



U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service: FY2019 Appropriations

Introduction

Congress generally funds the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS, an agency within the Department of the Interior) in Title I of annual appropriations laws for the Department of the Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies. Discretionary appropriations for FWS fund most of the essential functions related to the agency’s mission, namely the conservation, protection, and enhancement of fish, wildlife, and plants and their habitats. Discretionary funding covers activities including resource management and conservation, construction projects, land acquisition, and payments and grants to states and other parties. FWS also receives mandatory appropriations, most of which are disbursed directly to states. In FY2019, mandatory appropriations for FWS were estimated at \$1.57 billion in the Administration’s FY2019 request for FWS. This product focuses on the agency’s discretionary appropriations.

FWS Discretionary Appropriations

Enacted FY2019 appropriations (included in Division E of P.L. 116-6) provided \$1.578 billion in discretionary funding for FWS, which is \$17.0 million (1.1%) less than the FY2018 enacted level of \$1.595 billion (included in Division G of P.L. 115-141). The FY2019 enacted level exceeded the Administration’s FY2019 request by \$351.5 million (28.7%) (Table 1). FWS appropriations are provided for nine accounts (Table 1).

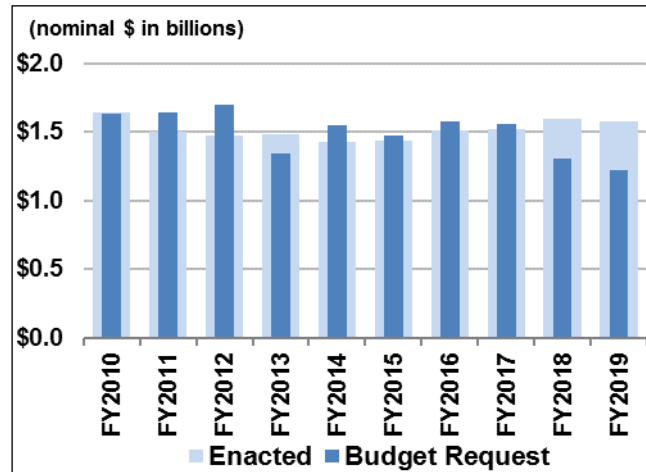
Table 1. FWS Appropriations by Account, FY2018 and FY2019
(nominal \$ in millions)

Account	FY2018 Enacted	FY2019 Request	FY2019 Enacted
Resource Management	\$1,279.0	1,130.6	1,292.1
Construction	66.5	13.7	54.1
Land Acquisition	63.8	7.0	65.2
Cooperative Endangered Species Conservation Fund	53.5	—	46.0
National Wildlife Refuge Fund	13.2	—	13.2
North American Wetlands Conservation Fund	40.0	33.6	42.0
Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Fund	3.9	3.9	3.9
Multinational Species Conservation Fund	11.1	6.0	11.6
State and Tribal Wildlife Grants	63.6	31.3	64.6
Total	1,594.6	1,226.1	1,577.6^a

Sources: CRS, with data from explanatory statement accompanying H.R. 1625 (P.L. 115-141), FWS FY2019 budget justification, and H.Rept. 116-9 accompanying H.J.Res. 31 (P.L. 116-6).

a. Total includes a \$15 million rescission of Coastal Impact Assistance Program grants.

Figure 1. FWS Discretionary Funding Enacted and Administration Requests, FY2010-FY2019



Sources: CRS, with data from FWS budget justifications and enacted appropriations.

From FY2010 through FY2019, FWS received \$1.52 billion annually, on average, in discretionary funding. Enacted appropriations exceeded requested amounts in four years, and requested levels were higher than enacted levels in six years (Figure 1).

Resource Management Account

The Resource Management (RM) account comprises the majority of the FWS discretionary budget. In FY2019, P.L. 116-6 included \$1.292 billion for the RM account. The RM account funds eight activities (Table 2).

