

State of Alaska FY2018 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.

Results

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

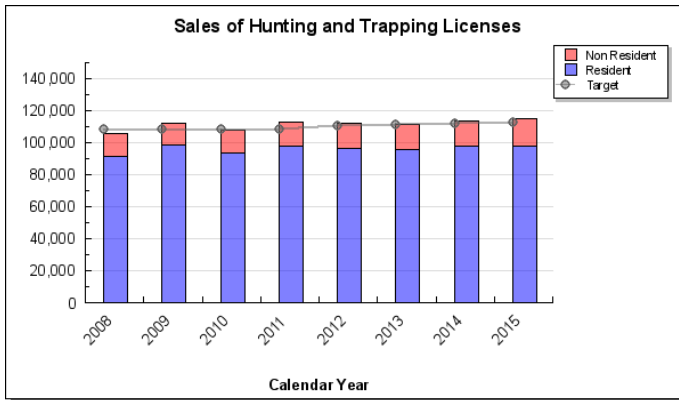
Core Services

- Maintain and enhance opportunities to hunt, trap, and view wildlife.
- 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.

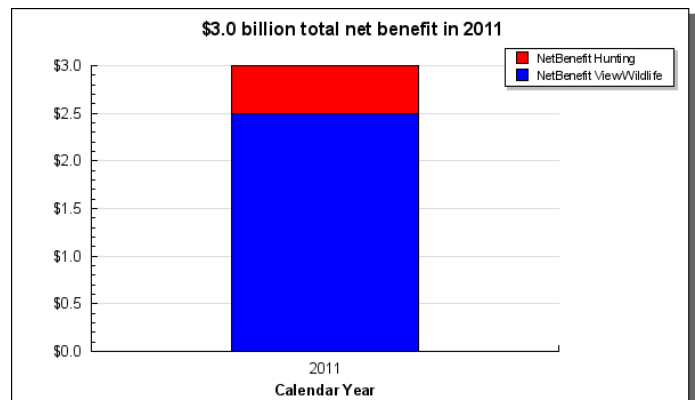
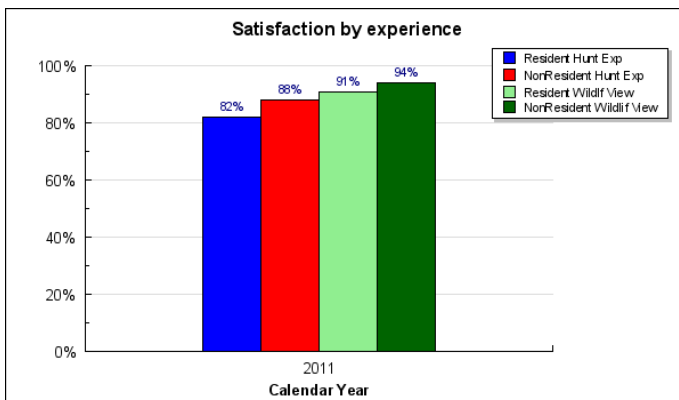
Measures by Core Service

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

1. Maintain and enhance opportunities to hunt, trap, and view wildlife.



2. 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.



Major RDU Accomplishments in 2016

Avoiding Reversion of Federal Funds. The division successfully obligated all funds at risk for reversion to the federal government. During FY2016, the challenge was finding appropriate matching funds because there was not adequate license fee revenue. To accomplish this, the division partnered with state, tribal, and non-profit

organizations to identify projects of mutual interest to benefit the hunting community. This resulted in nearly \$12 million in additional federal funding available to the division.

Intensive Management. The division is currently implementing intensive management (IM) programs aimed at increasing caribou or moose numbers in portions of Game Management Units (GMU) 12, 15, 16, 17, 19, 20, 24 and 25 and collection of habitat data was recently initiated as part of approved IM programs in GMUs 1 and 3. The division has allocated funds to support intensified field monitoring and research to document population parameters to support, sustain, and defend existing and new intensive management programs in the face of ongoing opposition and litigation.

Cooperation with City, State and Tribal Partners. Alaska Department of Fish & Game (ADF&G) is working with Alaska Department of Natural Resources (State Forestry) and other borough, tribal and federal entities concerning land and fire management to enhance moose habitat. Hundreds of acres have been cut or roller chopped in FY16 at project sites in Tok and Sterling. Additional projects are expected to be implemented in the coming year in Sutton and Delta. Further, in April 2016 an agreement was negotiated with Chugachmiut to provide matching funds for habitat enhancement on the Kenai Peninsula. We have also been working with four different native organizations on Kodiak Island to develop a cooperative elk research project.

