuit of private and agency funding for habitat protection projects. We actively reach out to State agencies and non-governmental organizations to educate them about available funding programs, and provide technical assistance, including



Rock sandpipers are one of many shorebirds that frequent Alaska's coasts.  
Photo: R. Gill, USFWS

grant writing support. During FY 2001, our partners successfully competed for two North American Wetlands Conservation Act Small Grants, two National Coastal Wetlands Conservation Grants, and two National Fish and Wildlife Foundation Grants.

**Alaska Department of Fish and Game Special Areas Inholdings Catalog** - Nearly 4 million acres of State land in Alaska are designated as Game Refuges, Sanctuaries or Critical Habitat Areas. This project allows Alaska Department of Fish and Game to inventory private inholdings in its 9 Cook Inlet Special Areas, prioritize lands for protection, and inform landowners about voluntary habitat conservation options.

**Wood Frog Distribution Project** - The Coastal Program has funded the University of Alaska's Alaska Natural Heritage Program, in cooperation with area schools and youth organizations, to gather baseline distribution data on wood frogs in the Cook Inlet region. This project will identify critical habitat characteristics of wood frog breeding areas in Southcentral Alaska.

**Ship Creek Restoration Coordination** - The Coastal Program is partnering with Anchorage Waterways Council to build interest and support for a comprehensive watershed and fisheries restoration initiative on Anchorage's Ship Creek,

in an effort to return the 29 mile-long stream to a more natural condition favorable to wild fish runs.

**Streambank Restoration Willow Guide** - The Coastal Program has partnered with the Kenai Watershed Forum to produce an identification guide to the willow species commonly used for streambank restoration in Alaska. The guide will provide agency specialists, contractors and landowners with information necessary to identify and select the proper species of willow for habitat restoration projects.

**Kenai Brown Bear Conservation Strategy** - The Coastal Program is partnering with Audubon Alaska and The Nature Conservancy to implement the key recommendations of the 2000 Kenai Peninsula Brown Bear Conservation Strategy, in order to preserve the small, geographically isolated Kenai brown bear population.

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