

**State of Alaska
FY2003 Governor's Operating Budget**

**Department of Fish and Game
Wildlife Conservation
Budget Request Unit Budget Summary**

Wildlife Conservation Budget Request Unit

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BRU Mission

The Division of Wildlife Conservation's mission is to conserve and enhance Alaska's wildlife and to provide for a wide range of uses for people.

BRU Services Provided

Division management programs include survey and inventory, regulatory, and enhancement projects for big game, small game, furbearer, waterfowl, and wildlife species that are not hunted. Enhancement projects improve wildlife population welfare factors to provide for increased opportunities for people to harvest or view wildlife. Biological information, harvest data, and recommendations are presented to the Board of Game to assist them in making allocation decisions through the regulatory process. Recommendations are also presented to the Federal Subsistence Board to encourage a cooperative approach between state and federal resource allocation.

The division's research program focuses on collecting data with direct management application and provides technical assistance to other agencies and the public.

The division is developing substantive new programs in the areas of school and community wildlife education, management of non-game species, and wildlife viewing. These programs are possible due to new federal funding provided by the Wildlife Conservation and Restoration Program (WCRP), previously called CARA. Projects within these three program areas are included in a separate WCRP budget component (previously called CARA Implementation).

BRU Goals and Strategies

The Division of Wildlife Conservation is responsible for the management of Alaska's wildlife resources. The primary goals of the division are to (1) protect, maintain, and enhance the wildlife resources of Alaska; and (2) provide for their greatest use by the people, consistent with the sustained yield principle, for the well being of the people and the economy of the state.

The division has experienced increased demands for public services, technical expertise, harvest opportunities, and other recreational uses of wildlife. These increased demands are due to increases in Alaska's population, tourism, subsistence needs on state and private lands, the federal preemption of state management authorities for subsistence uses on federal public lands, recent extension of federal jurisdiction onto state lands and waters, potential impacts of endangered species listings on industry, and plans to develop other natural resources. Wildlife habitat is being altered and reduced in populated areas, access and harvest technologies are improving, and indirect adverse impacts to wildlife populations are increasing. These factors are making sustained yield management of Alaska's wildlife resources more expensive and complex.

Maintaining healthy, productive, and usable wildlife populations will require increased scientific capabilities and better understanding of important wildlife species and associated human uses. Data collection and analysis techniques must become more precise and cost effective, particularly in intensive management areas designated by the Board of Game. Development of strategic and operational management plans with ample public input is necessary to establish quantifiable wildlife population and human use objectives and to ensure program continuity toward achieving these objectives. Management must include enhancement projects to mitigate for development, meet increasing demands for consumptive human use of wildlife, and meet growing demands by Alaskan visitors and residents for wildlife viewing opportunities.

Given the above scenario, wildlife information and education programs must be enhanced in the future. Increased public understanding of requirements for healthy and productive wildlife populations will help ensure public support for and voluntary compliance with wildlife conservation regulations. Division information programs are necessary to reduce public confusion regarding complex regulations resulting from "dual" management of Alaska's wildlife resources by state and federal authorities and to promote higher levels of voluntary compliance with regulations.

The division is beginning to develop a new fish and wildlife education program in the public school system. Initial efforts will target fourth grade students followed by development of a curriculum for 8-9th grade students. Community education programs will be expanded following the model of the highly successful hunter clinics. We will develop clinics that focus on wildlife viewing, photography, and species life history.

The popularity of wildlife viewing by both residents and visitors to Alaska is increasing rapidly. The Division will work to develop additional viewing areas that are accessible to the public and will not conflict with traditional uses. We will also develop viewing guidelines to ensure that viewing activities are not detrimental to the wildlife resource.

The importance of wildlife species that are not hunted or trapped is increasing and resulting in the need for more information on species distribution, population size, population trends, and habitat requirements. Lack of information has led to efforts to list numerous species that have healthy populations as threatened or endangered, but we lack good information on these species. We will increase our efforts to collect reliable information on wildlife species that are not hunted, especially species that have the potential to be petitioned for listing as threatened or endangered.

Key BRU Issues for FY2002 – 2003

Three major policy issues face the Division of Wildlife Conservation: (1) meeting an increased demand for hunting opportunities; (2) dealing with increased costs and complexities of managing for a state subsistence preference and all other uses while addressing Alaskan concerns arising from federal intervention into management of resident wildlife; and (3) meeting demands of the public for a strong conservation education program, more wildlife viewing opportunities, and management of endangered species.

