

# **State of Alaska FY2013 Governor's Operating Budget**

## **Department of Fish and Game Wildlife Conservation Results Delivery Unit Budget Summary**

## Wildlife Conservation Results Delivery Unit

### Contribution to Department's Mission

To conserve and enhance Alaska's wildlife and habitats and provide for a wide range of public uses and benefits.

### Core Services

- Survey and inventory wildlife populations for information on size, trends, productivity, and levels of mortality.
- Survey and inventory furbearers, waterfowl, and small game.
- Administer hunts by issuing permits, issuing emergency closure and opening orders, and monitoring harvest levels.
- Conduct multi-year field studies on wildlife populations to examine productivity, nutrition, predation, and the impacts of disease. Wildlife research is directed to assist in the management and understanding of wildlife and their habitats.
- Assess public interests and local needs, direct hunting inquires to appropriate and ethical hunting opportunities, sell hunting and trapping licenses, issue harvest tags and permits, make public presentations, and respond to injured wildlife.
- Provide Hunter Education courses as directed by regulation.
- Provide the Board of Game with biological information, offer suggested regulatory changes based on available information and data, and provide testimony, analyses, and recommendations on proposed changes offered by individuals and organizations.
- Administer and conduct the lottery for all Drawing Permit hunts and administer the Tier II Subsistence Permit hunt scoring and allocation system.
- Management of 32 state wildlife refuges, critical habitat areas, and wildlife sanctuaries for the protection of fish and wildlife, their habitats, and public use.
- Data processing support for division services also includes GIS-based data analysis and digital mapping within Game Management Units.

### Results at a Glance

(Additional performance information is available on the web at <http://omb.alaska.gov/results>.)

#### End Result A: Healthy and sustainable wildlife populations in Alaska that provide a diversity of opportunities for public use and enjoyment.

Target #1: Achieve population targets for at least 75% of big game populations for which the Board of Game (BOG) has set targets (i.e., objectives).

Status #1: According to FY2011 Wildlife Conservation data, 58% of big game populations targets set by the Board of Game were met (23/39.75), an increase from FY10 (44%). The trend remains below the 75% target.

Target #2: No increase in the number of state-listed threatened or endangered species in Alaska from the 2003 level.

Status #2: According to Wildlife Conservation data, five species are listed on the state endangered species list, no change since 1993.

Target #3: Develop and implement recovery strategies for 75% of those "species of concern" under primary division management.

Status #3: Wildlife Conservation action plans are in place for 10/11 (91%) of "species of concern," including blackpoll warbler, Townsend's warbler, olive-sided flycatcher, Steller's eider, spectacled eider, northern goshawk, Arctic peregrine falcon, American peregrine falcon, Aleutian Canada goose and Kenai brown bear.

#### Strategy A1: Collect scientifically sound information on wildlife populations in Alaska.

Target #1: Maintain the number of active research projects at 95% or more of the previous year's totals.

Status #1: The total number of FY2011 active Wildlife Conservation research projects conducted was slightly less than those conducted in FY2010 and slightly below (94%) the 95% target.

Target #2: Increase by 5% per year, the collection of population, harvest, and other biological information on species of concern and/or key species about which little information exists.

Status #2: According to FY2011 Wildlife Conservation data, 86 projects were studying key species (those listed

in Appendix 7 of the Wildlife Action Plan), exceeding the target (34).

Target #3: Complete 90% of planned surveys on the population status and harvest of big game species, furbearers, migratory birds and marine mammals (not including any stopped by adverse weather conditions or nonavailability of suitable aircraft).

Status #3: The Wildlife Conservation target to conduct 90% of planned wildlife surveys was not met in FY2011 (81%) and FY2010 (78%).

**Strategy A2: Provide biological information and recommendations to the Board of Game and state advisory committees as well as to the Federal Subsistence Board (FSB) and federal regional councils.**

Target #1: Actively participate in 100% of Board of Game and Federal Subsistence Board meetings, 75% of state advisory committee meetings, and 50% of federal regional council meetings that affect state management.

