

# **State of Alaska FY2019 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>.)

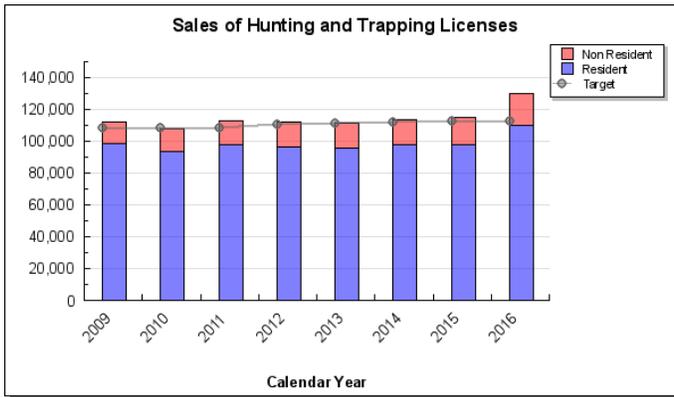
**Core Services**

- 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.

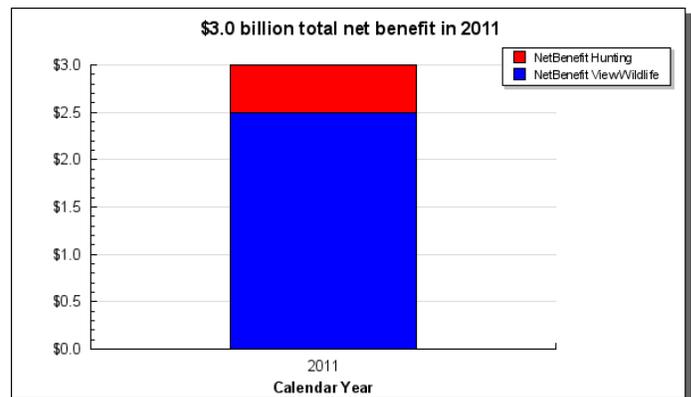
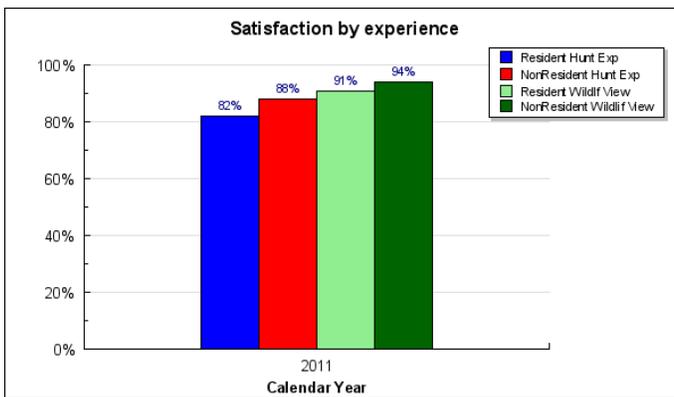
**Measures by Core Service**

(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 2017**

**Defending against federal erosion of state management authority**

The Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA) and Access Defense programs, and the Threatened, Endangered, and Diversity Program (TED) are cost effective approaches to federal management issues. The ANILCA

Program asserts and defends the authority of the Department for management of fish and wildlife on all lands in Alaska and maintains public access and use of federal public lands. The TED program works 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 Endangered Species Act (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 successes by these programs include:

- 1) Passage by the US Congress of HJR 69, which repealed USFWS wildlife regulations on Alaska refuges that were preempting state management authority;
- 2) Federal determinations that Pacific walrus and Lake Iliamna harbor seals did not require protection under the Endangered Species Act;
- 3) Coordinated the ADF&G's participation in Departments of Interior and Agriculture land management planning processes to ensure recognition of state management authorities and maintain public access and use of public lands; and
- 4) Finalized incidental take regulations for bald and golden eagles that do not penalize Alaska for having healthy populations of eagles as initially proposed.

#### **Mountain goat habitat selection research**

We completed this project in Game Management Unit 1D (Southeast Alaska). This project began in 2012 in efforts to assess goat winter range and use near Haines and Skagway. Largely driven by interest in heli-skiing and winter recreation in the area, mountain goat research was recognized as missing information needed for policy level decisions to be made by land management agencies. While portions of the research are ongoing, results of the research were presented to both public and agency audiences in fall 2017 in Haines. These data are being used to inform municipal code and federal regulations, and land use guidelines for state and federal lands in Game Management Unit 1D.

