



**Fisheries  
& Habitat  
Conservation**

**U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service**

**Fisheries and Habitat Conservation**

# The Coastal Barrier Resources Act

*The Coastal Barrier Resources Act - a free-market approach to conservation:*

*Conserves coastal wetlands that support a variety of fish and wildlife including migratory birds, shorebirds, finfish, shellfish, and sea turtles.*

*Saves taxpayers' money by restricting Federal subsidies to develop — and rebuild again and again — places subject to storm surge and chronic erosion.*

*Keeps people out of harm's way by discouraging construction in risky areas where hurricanes strike first.*



*Above: Coastal barriers are important for migratory birds and many at-risk plants and animals. Photo by Corel.*

Coastal barriers and their associated wetlands provide many free services that are foundations of a healthy environment and strong economy. These dynamic ecosystems provide essential spawning, nesting, nursery, and feeding areas for a variety of commercially and recreationally important fish and wildlife. They also serve as popular vacation destinations and are important to local economies. Developing coastal barriers, however, is risky. They serve as the mainland's first line of defense against hurricane winds and storm surges. Aware of this risk and of the value of coastal barriers to fish and wildlife, Congress adopted the Coastal Barrier Resources Act (CBRA) in 1982. CBRA is the essence of free-market natural resource conservation; it in no way regulates how people can develop their land, but transfers the full cost from Federal taxpayers to the individuals who choose to build in these areas.

## WHAT DOES THIS PROGRAM DO?

- Protects valuable coastal wetlands for fish and wildlife.
- Saves taxpayers' money.
- Keeps people out of the deadly path of storm surge.

## HOW DO WE DO IT?

- Communicate with the public and local and state governments to help them understand CBRA and how it affects them.
- Consult with Federal agencies that propose spending funds in CBRA areas.
- Work with landowners to identify properties affected by CBRA.

## WHAT HAVE WE DONE ALREADY?

- Saved the taxpayers more than a billion dollars.
- Worked with landowners, local governments, and Congress to make appropriate boundary modifications.
- Consulted with our customers and partners to understand how we can better serve their needs.

## HOW DOES THE PUBLIC BENEFIT?

- Valuable wetlands and coastal barrier habitat are less likely to be developed, helping migratory birds and at-risk plants and animals.

- Taxpayers across the country do not pay to develop—and rebuild again and again—risky and biologically rich places.
- The natural amenities that encourage economic growth endure.

## WHAT MORE CAN WE DO? MAP MODERNIZATION IS THE FUTURE.

- Give our customers user-friendly, digital maps that can be fully integrated into local and state management tools.
- Increase government efficiency by placing CBRA information on the Internet, making it easy for our customers to access information quickly.
- Reach out to more partners. CBRA is one item in the conservation toolbox that works best when complemented by other programs.



*Above: Hurricanes menace coastal barriers almost every year. Photo by NOAA.*

**For more information about the Coastal Barrier Resources System, contact U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Fisheries and Habitat Conservation at 703/358-2161 or visit us on the Internet at <http://www.fws.gov/habitatconservation/>.**

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