



Mexico

Protecting Phenomenal Biodiversity

A Mexican ecosystem showcases the incredible biodiversity of Mexico. Credit: Conabio

According to Mexico's National Commission for Knowledge and Use of Biodiversity (CONABIO), Mexico makes up only one percent of the Earth's land area but is home to an amazing one-tenth of all of the species known to science. Its rainforests are among the richest reservoirs of biological material on the planet and its diverse habitats are home to a broad array of wildlife including many seasonal residents that migrate to and from the U.S. and other areas.

The U.S. and Mexico share more than 480 species listed under the Convention on the International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) and more than 119 species listed under the Endangered Species Act (ESA). These species, including sea turtles, gray whale, bats, condor, jaguar, manatee, pronghorn, desert sheep, insects (such as the monarch butterfly), and a large variety of migratory birds depend on Mexico for their survival.

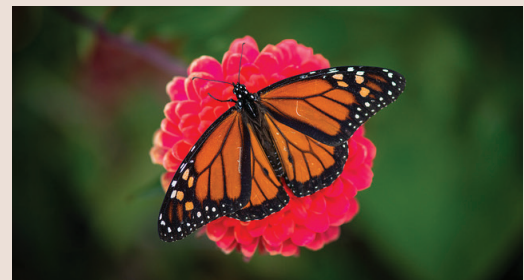
This astonishing biodiversity faces increasing threats, such as deforestation, unsustainable land-use practices, and illegal wildlife trade. In response, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) launched its Mexico program to build Mexico's human and institutional capacity to conserve and manage species, habitats and ecological processes of global importance, through training associated with nature reserves and other high-diversity areas.

A grants program and emphasis on strategic partnership development provide the primary vehicles through which conservation outcomes are achieved.

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Program Priorities

- **Managing for Excellence:** Supporting short-term training courses with on-the-ground applicability for Mexican government personnel that strengthen the management and conservation of natural protected areas, while addressing key threats to species.
- **Wildlife Watch:** Supporting projects to improve the capacity of Mexican government agencies and local communities to protect biodiversity from illegal trade and overexploitation.
- **Stewards of the Land:** Supporting projects that link sound management practices to economic alternatives for rural and indigenous communities, while reducing threats to biodiversity conservation.
- **Species and Spaces:** Supporting projects that promote the reintroduction, recovery, and conservation efforts of binational species including the California condor, jaguar, black-tailed prairie dog, Mexican wolf, and pronghorn.
- **Voices for Nature:** Supporting projects that increase the understanding, awareness, and appreciation of all Mexican citizens towards biodiversity and ecosystems, while promoting behavioral changes and values required to conserve and sustainably use resources.



Protecting the Monarch butterfly along its migratory routes from Canada to Mexico has provided a venue for successful international collaboration. Credit: Matt Deavenport / cc license



Children participate in a whale art festival focused on inspiring community members to conserve nearby breeding grounds for humpback whales.

Credit: Ecología y Conservación de Ballenas, A.C.

Threats to Wildlife in Mexico

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) addresses a number of serious threats to biodiversity across the region including

Unsustainable Land Use and Invasive Species

The loss of habitat for wildlife caused by agricultural expansion, deforestation, invasive species, and grazing constitutes one of the most challenging threats to endangered species. The Service provides appropriate tools and alternatives through its grant-making that protect land and critical habitat while also improving economic livelihoods of people who live near these places.

Illegal Wildlife Trade

The illegal take of wildlife and plants for sale and economic gain contributes to the decline of threatened species throughout the Americas. A variety of context-based approaches including increased education, law enforcement, and economic incentives are needed to alleviate the pressures on wildlife from illegal trade. The Service also supports efforts to investigate, arrest, and prosecute wildlife traffickers and disrupt networks.

Human-Wildlife Conflict

Wildlife, including large predatory species like jaguars, are sometimes killed by people in retaliatory attacks following livestock predation. To help alleviate the kill of animals, the Service supports projects that use preemptive techniques to reduce or eliminate conflicts between humans and wildlife and that engage relevant constituencies including ranchers and community leaders.

Strategic Objectives

- To reduce underlying threats and address the human elements of biodiversity conservation by supporting the implementation of on-the-ground projects.
- To conserve flora & fauna by strengthening the ability of local institutions, decision-makers, and civil society to deliver enduring conservation actions.
- To maximize conservation impact by developing strategic partnerships with key stakeholders at the local, national, regional, and international levels.

On-the-Ground Investments

USFWS Support to Mexico, 2013 - 2015

Fiscal Year	Amount Awarded	Amount Leveraged	Number of Projects
2015	\$671,963	\$1,080,798	18
2014	\$686,813	\$894,094	18
2013	\$686,813	\$1,099,914	21
3-year total	\$2,045,589	\$3,074,806	57

Achievements

The Mexico program has demonstrated success recently by:

- **Training 500 Park Rangers (Managing for Excellence):** For the past five years, in partnership with the Mexican Fund for the Conservation of Nature, A.C. and the National Commission of Natural Protected Areas (CONANP), the Service provided week-long training workshops for 100 park rangers annually representing more than 177 Natural Protected Areas managed by CONANP.
- **Protecting Monarch Butterflies Through Youth Outreach (Stewards of the Land):** In partnership with Geoconservacion, A.C., a training program was developed for young leaders that creates employment opportunities and provides information to guide actions aimed at increasing the Monarch Butterfly Biosphere Reserve's resilience to climate change.
- **Building Capacity to Combat Illegal Wildlife Trade (Wildlife Watch):** The Service, in partnership with World Wildlife Fund-TRAFFIC North America, has provided wildlife enforcement authorities across Mexico with the tools, materials, and fundamental knowledge to implement capacity building activities to monitor and control illicit trade and trafficking of marine species.
- **Cultivating Environmental Education in Baja Schools (Voices for Nature):** In partnership with San Diego Natural History Museum, the Service implemented a replicable model of environmental education that increases the number of schools, teachers, students, and community members that will become long-term stewards of their local environment in Baja California.
- **Building Awareness of California Condor Reintroduction (Species & Spaces):** Making achievements about the California condor reintroduction program better understood through public outreach, in partnership with San Diego Zoo Institute for Conservation Research.



A California condor soars.
Credit: USFWS

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