Status #1: In FY2010, the Division of Wildlife Conservation met its 100% target for attendance at Board of Game meetings, Advisory Committee meetings, and Federal Regional Council meetings. DWC staff attended only 50% of the Federal Subsistence Board meetings.

Target #2: Achieve a 75% adoption rate for regulatory proposals submitted to the Board of Game by the division.

Status #2: During FY2011 Board of Game (BOG) meetings, a total of 27 Wildlife Conservation proposals were submitted. 20 out of 27 proposals were carried, or were adopted by the BOG for a 74% adoption rate. Two proposals failed and five had no action taken. Thus, in FY11 the BOG adoption rate was slightly below the 75% target.

**Strategy A3: Maintain wildlife habitat on state lands capable of sustaining robust, well-distributed populations of wildlife.**

Target #1: Increase the percentage of management plans for state critical habitat areas, game refuges and game sanctuaries.

Status #1: The percent of Special Areas with management plans increased from 2010 (50%) up to 56%. Eighteen of 32 Special Areas have completed management plans.

**Strategy A4: Increase low or declining ungulate populations identified under the intensive management law in areas impacted by predators to provide for increased human harvest.**

Target #1: Increase ungulate populations by an average of 2% annually in areas where intensive management programs are being implemented.

Status #1: According to FY2011 Wildlife Conservation data, intensive management was implemented through predator control programs in six areas in Alaska for moose and/or caribou. In FY2011, three of the six areas had a greater than 2% population increase which is the same as reported in FY2010. Two areas had insufficient data to determine the growth and one area did not meet the target.

Target #2: Increase ungulate populations by an average of 2% annually in areas where intensive management programs are being implemented.

Status #2: According to FY2011 Wildlife Conservation data, Intensive Management was implemented through predator control programs in six areas in Alaska for moose and/or caribou. In FY2011, three of the six areas had a greater than 2% population increase which is the same as reported in FY2010. Two areas had insufficient data to determine the growth and one area did not meet the target.

**Strategy A5: Maintain and enhance opportunities to hunt, trap, and view wildlife.**

Target #1: Increase by 1% the 2001 level of adult participation in wildlife viewing.

Status #1: According to the most current year (2006) of Wildlife Conservation data, there was an 18% increase in number of wildlife-watchers for Alaska from 2001. The number of wildlife-watchers decreased less than 1% from 1996 to 2006 and continues to be below the target.

Target #2: Increase sales of hunting and trapping licenses to the three-year average.

Status #2: The Wildlife Conservation target to increase sales of hunting and trapping licenses was met. In the most recent year available (2010), 151,620 resident and non-resident hunting and trapping licenses were sold which was higher than the target 3-year average (150,349). Total sales decreased from 2009 by 1% (155,521 licenses were sold in 2009).

**Strategy A6: Provide opportunities for Alaskans to gain knowledge of and appreciation for Alaska's wildlife, its management, and ways to safely and ethically interact with wildlife.**

Target #1: Increase by 5% the number of workshops offered to teachers in wildlife curricula.

Status #1: According to FY2011 Wildlife Conservation data, 52 Alaska Wildlife Curriculum and Project Wild (AWC/PW) workshops were offered, a significant increase from FY2010 (21). The 5% increase target (22) was more than met.

Target #2: Increase annually the number of opportunities for Alaskans to learn about wildlife and wildlife management.

Status #2: The Wildlife Conservation target to annually increase the number of opportunities for Alaskans to learn about wildlife and wildlife management was met in FY2011 (680). Total activities in FY2011 increased from FY2010 (516) by 32%.

Target #3: Increase by 5% the number of hunter education clinics offered.

Status #3: The percentage of hunter education clinics offered by Wildlife Conservation increased 7% from FY2010 (268) at 286 which is above the target 5% increase from FY2010 of 281.