Moose Habitat On the Kenai. In April, the Kenai National Wildlife Refuge and State Forestry both began work on a cooperatively designed fuel break around Sterling involving Refuge, Borough, and Tribal lands. Refuge crews and private contractors are cutting fuel breaks with both mechanical and manual systems. This project is greatly extended through federal aid funds with a match from Chugachmiut, who secured Bureau of Indian Affairs funding (\$685K non-federal) to support the Yukon Fire Crew to work on the Sterling Fuel Break focusing on sensitive native lands. This allowed ADF&G to apply for additional federal funds which will expand the project's utility to more communities in the area.

Chugachmiut and the division will collaborate with State Forestry and the Kenai National Wildlife Refuge this winter to determine the best suitable location for additional fuel breaks. A companion moose movement study includes deploying collars to evaluate behavioral response to recent fires and existing vegetation.

Northern Southeast Alaska Brown Bear Research. The objective of this study was to provide state and federal managers with information to help guide management of the brown bear population along the northern mainland coast of Southeast Alaska. The project assessed the population demographics, spatial relationships, habitat selection patterns, harvest rate, and density of brown bears in a portion of GMU 5 near Yakutat. From GPS radiocollared brown bears, we documented spatial use patterns including seasonal home range size and habitat selection relationships. This year field activities were completed to calculate a brown bear population and density estimate for GMU 5A. Research staff estimated the density of brown bears on the Yakutat Forelands by integrating a DNA-based, spatially explicit mark-recapture technique with GPS radiocollar data to inform the parameters in the model. The results from this study will provide managers with appropriate population information with which to develop management strategies, including appropriate harvest rates for brown bears in the subunit

Southeast Alaska Wolf Research. The division has continued efforts to estimate the fall population for wolves on Prince of Wales and associated islands in order to inform sustainable harvest and to support monitoring of Southeast Alaska wolves. To accomplish this objective we are using DNA-based, spatial mark-recapture (SECR) methods, and continuing to improve and refine estimation techniques. The future goal is to implement the approach to estimate wolf population densities across a larger part of the Southeast panhandle. In addition, research has begun to investigate wolf genetic diversity and population structure and variation in wolf diets across the region. Little is known about gene flow among wolf populations in different Southeast Alaskan geographic regions, thus the current project will quantify levels of genetic connectivity by analyzing DNA from collected samples. Sitka black-tailed deer are considered the primary prey species of wolves where deer are available. More information is needed to determine to what extent wolves exploit prey species other than deer, specifically when deer abundance is low or deer are not available. Research is underway to determine variation in alternate prey species occurrence and proportion of prey species in wolf diets across the Region. The division has been, and will continue to be actively engaged in wolf research and management in close cooperation with the USDA Forest Service – Tongass National Forest.

Threatened, Endangered and Diversity Program. The "TED" Program is a pro-active, cost effective approach to the federal Endangered Species Act (ESA), intended to conserve wildlife species before they become threatened or

endangered, to recover species already imperiled, and to keep “common species common.” The Program administers the State’s response to the ESA by providing resources, expertise, and coordination among agencies (e.g., Department of Law and Department of Natural Resources) with the goal of conserving wildlife and avoiding unwarranted regulations. Last year’s major Program success include:

- 1) A not warranted ESA listing finding for wolves in Southeast Alaska;
- 2) The delisting of the primary population of humpback whales that use Alaska waters;
- 3) The State winning a major lawsuit overturning the designation of the listing of the Arctic subspecies of the ringed seal as threatened under the ESA (TED assisted the Department of Law);
- 4) Draft federal regulations and revised federal policies that will increase the State’s role in implementing the ESA;
- 5) The submission of detailed information to the Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) that establishes a strong foundation for avoiding listing of the northern bog lemming and western bumble bee under the ESA (FWS had determined listing for these species may be warranted);
- 6) The submission of critical information on bald and golden eagles, which established that FWS’s proposed take regulations for eagles in Alaska were inappropriate; and
- 7) Critical research conducted that will enable the State to conserve species, avoid unwarranted ESA listings, and minimize regulatory impacts.

Key RDU Challenges

Increase in Funding. The division has seen a drastic increase in the federal apportionment available through the Wildlife Restoration program and is expected to see increases after January 1, 2017 as a result of the passage of HB137, the bill that increases license fee revenue (Fish & Game Fund). Further, the legislature provided intent language for the division to work collaboratively with state, tribal and non-governmental organization to “ensure that no Pittman-Robertson monies are returned to the federal government unspent.” This has been and will continue to be challenging given the State’s current budget climate and the move to reduce spending. While these restrictions were initially focused on general fund spending, spending restrictions on all funding sources are now in effect. This has caused a drastic slowdown in the ability to work on projects fully-funded using federal dollars matched with Fish & Game Fund.

