



RESTORING AND SUSTAINING SPECIES

We're at the threshold of something good in the history of American conservation. It's a word that has power, vision, and magic. The word is restoration. On the eve of the 21st century, we've come to understand that in nature everything relates.

Secretary Babbitt

The 21st Century has arrived, and with it a host of new challenges. Mechanization and consolidation have meant the end of small family farms and the increased size of corporate farms. Meanwhile, weekenders, retirees, and "Internet commuters" have colonized those old farmsteads. America's rapidly growing population has burst through traditional city boundaries and expanded further into the country with big-box retail centers, strip malls, stadium size theaters, and designer golf courses. Mountain bikers, kayakers, hikers, and other nature lovers – with increased prosperity and leisure time – are crowding the public lands and competing with traditional users. Stuck in the middle of these competing demands are wildlife and fisheries resources. The Department of the Interior will employ a variety of programs to strike a balance between these needs and the needs of these precious resources.

PARTNERING FOR ESA CONSERVATION

The Department has proven that it can both protect the environment and permit sound economic development through the flexible and innovative tools included in the Endangered Species Act. Candidate conservation agreements have been

implemented in the Southwest that kept the Pecos pupfish and Arizona bugbane off the endangered species list. The Department has streamlined the Section 7 consultation process for timber sales in the Pacific Northwest by 50 percent. Multi-species Habitat Conservation Plans have been signed to protect salmon and bull trout while allowing resource development. The gray wolf and California condor have been reintroduced to portions of their original range as "experimental, non-essential" populations. This designation has given local residents unprecedented input into these projects while at the same time promoting tourism for local economies. Safe harbor agreements allow landowners to make future modifications to their lands while they protect listed species. And, the bald eagle was recently removed from the endangered species list.

Interior plans to continue these success stories by working with other Federal agencies, States, Tribes, local governments, and private landowners and forging new partnerships for a new century where even more innovative solutions will be needed to balance restoration and development. The 2001 budget includes \$115.3 million in the Fish and Wildlife Service operations account for the en-



FWS 2001 Goal - By September 30, 2001, 37 percent or 210 endangered or threatened species populations listed a decade or more ago are stabilized or improved and 20 candidates or proposed species are precluded from the need for listing under the Endangered Species Act.

LAW ENFORCEMENT TO SUPPORT SPECIES RESTORATION

The FWS law enforcement program pits what amounts to a handful of officers against increasingly sophisticated criminals — many of whom operate from coast-to-coast and around the globe — to enforce national and international wildlife protection efforts. The 2001 budget request includes an increase of \$12.6 million to strengthen this program as part of a two-year initiative to meet high priority operations, maintenance, and

dangered species program; this is an increase of \$7.0 million over 2000. With this funding, FWS will be able to: develop 42 candidate conservation agreements; review 40,500 proposed Federal actions and conduct over 75 programmatic consultations; work on the 550 Habitat Conservation Plans that will be in some stage of development or implementation; consider up to 27 additional species reclassifications and delisting actions once recovery goals have been met; develop an additional 100 safe harbor agreements; and complete additional recovery plans and recovery activities.

As part of the Lands Legacy Initiative, Interior proposes an additional \$42.0 million for the Cooperative Endangered Species Conservation Fund. This funding will expand grants to States for Habitat Conservation Plan land acquisition, such as recent projects in California's Coachella Valley to maintain sand dunes; near Austin, Texas to protect golden cheeked warblers; and in Alabama and Florida for sea turtle habitat. The funding will also be used by the States to plan, develop, and implement candidate conservation agreements, safe harbor agreements, and Habitat Conservation Plans; as well as for State land acquisition in support of recovery plans.



recruitment and training needs. Funding will be used to support reintroduction efforts by protecting fledgling populations such as southern sea otters; to credibly and consistently enforce Habitat Conservation Plans; and to forge cooperative partnerships with States and Tribes to prevent poaching and illegal harvest. The funding will also be used to monitor and prevent the trade in illegal endangered species such as wild birds, bear parts, and tiger balm, while allowing legitimate international commerce to proceed. Operations funding will be used to equip officers with state-of-the-art weapons and body armor and to recruit and train new agents to build force strength in anticipation of looming retirements. Maintenance funding will be used to purchase new vehicles and replace outdated forensics equipment at the Clark R. Bavin Forensics Laboratory.