#### **Watana research projects**

As part of an environmental review, the division completed several multi-year projects for the Susitna-Watana Hydroelectric Dam project. The studies are complete and the information and reports are archived. This information can be built upon again in the future should the hydroelectric project be resurrected. The division's studies focused on moose, caribou, wolverine and ptarmigan. The division also made substantial contributions to the Dall's sheep and large carnivore knowledge base in this region, and completed several Dall sheep surveys within the project area. The large carnivore project included spatially explicit population estimates for both black and brown bear as well as an updated wolf survey. In addition to documenting wildlife populations potentially affected by construction, these studies inform ongoing management.

#### **Photocensus Project**

For over 30 years, the division has successfully used World War II era aerial photographic equipment to survey caribou across the state. In the last few years, it became apparent that film was becoming obsolete and no longer supported by industry. The division successfully transitioned to digital aerial imaging during this past season. The new system took several years to develop, and resulting equipment is greatly exceeding expectations, resulting in more frequent surveys under less restrictive weather conditions and caribou behavior, and more accurate surveys.

### **Key RDU Challenges**

#### **Authorization shortfall with increases in federal funding and state revenue collection**

Due to robust national firearm and ammunition sales, the federal excise taxes collected on those products have reached all-time highs. Those federal taxes for wildlife conservation are distributed to states and Alaska receives the maximum apportionment. As such, the division of Wildlife Conservation (DWC) has seen a drastic increase in the availability of federal dollars through the Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration (WSFR) program (aka Pittman-Robertson) from the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS). In FY 2017, the Fish and Game Fund received increased revenues from hunting license sales with the passage of HB 137. Furthermore, the legislature provided intent language for the division to work to "ensure that no Pittman-Robertson monies are returned to the federal government unspent." This has been and will continue to be a challenge given the State's current budget climate and the move to reduce overall government spending.

**Avoiding reversion of federal funds**

One challenge is identifying suitable projects to receive and expend the federal and matching Fish and Game funds. The division received a FY2017 CIP appropriation in the summer of 2017 and was able to submit several hunter access projects to use \$2.0 million of federal and Fish and Game funds. This appropriation reduced the reversion of federal funds to \$1.9 million and funded several important hunter access projects. The division is working to identify additional appropriate projects for submittal to USFWS in order to reduce the reversion of funds in FY2018, and these efforts would benefit from additional federal and Fish and Game Fund expenditure authorization.

**Significant Changes in Results to be Delivered in FY2019**

In the FY2019 budget, Division of Wildlife Conservation is combining two budget components (Wildlife Conservation and Wildlife Conservation Special Projects) to increase oversight for the management of its reduced resources.

Contact Information
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**Wildlife Conservation  
RDU Financial Summary by Component**

*All dollars shown in thousands*

	FY2017 Actuals				FY2018 Management Plan				FY2019 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	2,812.9	8,714.4	19,192.7	30,720.0	1,239.9	10,398.8	22,346.8	33,985.5	1,898.5	13,549.1	31,775.8	47,223.4
WC Special Projects	1,281.3	1,764.1	8,170.7	11,216.1	705.0	3,074.8	9,369.8	13,149.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Hunter Ed Public Shooting Ranges	0.0	849.9	0.0	849.9	0.0	913.9	0.0	913.9	0.0	916.9	0.0	916.9
<b>Totals</b>	<b>4,094.2</b>	<b>11,328.4</b>	<b>27,363.4</b>	<b>42,786.0</b>	<b>1,944.9</b>	<b>14,387.5</b>	<b>31,716.6</b>	<b>48,049.0</b>	<b>1,898.5</b>	<b>14,466.0</b>	<b>31,775.8</b>	<b>48,140.3</b>

**Wildlife Conservation**  
**Summary of RDU Budget Changes by Component**  
**From FY2018 Management Plan to FY2019 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>FY2018 Management Plan</b>	<b>1,944.9</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>14,387.5</b>	<b>31,716.6</b>	<b>48,049.0</b>
<b>Adjustments which continue current level of service:</b>					
-Wildlife Conservation	658.6	0.0	3,150.3	9,429.0	13,237.9
-WC Special Projects	-705.0	0.0	-3,074.8	-9,369.8	-13,149.6
-Hunter Ed Public Shooting Ranges	0.0	0.0	3.0	0.0	3.0
<b>FY2019 Governor</b>	<b>1,898.5</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>14,466.0</b>	<b>31,775.8</b>	<b>48,140.3</b>