Significant Changes in Results to be Delivered in FY2018

The division’s primary federal funding source is from an annual apportionment of Wildlife Restoration funds set aside for the state annually and requires a 25% non-federal match. This match is primarily achieved using license and tag fee revenue (Fish & Game Fund). In addition there are several small projects which are ineligible for Wildlife Restoration funds such as the Threatened, Endangered, and Diversity Species program, law enforcement and regulatory activities including Board of Game functions. While Fish & Game Fund will be used where possible to fund these activities there are several programs not eligible for these funds. To continue these activities general fund support is needed to sustain them.

In FY2017, the division reduced general fund receipts in the amount of \$1,300,000. This was primarily accomplished by updating administrative staff duties to make them eligible for funding using restricted federal receipts matched with Fish & Game Fund. By doing this, the division risks reducing the federal indirect percentage collected by the department that supports administrative services necessary for department functions. These administrative services include the commissioner’s office, human resources, and critical financial staff. In addition, the division reduced funds used in the Creamer’s Field program, phased out the graduate tuition program, and reduced contract awards to outside agencies.

DWC intends to offset FY2018 reductions with revenues from HB 137 (Fish & Game Fund). Fish & Game Fund is a restricted funding source that can only be used for “Programs intended to directly benefit license purchasers of general hunting, trapping and fishing licenses.” With the loss of general fund the following programs will no longer have the flexibility to work on projects that do not meet the stated criteria.

- **Regional administrative and leadership staff** – These staff salaries will be funded using restricted federal funding matched with Fish & Game Fund. This may further reduce the department’s indirect cost recovery rate and risk reduction to critical administrative staff.

- **Building leases** – DWC offices house staff from all programs including those that cannot be covered using Fish and Game funds. The division will shift to using Fish and Game Fund to cover leases for eligible staff thereby reducing the amount of general funds used for this purpose.
- **Hunter Information Services** – These frontline staff and public information officers serve as the initial contact point and provide a broad array of wildlife related information and services to the public. These grant activities were previously matched using general funds to allow for the greatest possible flexibility but will now be matched using restricted Fish & Game Funds.

Contact Information
<p>Contact: Bruce Dale, Director Phone: (907) 861-2101 Fax: (907) 861-2121 E-mail: bruce.dale@alaska.gov</p>

**Wildlife Conservation
RDU Financial Summary by Component**

All dollars shown in thousands

	FY2016 Actuals				FY2017 Management Plan				FY2018 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
Formula Expenditures None.												
Non-Formula Expenditures												
Wildlife Conservation	4,209.6	8,184.2	19,284.8	31,678.6	3,373.7	8,390.6	21,456.8	33,221.1	1,239.9	10,591.0	21,441.8	33,272.7
WC Special Projects	1,148.7	1,836.0	7,231.8	10,216.5	1,252.0	2,481.9	10,250.7	13,984.6	705.0	2,882.6	10,274.8	13,862.4
Hunter Ed Public Shooting Ranges	0.0	516.4	356.0	872.4	0.0	908.8	0.0	908.8	0.0	913.9	0.0	913.9
Totals	5,358.3	10,536.6	26,872.6	42,767.5	4,625.7	11,781.3	31,707.5	48,114.5	1,944.9	14,387.5	31,716.6	48,049.0

Wildlife Conservation
Summary of RDU Budget Changes by Component
From FY2017 Management Plan to FY2018 Governor

All dollars shown in thousands

	<u>Unrestricted</u> <u>Gen (UGF)</u>	<u>Designated</u> <u>Gen (DGF)</u>	<u>Other Funds</u>	<u>Federal</u> <u>Funds</u>	<u>Total Funds</u>
FY2017 Management Plan	4,625.7	0.0	11,781.3	31,707.5	48,114.5
Adjustments which continue current level of service:					
-Wildlife Conservation	-2,133.8	0.0	2,200.4	135.0	201.6
-WC Special Projects	-547.0	0.0	559.7	24.1	36.8
-Hunter Ed Public Shooting Ranges	0.0	0.0	5.1	0.0	5.1
Proposed budget decreases:					
-Wildlife Conservation	0.0	0.0	0.0	-150.0	-150.0
-WC Special Projects	0.0	0.0	-159.0	0.0	-159.0
FY2018 Governor	1,944.9	0.0	14,387.5	31,716.6	48,049.0