The division's ability to maintain healthy populations of wildlife is directly related to the ability of Alaska's land and water resources to support these populations. Loss or serious alteration of important wildlife habitats can have direct and long-term economic impacts on the state by reducing the sustainable yield of these renewable resources. Because of increasing human populations and the need for an expanded and more diversified economy, the division must work closely with development interests and other agencies. We must effectively mitigate the effects of development through active management programs to ensure adequate protection of wildlife values and continued opportunities for public use of these resources. The process can be effective only if the division can provide the latest information, techniques, and research findings to all parties involved in a quick and efficient manner.

Predation by wolves and bears has a major impact on many wildlife populations in Alaska. The division will work to develop methods to regulate predator populations that are biologically sound, acceptable to the public, and cost effective. Efforts will continue to educate the public about wildlife management and how predation can affect ungulate populations.

Listing species as threatened or endangered can have great adverse economic impacts on Alaska. Wildlife Conservation programs have been designed to provide for population recovery of listed species as well as preventing the need for additional listings under the federal endangered species act. The division will continue to collect information on several species in an effort to insure species are not unnecessarily listed under the federal act.

The federal "takeover" of traditional state management authorities continues to have major impacts on the management of wildlife in Alaska. The division continues to work on development of procedures to address resource management and allocation conflicts between state and federal managers.

Most funds used by the division are generated from the sale of hunting and trapping licenses and tags, and from federal aid receipts from the excise tax on firearms, ammunition, and archery equipment. The division has received \$256.0 in general funds for the past three years. While this is only about 1% of the budget, it provides funds for important programs in watchable wildlife, endangered species, and management of marine mammals. The other significant source of funds for the division is in the special projects component. The division receives about \$4.5 million from federal agencies and private organizations to conduct research or provide specific management activities that help meet our mission. The majority of these funds are used for research on marine mammals that have been listed as threatened or endangered or have been petitioned to be listed.

Beginning in FY02, the division began receiving funds from the new federal program entitled Wildlife Conservation and Restoration Program (WCRP). This program was formerly called CARA. The purpose of these funds is for programs in wildlife education, wildlife viewing, and management of species that are not hunted. In FY02, Alaska was allocated

\$2,425.0 in WCRP funds from the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service and the legislature authorized expenditure of \$1.6 million. Alaska has been allocated \$4.0 million in federal funds for FY03 for WCRP activities.

Major BRU Accomplishments in 2001

In its effort to conserve and enhance wildlife and provide for a wide range of uses for the greatest benefit of people, the division continued to concentrate on biological data collection, public services, and habitat manipulation. The following were among the most notable accomplishments for FY01:

1. Provided opportunities to over 100,000 people to participate in hunting in Alaska. Sold over 30,000 resident, non-resident, and alien hunting and trapping licenses. Approximately 70,000 combination licenses such as Resident Sport Fish/Hunt/Trap licenses were also sold. These license sales and tag sales generated nearly \$10 million in revenue to the Fish and Game Fund.
2. 104,000 drawing and Tier II hunts were applied for and 25,000 drawing and Tier II permits were issued. Over \$500.0 in revenue was generated for the Fish and Game Fund.
3. Trained 1,250 new hunters in basic hunter education program.
4. Trained 900 hunters in advanced hunter education program.
5. Provided special hunting clinics for about 600 hunters to improve their skills.
6. Provided information packets to over 5,000 non-resident hunters that plan to hunt in Alaska.
7. Responded to over 80,000 in-person inquiries at various offices about hunting, trapping, and opportunities to observe wildlife.
8. Responded to over 160,000 telephone inquiries at various offices about hunting, trapping, and opportunities to observe wildlife.
9. Estimated visitors to the following refuges and sanctuaries: Stan Price (Pack Creek) Bear Sanctuary – 1,400; McNeil River Falls - 230; Potter's Marsh, between 30,000 - 40,000; and Creamer's Refuge, 30,000+ visitors used the trail system and several thousand unrecorded visitors viewed waterfowl from the parking lot.
10. Collected biological data on a variety of species to ensure continued population viability and harvest levels that are within sustained yield guidelines. Big game surveys were done for 56 populations identified by the Board of Game for intensive management or high levels of human use.

