

Update to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service endangered species program FY 2022 request

In FY2021, Congress increased funding for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) endangered species program by 3.7%. This was a crucial step in the right direction, but it falls short of what is required to meet the needs of Endangered Species Act (ESA)-listed species.

Our request for fiscal year (FY) 2022 is \$592.1 million, distributed across five programs, to make up for lost ground from the previous two fiscal years and to support the Biden Administration’s commitment to addressing the threat of climate change to biodiversity. For FY2022, our funding request increases by ~\$61 million relative to FY 2021. The increase puts Congress back on track to meet the funding need identified in our 2019 analysis for the amount FWS needs to implement the ESA as intended. We have also included additional budget recommendations that align with the Biden Administration priorities for FY2022.

Below, we provide a breakdown of the FY 2022 distribution by program and the additional appropriations recommendations. The breakdown includes a 4-year track to achieve the original funding target through the current administration. The funding breakdown is as follows:

Program	FY21 Ask Distribution	FY21 Enacted	DIF FY21 Enacted with Inflation*	FY22 Ask Distribution	4 Yr. Round Up
Listing	\$55 M	\$20.8 M	\$34.6 M	\$63.7 M	\$8.7 M
Recovery	\$213 M	\$105 M	\$109.3 M	\$240.3 M	\$27.3 M
Planning and Consultation	\$141 M	\$109.3 M	\$32.1 M	\$149.0 M	\$8.0 M
Conservation and Restoration (CC**)	\$13.3 M	\$13.3 M	\$0.0 M	\$13.5 M	\$0.0 M
CESCF	\$109 M	\$43.3 M	\$66.4 M	\$125.6 M	\$16.6 M
Total	\$531.3 M	\$291.7 M	\$242.4 M	\$592.1 M	\$60.6 M

**Inflation rate of 1.2% used based off of CPI data for the year 2020*

***Candidate Conservation program funding*

Additional Appropriations Recommendations:

Given Congress and the Administration’s climate priorities, we suggest three key areas within the Ecological Services program that link directly to climate change and warrant additional attention (beyond the baseline suggested above) for FY2022:

First, of the 1,665 ESA-listed species, just 409 have recovery plans that have been updated in some way in the past decade, meaning over 1,200 species are missing plans for recovery or have plans that are at least a decade old and that may no longer contain the best available science.

Critically, this shortfall means there may be missing science pertaining to the threat of climate change, as found in a 2019 analysis of endangered animal recovery plans. Recovery plans whose core content and guidance – not just recovery criteria – are more than 10 years old should be revisited and, as needed, revised to ensure that climate change is accounted for in their assessment of the species.

Second, because both Congress and the Biden administration recognize the need to act now to address the climate crisis, there is a concomitant need to ensure that ESA-listed species are not a casualty of well-intentioned federal actions. Ecological Services should be fully funded to carry out both ESA section 7(a)(2) consultations and support other federal agencies in developing 7(a)(1) conservation plans that will help the nation address climate change. At a minimum, we recommend a 3-fold increase specifically in the consultation program budget for each of the next five years to front-load our ability to address both the climate crisis and the biodiversity crisis in tandem.

Third, we recommend that Congress show their support for private landowners in addressing the climate and biodiversity crises by dramatically increasing funding for the Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) program of Ecological Services. Private lands will be critical to achieving the national goal of protecting at least 30% of U.S. lands and waters for biodiversity and climate by 2030, including for the goal of protecting threatened and endangered species. We recommend funding specifically to the HCP program budget be increased 3-fold to both fill an existing need over the next five years – HCPs have long been in greater demand than FWS can meet – and in anticipation of increased funding and implementation of private lands conservation programs like the Working Lands for Wildlife Program (WLFW) and the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS).