



Working with Others to Conserve Fish and Wildlife

Fish and Wildlife Management Program

America's Aquatic Resources Are Facing a Crisis

America's fish and other aquatic resources are among the richest and most diverse in the world. These resources, and the recreational, commercial, and subsistence opportunities they provide, have helped support the Nation's growth by providing enormous ecological, social and economic benefits. In 2001 alone, recreational fishing revenues contributed over \$35 billion to the national economy. Although fisheries management has achieved some notable successes, the health of fish and aquatic resources is at a crisis state. Stresses such as the introduction of invasive species, habitat loss, and erosion are degrading the quality of these resources, thereby impacting their various uses.

A growing number of fish species continue to decline at alarming rates. Almost 400 aquatic species either have, or need, special protection in some part of their natural or historic range. Several species listed as threatened or endangered under the *Endangered Species Act* (ESA), including populations of salmon, sturgeon, and trout, were once important for recreational, subsistence, and commercial fish uses. To date, the Service has never been able to remove these species from the ESA lists, although recovery efforts have brought a few close to being delisted or downlisted from endangered to threatened status. Yet, success stories such as the recovery of Atlantic striped bass and the Apache trout give us hope and illustrate the value of cooperative approaches to fisheries management.

People and Partnerships

The Fish and Wildlife Management Program works with States, Tribes, Federal agencies, foreign governments, and the private sector to foster sound science and collaborative management. We take a hands-on approach to cooperative management and restoration of nationally significant fish, marine mammals, wildlife, and other aquatic



A cooperative approach to managing aquatic species helps to ensure their long-term reproductive success and survival.

animals. One of our greatest strengths is our ability to work across geographic, political, and international borders to craft coalitions, partnerships, and solutions.

Conservationists and fisheries managers nationwide look to us to assist in achieving restoration goals, such as:

- helping state governments to restore depleted aquatic species,
- assessing the status of remnant populations on Federal lands,
- assisting Tribal governments in recovering threatened and endangered fish and wildlife on their lands,
- providing fish passage by removing and bypassing artificial barriers,

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- restoring degraded aquatic habitat, and
- managing subsistence fishery harvest on Federal lands in Alaska.

Healthier ecosystems yield multiple economic benefits by providing increased hunting, fishing, and wildlife watching opportunities. These recreational pastimes translate into real economic benefits for rural communities, supported by responsible and effective management of our nation's fish and wildlife resources.

Our Vision for the Future

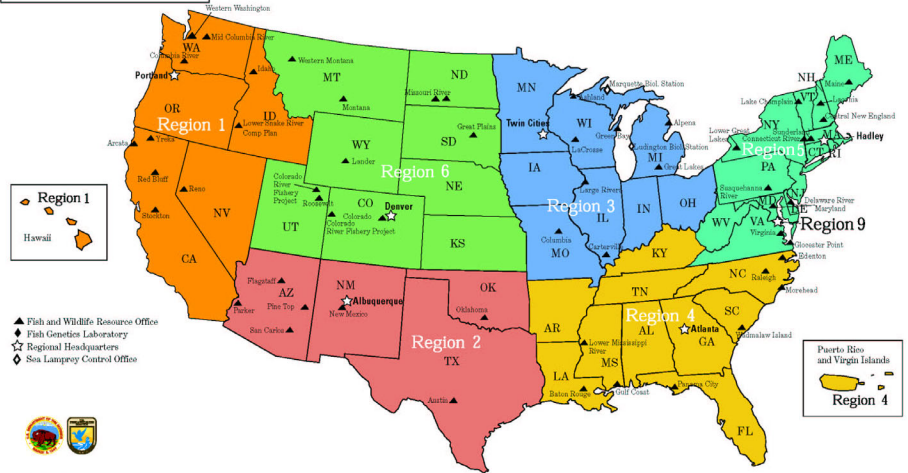
Recognizing that sound science and solid partnerships are key to successful fish and wildlife management, the Fisheries Program, including Fish and Wildlife Management and the National Fish Hatchery System, completed its vision, *Conserving America's Fisheries: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Fisheries Program Vision for the Future* in 2002. Through this vision, we will work "with partners to restore and maintain fish and other aquatic resources at self-sustaining levels". To do this, we will focus on creating and participating in value-added partnerships in seven focus areas:

- Aquatic Species Conservation and Management
- Aquatic Habitat Conservation and Management
- Public Use
- Cooperation with Native Americans
- Leadership in Science and Technology
- Partnerships and Accountability
- Workforce Management.

The Service has recommitted the Fisheries Program to embracing its role as partner in conserving the nation's fish and other aquatic resources. In some cases, we will lead, in others, we will facilitate or follow. In all cases, we will work with our partners to **protect** the health of aquatic



**U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Fish and Wildlife Management Assistance Stations**



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The Fish and Wildlife Management Program consists of about 300 fish and wildlife management professionals nationwide, located in 64 field offices in 33 states.



ARIZONA FISH & GAME

FWM assists in recovery efforts for species listed under the ESA such as this black-footed ferret and shortnose sturgeon (pictured at right).



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habitats, **restore** fish and other aquatic resources, and provide opportunities to **enjoy** the benefits of healthy aquatic ecosystems.

Implementing this vision will help us to do more for aquatic resources and the people who value and

depend on them through enhanced partnerships, scientific integrity, and a balanced approach to conservation.