Key Performance Measures for FY2003

Measure:

The number of big game surveys completed for populations identified by the Board of Game as important for providing high levels of human consumptive use.

Sec 71.b.1. Ch 90 SLA 2001(HB 250)

Alaska's Target & Progress:

During FY01, big game surveys were done for 56 populations identified by the Board of Game for intensive management or high levels of human use.

Benchmark Comparisons:

A benchmark for this measure is not applicable. The populations identified by the Board of Game can vary from year to year.

Background and Strategies:

The division collects biological data on a variety of species to ensure continued population viability and harvest levels that are within sustained yield guidelines.

Measure:

The number of hunting and trapping licenses sold and the total revenue generated.
Sec 71.b.2. Ch 90 SLA 2001(HB 250)

Alaska's Target & Progress:

The division's target is to maintain or increase the number of hunting and trapping licenses sold to residents and nonresidents. Number of licenses sold and corresponding revenues generated for 1998-2000 are listed below.

| | <u>1998</u> | <u>1999</u> | <u>2000</u> |
|--------------------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Hunting & Trapping | | | |
| Number of Resident Licenses sold | 110,523 | 110,348 | 113,290 |
| Resident License Revenue | \$1,729,582 | \$1,726,954 | \$1,740,958 |
| Number of Non-Resident Licenses sold | 14,614 | 14,752 | 15,954 |
| Non-Resident License Revenue | \$1,119,627 | \$1,134,412 | \$1,220,446 |
| Number of Big Game Tags sold | 23,124 | 24,779 | 26,617 |
| Big Game Tag Revenue | \$5,319,312 | \$5,579,844 | \$5,781,358 |

Benchmark Comparisons:

A benchmark for this measure is not applicable.

Background and Strategies:

This measure will seek to document trends in license sales.

Measure:

The percentage of Alaska residents between the ages of 16 and 59 who purchase hunting and trapping licenses.
Sec 71.b.3. Ch 90 SLA 2001(HB 250)

Alaska's Target & Progress:

The division's target is to maintain or increase the number of hunting and trapping licenses sold to residents. According to the 2000 US Census Bureau report there are 400,610 Alaska residents between the ages of 18 and 64 years of age. DF&G license sales records indicate that 113,290 residents purchased hunting and trapping licenses in 2000. Therefore, **28.3%** of all residents purchased hunting and trapping licenses in 2000.

Benchmark Comparisons:

A benchmark for this measure is not applicable.

Background and Strategies:

This measure will provide an informational trend for this segment of the Alaska resident population.

Measure:

The number of drawing permits applied for each year and the total number of drawing permits issued.
Sec 71.b.4. Ch 90 SLA 2001(HB 250)

Alaska's Target & Progress:

104,000 drawing and Tier II hunts were applied for and 25,000 drawing and Tier II permits were issued. Over \$500.0 in revenue was generated for the Fish and Game Fund.

Benchmark Comparisons:

A benchmark for this measure is not applicable.

Background and Strategies:

This measure will seek to document trends in drawing permit applications and permits.

Measure:

The total number of visitors visiting the state's wildlife viewing areas at Pack Creek, McNeil River, Potter's Marsh, and Creamer's Field.

Sec 71.b.5. Ch 90 SLA 2001(HB 250)

Alaska's Target & Progress:

Access to Pack Creek and McNeil River is limited. Permits are required before traveling to either sanctuary.

Stan Price (Pack Creek) Bear Sanctuary: 1,400;
McNeil River Falls: 230;

Access to Potter's Marsh and Creamer's Field is unlimited as they are continuously open to the public.

Potter's Marsh: between 30,000 - 40,000;
Creamer's Refuge: 30,000+ visitors used the trail system and several thousand unrecorded visitors viewed waterfowl from the parking lot.

Benchmark Comparisons:

A benchmark for this measure is not applicable.

Background and Strategies:

This measure will seek to document trends in the viewing of wildlife at these four areas.