Table 2. FWS Resource Management Appropriations by Activity, FY2018 and FY2019

(nominal \$ in millions)

Activity	FY2018 Enacted	FY2019 Request	FY2019 Enacted
Ecological Services	\$247.8	211.8	251.8
Habitat Conservation	65.0	42.3	65.0
National Wildlife Refuge System	486.8	473.1	488.3
Conservation and Enforcement	141.3	130.2	141.3
Fish and Aquatic Conservation	164.6	133.9	167.2
Cooperative Landscape Conservation	13.0	—	12.5
Science Support	17.3	—	17.3
General Operation	143.2	139.4	148.7
Total	1,279.0	1,130.6	1,292.1

Sources: CRS, with data from explanatory statement accompanying H.R. 1625 (P.L. 115-141), FWS FY2019 budget justification, and H.Rept. 116-9 accompanying H.J.Res. 31 (P.L. 116-6).

Other FWS Accounts

For the eight other appropriations accounts, FY2019 enacted funding levels decreased, increased, or maintained FY2018 enacted levels depending on the account (Table 1).

The Construction account funds engineering design and construction throughout FWS facilities and infrastructure through four activities: Line Item Construction Projects, Bridge and Dam Safety Programs, Nationwide Engineering Services, and Deferred Maintenance. In FY2019, the Construction account received \$54.1 million, which amounted to a decrease of \$12.4 million (18.7%) compared to the FY2018 enacted level of \$66.5 million (Table 1).

Funding for the Land Acquisition account is used to acquire land for recreation and conservation purposes. The Land Acquisition account received \$65.2 million in FY2019, a \$1.4 million (2.1%) increase over the FY2018 enacted level of \$63.8 million (Table 1).

The remaining accounts relate to FWS conservation, financial assistance, and other programs that support grants and financial and technical assistance programs for state, tribal, and international partners and other stakeholders (Table 1).

Proposed Funding Eliminations

In its FY2019 request, the Administration proposed eliminating two of FWS's discretionary appropriations accounts—Cooperative Endangered Species Conservation Fund (CESCF) and National Wildlife Refuge Fund

(NWRF)—stating that funding was needed for “higher priorities.” The Administration also proposed eliminating eight activities across three other accounts (Table 3). Higher priorities were primarily cited, although for Science Support, the request stated that functions would be covered by other programs.

None of the proposed eliminations was enacted in P.L. 116-6, although one of the accounts (CESCF) and two of the activities (Cooperative Landscape Conservation and Land Acquisition Projects) received less in FY2019 than in FY2018 (Table 3). The other account (NWRF) and five activities across the three accounts received the same level of funding in FY2018 and FY2019, and one activity, Highlands Conservation Act Grants in the Land Acquisition appropriations account, received twice the funding in FY2019 (\$20 million) as compared to FY2018 (\$10 million) (Table 3).

Table 3. Proposed Eliminations in FY2019 Request with FY2018 and FY2019 Enacted Funding Levels

(nominal \$ in millions)

Account and Activity	FY2018	FY2019
Account		
Cooperative Endangered Species Conservation Fund	\$53.5	\$46.0
National Wildlife Refuge Fund	13.2	13.2
Activity (Account)		
Cooperative Landscape Conservation (RM)	13.0	12.5
Science Support (RM)	17.3	17.3
Land Protection Planning (LA)	0.5	0.5
Highlands Conservation Act Grants (LA)	10.0	20.0
Recreational Access (LA)	2.5	2.5
Land Acquisition Projects (LA)	31.3	22.6
State Wildlife Grants (Competitive) (STWG)	6.4	6.4
Tribal Wildlife Grants (STWG)	4.2	4.2

Sources: CRS, with data from explanatory statement accompanying H.R. 1625 (P.L. 115-141), FWS FY2019 budget justification, and H.Rept. 116-9 accompanying H.J.Res. 31 (P.L. 116-6).

Notes: RM = Resource Management; LA = Land Acquisition; STWG = State and Tribal Wildlife Grants.

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