**Major Activities to Advance Strategies**

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conduct population and trend count surveys on wildlife populations.</li> <li>• Conduct Game Management Unit area and/or species-specific research.</li> <li>• Conduct harvest surveys on wildlife populations.</li> <li>• Review and analyze proposals from the public pertaining to wildlife in regards to the regulatory process.</li> <li>• Collect, analyze, and share information regarding wildlife to regulatory bodies.</li> <li>• Develop and present recommendations to the Board of Game.</li> <li>• Participate in regulatory sessions with the Board of Game.</li> <li>• Devise management strategies and plans regarding wildlife habitat.</li> <li>• Conduct field assessments regarding wildlife habitat.</li> <li>• Assign staff to heavily used areas to protect resources and/or public safety.</li> <li>• Participate in interdisciplinary permit review teams regarding wildlife habitat.</li> <li>• Offer biological expertise regarding wildlife habitat.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conduct prescribed burns to enhance wildlife habitat.</li> <li>• Carry out habitat scarification/crushing.</li> <li>• Build and install nesting structures.</li> <li>• Conduct recruitment and survival surveys on ungulate populations.</li> <li>• Develop and enhance marketing strategies for the sale of hunting licenses.</li> <li>• Conduct hunter / trapper / viewer clinics for the general public.</li> <li>• Enhance web-based information systems and other publications regarding wildlife resources and opportunities.</li> <li>• Use the media to promote opportunities for wildlife related activities.</li> <li>• Sponsor lecture series and other educational forums for the public.</li> <li>• Development of brochures, news articles and other publications.</li> <li>• Conduct teacher trainings on the use of outdoor and wildlife curricula.</li> <li>• Sponsor outdoor skill clinics.</li> </ul> |
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**Key RDU Challenges**

Game Management and Hunting Opportunities

Predation by wolves and bears has a major impact on selected wildlife populations in Alaska. The division will continue to work with the Board of Game to develop biologically sound and cost effective programs to regulate predator populations where necessary to enhance numbers and distribution of important ungulate herds.

Under A.S. 16.05.255, the Board of Game is charged with carrying out intensive management programs for identified big game populations failing to meet regulatory management objectives. In five areas, predator management is being used as a tool to boost the harvestable surpluses of moose and caribou populations and provide increased hunting opportunities for Alaskans. These programs are targeted at subunits within Game Management Units (GMU) 12, 13, 16, 19, and 20. In GMU 9, the division has engaged in wolf reduction efforts to arrest and reverse a precipitous decline in the Southern Alaska Peninsula (SAP) caribou herd. This year's counts indicate a steady increase in the SAP population since control actions were initiated four years ago. The division has allocated funds to support

studies and field research to document population parameters in order to support, sustain, and defend new intensive management programs in the face of ongoing opposition and litigation. Without these programs, hunting opportunities will be severely reduced, with commensurate reduction in the amount of meat harvested for human use.

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 to effectively mitigate the effects of development through active management programs that ensure adequate protection of wildlife values and continued opportunities for public use of these resources. The process depends on the division's ability to provide the latest information, techniques, and research findings to all parties involved, in a timely and efficient manner.

#### Protect State Interests in the Designation and Management of Endangered Species

The listing of species as threatened or endangered under the federal Endangered Species Act (ESA) can have adverse economic impacts on Alaska. Division programs have been designed to provide for population recovery of listed species as well as preventing the need for additional listings. The division will continue to collect information on several species in an effort to ensure that species are not unnecessarily listed under the federal act. The department will take a lead to respond to future listing issues.

#### Marine Mammal Research

The Division has researched marine mammals over several decades. Current emphasis on Steller sea lions, harbor seals, and ice seals totals approximately \$2.5 million annually and is funded through grant agreements from the federal Department of Commerce/NOAA. Sea lions and four species of ice seals are candidates for listing under the ESA. The research work was formally shown in the NOAA budget as earmarks originally developed by the late Senator Ted Stevens. The earmark system has been revised and funding levels from Congress to NOAA were reduced to the State of Alaska during FFY 08-11. Funding was secured from NOAA to maintain research work into state FY12, but future funding levels from NOAA are expected to decrease.