Wildlife Conservation
BRU Financial Summary by Component

All dollars in thousands

| <u>Formula</u> <u>Expenditures</u> | FY2001 Actuals | | | | FY2002 Authorized | | | | FY2003 Governor | | | |
|-------------------------------------------|----------------|----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| | General Funds | Federal Funds | Other Funds | Total Funds | General Funds | Federal Funds | Other Funds | Total Funds | General Funds | Federal Funds | Other Funds | Total Funds |
| None. | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| <u>Non-Formula</u> <u>Expenditures</u> | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Wildlife Conservation | 251.6 | 6,256.2 | 10,722.8 | 17,230.6 | 253.7 | 7,017.2 | 10,569.8 | 17,840.7 | 0.0 | 8,100.0 | 9,200.0 | 17,300.0 |
| CARA Implementation | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 1,510.0 | 0.0 | 1,510.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 |
| WCRP | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 256.0 | 4,000.0 | 1,004.0 | 5,260.0 |
| W.C. Special Projects | 17.9 | 2,448.1 | 424.0 | 2,890.0 | 0.0 | 3,775.4 | 662.2 | 4,437.6 | 0.0 | 3,801.9 | 665.7 | 4,467.6 |
| W.C. CIP Position Costs | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 302.7 | 302.7 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 159.0 | 159.0 |
| W.C. EVOS Restoration Projects | 0.0 | 0.0 | 205.5 | 205.5 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 544.8 | 544.8 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 547.5 | 547.5 |
| Assert/Protect State's Rights | 0.0 | 0.0 | 195.4 | 195.4 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 206.0 | 206.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 210.6 | 210.6 |
| Totals | 269.5 | 8,704.3 | 11,547.7 | 20,521.5 | 253.7 | 12,302.6 | 12,285.5 | 24,841.8 | 256.0 | 15,901.9 | 11,786.8 | 27,944.7 |

Wildlife Conservation

Proposed Changes in Levels of Service for FY2003

Due to new federal funding, a budget component titled WCRP was created in the FY02 budget (component originally titled "CARA Implementation"). This component includes projects related to wildlife education, management of species that are not hunted or trapped, refuge management, and wildlife viewing. The Wildlife Conservation budget component includes projects related to management of species that are hunted or trapped and hunter information and training. Some projects have been moved from the Wildlife Conservation component to the WCRP component and many new projects are included in the WCRP component.

Additional federal dollars are available under both the traditional Pittman-Robertson Wildlife Restoration Act and from the new WCRP federal aid program. An increment in the Wildlife Conservation component is requested as well as additional federal funding in the new WCRP component. The request for traditional Pittman-Robertson federal aid funds has been increased by \$1,082.8. The request for WCRP federal aid funds has increased from \$1,510.0 to \$4.0 million. Expenditures of the fish and game fund will be made in both components. However, the overall request for Fish and Game Funds has been reduced by \$360.8.

Wildlife Conservation

Summary of BRU Budget Changes by Component

From FY2002 Authorized to FY2003 Governor

All dollars in thousands

| | <u>General Funds</u> | <u>Federal Funds</u> | <u>Other Funds</u> | <u>Total Funds</u> |
|------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| FY2002 Authorized | 253.7 | 12,302.6 | 12,285.5 | 24,841.8 |
| Adjustments which will continue current level of service: | | | | |
| -Wildlife Conservation | -253.7 | 596.9 | -1,369.8 | -1,026.6 |
| -CARA Implementation | 0.0 | -1,510.0 | 0.0 | -1,510.0 |
| -WCRP | 256.0 | 1,518.7 | 1,004.0 | 2,778.7 |
| -W.C. Special Projects | 0.0 | 26.5 | 3.5 | 30.0 |
| -W.C. CIP Position Costs | 0.0 | 0.0 | 6.0 | 6.0 |
| -W.C. EVOS Restoration Projects | 0.0 | 0.0 | 2.7 | 2.7 |
| -Assert/Protect State's Rights | 0.0 | 0.0 | 4.6 | 4.6 |
| Proposed budget decreases: | | | | |
| -W.C. CIP Position Costs | 0.0 | 0.0 | -149.7 | -149.7 |
| Proposed budget increases: | | | | |
| -Wildlife Conservation | 0.0 | 485.9 | 0.0 | 485.9 |
| -WCRP | 0.0 | 2,481.3 | 0.0 | 2,481.3 |
| FY2003 Governor | 256.0 | 15,901.9 | 11,786.8 | 27,944.7 |