AMPHIBIANS

Amphibians have experienced precipitous population declines and high rates of deformities. Understanding the decline of amphibian populations is crucial in uncovering how people's activities are affecting water quality, wildlife habitat, and other aspects of our environment. We share our envi-



ronment with amphibians, and their decline may foreshadow challenges we and other species will have to face in the 21st Century.

Habitat loss, exposure to contaminants, ultraviolet radiation, introduced species, parasites, and fungal diseases are some of the factors identified as having caused amphibian declines, but the mystery is far from solved. The \$2.0 million increase proposed for 2001 will support implementation of an interagency amphibian plan; expand surveys and monitoring projects to all regions delineated in the plan; and enable U.S. Geological Survey to initiate the research element of the plan.

REBUILDING WILDLIFE AND FISHERIES RESOURCES

The FWS manages the national fish hatchery system to restore fisheries and conducts international conservation efforts to protect imperiled wildlife impacted by trade and to provide assistance in conserving habitat.

The budget request includes a \$1.2 million increase to rebuild native fish populations such as trout, salmon, and striped bass and to ensure fish passage to historic spawning grounds through voluntary partnership efforts with the hydropower industry, States, Tribes, local governments, and private landowners. This will enhance recreational fishing opportunities for the Nation's 50 million licensed anglers.

A \$1.9 million increase for international wildlife conservation efforts will enhance international species conservation efforts; improve monitoring of trade in imperiled species; support Asian elephant conservation measures in countries such as Burma, Sri Lanka, Thailand, and Vietnam; and support additional rhinoceros and tiger projects in African and Asian countries such as the Congo, Indonesia, Sumatra, India, and Nepal.

ANADROMOUS FISH RESEARCH AND RESTORATION

The wild salmonids, including salmon, bull trout, and steelhead, are symbols of the Pacific Northwest and key economic and ecological resources in the region. The budget request includes \$4.0 million for USGS research into the causes of the decline of salmonids in the Columbia River basin. This research will complement efforts by other

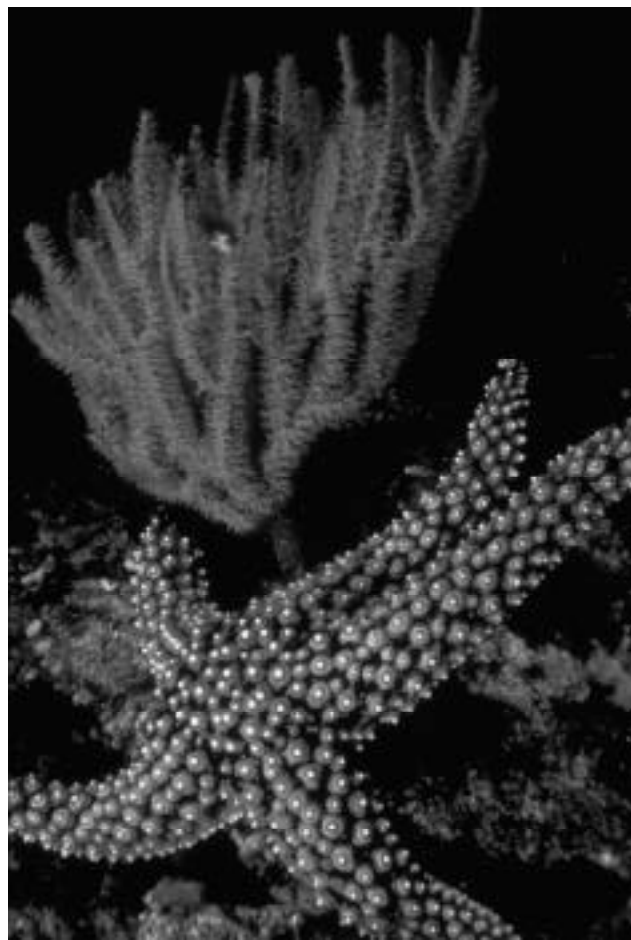
Federal agencies such as the National Marine Fisheries Service and the Bonneville Power Administration. The FWS will continue efforts to restore and recover Pacific salmon by hatcheries operations that supplement fish stocks while minimizing impacts on wild fish.