#### Wood Bison Reintroductions

Wood bison are native to Alaska but were extirpated about 150 years ago. Efforts to re-establish wood bison in Alaska have been slow and tedious, with numerous challenges to overcome. In June 2008, with the financial support of several conservation organizations, 52 captive wood bison were delivered from Elk Island National Park in Alberta, Canada, to the Alaska Wildlife Conservation Center (WCSS) in Portage, Alaska. These bison supplement the 32 wood bison held at the WCSS since 2003. As of November 2011, the number of wood bison held for possible reintroduction is 102. Holding the bison is expensive, as is the ultimate releases, and follow-up monitoring. The current target date for the first release of wood bison is spring 2013, after the ESA regulations are completed. This assumes the regulations are deemed to provide sufficient protection to other resource development activities. The Fish and Wildlife Service is expected to make the final revisions to the Environmental Assessment that will be made available for public review and comment in conjunction with the proposed ESA sections 10(j) and 4(d) rules.

#### Increased Urban Human-Wildlife Conflicts

As Alaska's cities have grown and expanded into previously un-altered wildlife habitat, conflicts between humans and wildlife have increased. Most notable are human conflicts with bears and moose. As division staff are called upon to deal with these conflicts, efforts related to the division's core function of surveying, monitoring, and managing the state's wildlife populations become compromised. This results in reduced population data which, in turn, results in more conservative hunting seasons and bag limits.

#### Dual Management

The federal assertion of management authorities for subsistence hunting on federal lands continues to have major impacts on the management of wildlife in Alaska. The division continues to work to address resource management and allocation conflicts between state and federal managers.

#### Funding Diversity and Matching Funds for Federal Funding Sources

Revenues into the Fish and Game Fund are derived from the sale of hunting and trapping licenses to residents and non-residents, special permits, and tag fees. Revenue received during FY11 from these sources was 23.4% less than the amount received in FY01. More recently, revenue for license sales between FY11 and FY08 was down

14.5%, primarily due to fewer sales of licenses and tags to non-residents. Sales to non-residents comprise 70-75% of yearly revenue into the fund. Nationwide, hunting license sales are on the decline.

The division's primary source of federal funding is the Pittman-Robertson Wildlife Restoration (PR) program. Revenue for PR is derived from excise taxes as follows: 11% on arms and ammunition; 10% on pistols, handguns, and revolvers; 11% on bows and archery equipment; and 12.4% on arrow components. Between 2008 and 2009, receipts into this national fund increased by 42% due to a surge in sales of guns and ammunition nationwide. For 2010 through 2011, receipts into the fund have dropped by 18% per year. Future projections of receipts is uncertain. The increase permitted the division to expand wildlife survey and research work beginning in FY11, but revenue uncertainty may require spending reductions.

Participation by states in the PR program requires that states enact laws to dedicate hunting license revenue to serve as the required 25% match for the federal funds. If the current trend of decreased revenue into the Fish and Game fund continues and the PR fund begins to grow again, the State of Alaska will have a problem meeting the minimum match requirements for this program.

### **Significant Changes in Results to be Delivered in FY2013**

The division will begin to expand its capability toward spatial data analysis. The division will begin a process to provide useable geospatial information to the ADFG Habitat Division, industry, federal agencies, non-governmental organizations and the public with information on important big game areas, wildlife corridors, wintering areas and calving grounds.

The division will continue and maintain field research activities toward harvest management and population assessment objectives in FY13 when compared to FY12.

### **Major RDU Accomplishments in 2011**

#### Reorganization of Services for the Mat-Su

The division divided its largest region into two smaller, more manageable regions at the start of FY11. Area offices in Glennallen, King Salmon, Dillingham, and Palmer are now under the regional leadership of Region IV, based in Palmer. Region II remains based in Anchorage with area offices in Kodiak, Kenai/Homer, Cordova, and Anchorage. This change has provided for a greater focus on wildlife management services for the population of this growing area of the state.

#### Wildlife Survey and Inventory

Professional biological staff continued to conduct management projects for 11 big game species; black and brown bears, bison, caribou, Dall sheep, deer, elk, moose, mountain goat, muskox, and wolf across 26 game management units and sub-units statewide. Staff performed coordination and support projects for research and management projects, including biometrics and geographic information systems (GIS) support, harvest reporting, habitat enhancement projects, and fire management planning projects.

