

The Southwest Region

An Overview



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Overview

The Southwest Region encompasses Arizona, New Mexico, Texas, and Oklahoma. We work with a variety of partners and other agencies, communities, tribal governments, conservation groups, business interests, landowners and concerned citizens to conserve, protect, and enhance fish, wildlife, and their habitat.

Resource Facts and Figures

- 47 National Wildlife Refuges
- 8 National Fish Hatcheries
- 1 Fish Health Center
- 4 Fishery and Wildlife Conservation Offices
- 7 Ecological Services Field Offices
- 18 Law Enforcement Offices
- 4 Border Inspection Stations
- 2 Law Enforcement Designated Ports of Entry
- 5 Joint Ventures that conserve and improve migratory bird habitat across the Southwest
- Over 900 dedicated professionals who achieve our conservation work.

Key Habitats and Ecosystems

The Southwest's distinctive landscapes provide habitat for a wide variety of remarkable native plant and animal species, including 150 species that are protected under the Endangered Species Act. In Arizona, wildlife adapts to exist in environments ranging from lowland deserts to scenic mountain peaks. New Mexico's vistas intertwine with ancient cultural landscapes accommodating many species sacred to Native Americans.

From the gulf coast beaches to the plains of the panhandle, Texas is home to a wide variety of species including whooping cranes, the Kemp's Ridley sea turtle, and the lesser prairie-chicken. Oklahoma's expansive landscapes include species that represent the historic character of the West, where prairie dogs, elk and bison still roam the plains. Weaving through all of these landscapes are hundreds of species of migratory birds that migrate through the Southwest Region.

Protecting Wildlife Heritage

National Wildlife Refuges are a unique system of lands dedicated to preserving a rich quality of life for Americans by protecting their wildlife heritage. In the Southwest Region, Refuges protect some of the most varied wildlife and spectacular landscapes found anywhere in the world. Included among Southwestern Refuges are the saguaro-studded Sonoran Desert in Arizona, the coastal marshes of Texas that host flocks of waterfowl every winter, unique species found only in the sinkholes of New Mexico, and Oklahoma caves supporting endangered bats.

The Southwest Region has two major urban partnerships. In Houston, our Refuge program is working with a network of federal, state and local agencies; environmental interest groups; business and corporate partners; and stakeholders to create and support conservation in one of the country's largest metropolitan areas. In central New Mexico, the

(continued from front)

new Valle de Oro National Wildlife Refuge is the first urban wildlife refuge in the southwestern United States, and provides an oasis in an otherwise metropolitan landscape that allows wildlife and people – especially young people – to reconnect to the natural world.

Conservation Challenges

Water is a critical resource in the Southwest. With droughts and water scarcity becoming increasingly severe, the Southwest Region works with a broad spectrum of partners and stakeholders to conserve limited water resources and the numerous aquatic species who rely on them, including many species of native fish, amphibians and reptiles. From the Colorado River to the Rio Grande, from the Edwards Aquifer in Texas to the Gulf Coast, we are committed to finding solutions to some of the country's most challenging water conservation issues.

Investments in Fish and Wildlife Activities

The Southwest Region administers nine state grant programs. Approximately \$120 million in federal funding is awarded each year through these grant programs to eligible state agencies in Arizona, New Mexico, Texas, and Oklahoma. Thanks to our partnerships with states, tribes and other conservation agencies, these grants directly benefit fish and wildlife conservation efforts in the Southwest, making it possible for people to enjoy their time in the great outdoors.

Science Supporting Conservation

Throughout the Southwest Region, we manage our important wildlife and habitat resources on a landscape level through Strategic Habitat Conservation (SHC). SHC uses the best available scientific information in an adaptive management framework that integrates planning, design, delivery and evaluation. The Southwest Region supports three Landscape Conservation Cooperatives (LCCs) that provide scientific and technical expertise to support landscape-scale conservation planning, and promote effective collaboration among our many conservation partners.

The Southwest Region is committed to finding common ground as we work with a variety of partners across our landscapes. We are currently



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working with partners on a “surrogate species” approach to conservation. Surrogate species are species that distinctly signal the health of specific ecosystems. By applying the surrogate species approach, the Southwest Region is able to coordinate with our partners and focus our conservation efforts in a way that benefits many species.

Every employee in the Southwest Region is committed to conserving our country's natural resources for the benefit of current and future generations of Americans. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is an agency within the Department of Interior, and our Region is one of eight U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Regions in the United States.

For more information on the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Southwest Region visit our website at <http://www.fws.gov/southwest/>

or at the Regional Office in Albuquerque, New Mexico. P.O. Box 1306 Albuquerque, NM 87103-1306

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