



U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

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News

04-18

For Immediate Release

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Service Awards Grants to Russian Nature Reserves and Parks

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service *Wildlife Without Borders* program is pleased to announce the result of its fifth biennial small grants competition to benefit nature reserves and national parks within Russia. This year, grants averaging \$7,300 will go to forty conservation sites (see attached list) and will help to pay for boats, radios and other equipment to prevent illegal hunting; environmental education materials about the nature reserves and parks; and equipment essential for biological monitoring.

Since 1995, the Service has provided more than \$902,000 benefiting bird and marine mammal populations that migrate between the United States and Russia, as well as threatened and endangered species such as saiga antelope, Oriental white stork, red-crowned crane and ginseng.

“I am glad to inform you that, due to your financial help, during December-January we confiscated 8 guns from poachers. It’s the best result in 63 years of law enforcement at our reserve,” said Nikolai Maleshin, a 1997 grant recipient from the Central Black Earth Biosphere Reserve.

Russia's Wrangel Island Nature Reserve, high in the Arctic and vital habitat for the Bering-Chukchi Seas polar bear population, has received two grants, totaling \$ 13,486. The Commander Islands Nature Reserve, at Russia's end of the Aleutian Chain, home to sea otters and seabird colonies, has received three grants totaling \$ 11,775.

Protected natural areas in Russia play a key role in preserving the biodiversity of our planet. The Fish and Wildlife Service recognizes the importance of cooperating with its Russian colleagues in the conservation of the world’s natural resources for current and future generations. Here in Alaska, a state which shares populations of many of its migratory birds and marine mammals with Russia, this cooperation is especially valued.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is the principal Federal agency responsible for conserving, protecting and enhancing fish, wildlife and plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. The Service manages the 95-million-acre National Wildlife Refuge System, which encompasses 544 national wildlife refuges, thousands of small wetlands and other special management areas. It also operates 69 national fish hatcheries, 63 Fish and Wildlife Management offices and 81 ecological services field stations. The agency enforces federal wildlife laws, administers the Endangered Species Act, manages migratory bird populations, restores nationally significant fisheries, conserves and restores wildlife habitat such as wetlands, and helps foreign governments with their conservation efforts. It also oversees the Federal Assistance program, which distributes hundreds of millions of dollars in excise taxes on fishing and hunting equipment to state fish and wildlife agencies.

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