Intensive management programs continued during FY11 in an effort to increase ungulate species for human consumption by controlling predators in the following game management units: 9, 12, 13, 16B, 19A, 19D, and 20E.

#### Public Information and Organizational Coordination

Staff, throughout 22 office locations, met with the public and guided them through hunting opportunities, regulatory requirements, harvest reporting, and wildlife viewing locations. Staff resources were coordinated to provide accounting and administrative support to support field survey, inventory, and research projects.

#### Wildlife Research

Wildlife research projects through Pittman-Roberson Wildlife Restoration funding conducted during FY11 include 32 related to the following big game species; moose, deer, caribou, bear, sheep, furbearers, wolf, and muskox. In addition, the division is engaged in 75 additional research projects; including Steller sea lions, harbor seals, ice seals (four species), bowhead whales, and walrus. Marine mammal projects are ongoing and are funded primarily through the National Marine Fisheries Services (NMFS).

**Hunter Education**

Hunter education clinics and classes were completed in 40 communities statewide, certifying 3,340 total students. There were 166 basic hunter education, 94 bowhunter, and 26 muzzleloader classes. DWC trained 89 volunteer instructors statewide; 55 in basic hunter education, 20 bowhunter, and 14 muzzleloader.

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**Wildlife Conservation  
RDU Financial Summary by Component**

*All dollars shown in thousands*

	FY2011 Actuals				FY2012 Management Plan				FY2013 Governor			
	UGF+DGF Funds	Other Funds	Federal Funds	Total Funds	UGF+DGF Funds	Other Funds	Federal Funds	Total Funds	UGF+DGF Funds	Other Funds	Federal Funds	Total Funds
<b>Formula Expenditures</b> None.												
<b>Non-Formula Expenditures</b>												
Wildlife Conservation	5,607.5	7,308.3	14,909.9	27,825.7	6,809.3	8,612.1	15,710.1	31,131.5	7,094.0	8,779.6	16,066.3	31,939.9
WC Special Projects	895.7	2,057.0	6,632.7	9,585.4	933.5	2,333.1	8,397.2	11,663.8	944.7	2,245.8	8,605.7	11,796.2
Hunter Ed Public Shooting Ranges	284.5	429.3	0.0	713.8	295.8	436.7	0.0	732.5	303.9	443.3	0.0	747.2
<b>Totals</b>	<b>6,787.7</b>	<b>9,794.6</b>	<b>21,542.6</b>	<b>38,124.9</b>	<b>8,038.6</b>	<b>11,381.9</b>	<b>24,107.3</b>	<b>43,527.8</b>	<b>8,342.6</b>	<b>11,468.7</b>	<b>24,672.0</b>	<b>44,483.3</b>

**Wildlife Conservation**  
**Summary of RDU Budget Changes by Component**  
**From FY2012 Management Plan to FY2013 Governor**

*All dollars shown in thousands*

	<u>Unrestricted Gen (UGF)</u>	<u>Designated Gen (DGF)</u>	<u>Other Funds</u>	<u>Federal Funds</u>	<u>Total Funds</u>
<b>FY2012 Management Plan</b>	<b>7,653.3</b>	<b>385.3</b>	<b>11,381.9</b>	<b>24,107.3</b>	<b>43,527.8</b>
<b>Adjustments which will continue current level of service:</b>					
-Wildlife Conservation	-378.2	2.9	167.5	356.2	148.4
-WC Special Projects	11.2	0.0	12.7	108.5	132.4
-Hunter Ed Public Shooting Ranges	0.0	8.1	6.6	0.0	14.7
<b>Proposed budget decreases:</b>					
-WC Special Projects	0.0	0.0	-200.0	0.0	-200.0
<b>Proposed budget increases:</b>					
-Wildlife Conservation	660.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	660.0
-WC Special Projects	0.0	0.0	100.0	100.0	200.0
<b>FY2013 Governor</b>	<b>7,946.3</b>	<b>396.3</b>	<b>11,468.7</b>	<b>24,672.0</b>	<b>44,483.3</b>