Thanks to the efforts of Senator Slade Gorton and Congressman Norm Dicks, the Congress has funded \$51.5 million to date for restoration of the Elwha River ecosystem. The planned removal of two dams will return native salmon to more than 70 miles of the Elwha River and its tributaries on the Olympic Peninsula of Washington. The request for 2001 includes an additional \$15.0 million for the continued phased funding leading to removal of the dams.



CORAL REEFS

Under threat from multiple stressors, coral reefs are deteriorating worldwide, and many are in crisis. To prevent further loss of these vital ecosystems, President Clinton issued Executive Order 13089 on Coral Reef Protection. The Order established a Coral Reef Task Force that is co-chaired by the Secretaries of the Interior and Commerce, and directed the Task Force to identify major causes of coral reef degradation and ensure that measures are taken to protect and restore these resources. Through its role on the Coral Reef Task Force, and



with the funding provided in 2000, Interior has begun what must be a long-term effort to intensify the protection and recovery of coral reefs.

The 2001 Interior budget proposes increases that will enable the Department to build on and expand efforts initiated in 2000. It includes an increase of \$2.0 million for the National Park Service to strengthen and enhance coral reef management and protection activities in park units; a \$250,000 increase for FWS to expand its staff of reefkeepers at refuges in Hawaii and the Caribbean; and \$2.0 million for USGS to expand research, inventory, and monitoring.

INVASIVE SPECIES

Nonindigenous invasive species are now one of the most serious threats to America's ecological health and biodiversity. There has been a proliferation in the introduction and spread of invasive species in recent years. Invasive species undermine the biological integrity, diversity, and overall environmental health of ecosystems. Invasive



species are now second only to habitat loss in causing endangerment of native species. The adverse environmental impacts have economic costs as well — from weeds reducing the productivity of grazing lands to zebra mussels harming commercial fisheries and clogging industrial water intake systems. Some experts have estimated that the annual costs associated with nonindigenous invasive species could exceed \$123 billion. Non-native plants and animals in the U. S. now number at least 6,300 species, with new invasions occurring weekly.

As evidence of the urgency of addressing the invasive species problem, and the need to engage and coordinate the collective efforts of many Federal agencies, President Clinton issued Executive Order 13112 on February 3, 1999, establishing an Invasive Species Council that is co-chaired by the Secretary of the Interior.

The 2001 budget includes an increase of \$6.1 million for the three land management bureaus to intensify efforts to control and eradicate invasive species on Interior lands, and in the case of FWS, to also strengthen efforts aimed at preventing the introduction of non-native species into the U. S. The budget includes a \$2.0 million increase for USGS research on invasive species.

ALASKA SUBSISTENCE FISHERIES

The Department requests \$12.9 million to fully implement the court-ordered Federal takeover of the subsistence fisheries program in Alaska. In addition, the U.S. Forest Service will request \$5.5 million for its program responsibilities. Interior's goal is to give subsistence users — who are last in line to harvest migrating salmon — the priority afforded in Title VIII of the Alaska National Interests Land Conservation Act. The subsistence salmon harvest represents the foundation of the subsistence way of life and is essential for meeting economic, social, and cultural needs for most of rural Alaska. Intense allocation conflicts over the returning runs between subsistence users and commercial and recreational users could erupt without a fair, professional fisheries management program in place. Thus, the funding will be used to conserve stocks, minimize disruptions to other fisheries, and maximize cooperation by building on existing strengths and capabilities.

The program affects 52 percent of Alaska's rivers and lakes, 39 Federal conservation units including national parks and refuges, as well as 237 villages with 125,000 residents. Management challenges on the Yukon, illustrate the complexities facing the Department: 1,240 river miles with multiple tributaries; multiple runs of different species of salmon; 43 villages with 11,000 residents; 18 Federal conservation units; and resident fisheries species in addition to the migrating salmon.

The request includes \$5.4 million that will be used for program management and coordination and \$7.5 million for resource and harvest monitoring. Interior has a goal to conduct resource monitoring primarily through contracts with the State and Native organizations and other organizations.

