



FY 2013 HOUSE INTERIOR BILL HARMS WILDLIFE

Wildlife and its habitat are valuable national assets. Wildlife related recreation is a \$122 billion a year industry.ⁱ Moreover, protecting wildlife and its habitat also supports healthy natural systems that provide clean air and water, food, medicines and other products. The value of benefits provided by natural habitats in the U.S. is estimated at more than \$2 trillion per year.ⁱⁱ

Despite their importance, H.R. 6091, the FY 2013 Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies appropriations bill would severely harm wildlife and habitat through both draconian funding cuts and extreme and unnecessary anti-environmental riders.

WORST CUTS FOR WILDLIFE AND HABITAT IN H.R. 6091

The FY 2011 and FY 2012 funding levels have already dangerously reduced funding for the agencies and programs designed to manage and protect our air, water, wildlife and lands. Unfortunately, while there are a few bright spots, the FY 2013 House Interior bill compounds this with much deeper cuts – and eliminating funding for some programs entirely.

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) is the primary federal agency responsible for conserving wildlife and habitat both domestically and internationally. FWS obligations include managing and conserving national wildlife refuges, imperiled plants and animals, migratory birds and wildlife of global concern and stopping wildlife crimes. Yet H.R. 6091 singles it out for punitive cuts of more than 21 percent below the FY 2012 level. Based on information requested from the agency, some of these impacts include:

Endangered Species Programs – For nearly 40 years, the Endangered Species Act (ESA) has helped prevent the extinction of our nation's wildlife treasures. Yet this bill makes crippling cuts in already underfunded programs.

The operating program, including Candidate Conservation, Listing, Recovery, and Consultation, is cut nearly 24 percent below FY 2012. The 30 percent cut in the Listing program will severely restrict efforts to list more than 250 new animals and plants under the Endangered Species Act, many of which have awaited protection for years. The nearly 25 percent reduction in Consultation will lead to the loss of 121 staff positions and stop 5,445 consultations necessary so crucial projects, such as development of both conventional and renewable energy, can move forward while at the same time protecting listed species. The nearly 24 percent decrease in Recovery would delay the recovery of 193 species



as a result of the loss of 124 staff positions and stoppage of approximately 1,867 needed on the ground actions, such as inventory and monitoring for the threatened Steller's eider and Canada lynx and the endangered ocelot. In one bright spot, the Livestock Loss Demonstration Program, that assists livestock owners co-existing with wolves, is funded at \$1 million.

The Cooperative Endangered Species Fund is cut by more than 70 percent, a nearly lethal blow to this program that provides grants to states to help conserve the 65 percent of listed species that occur on non-federal lands.

National Wildlife Refuges – The National Wildlife Refuge System is the largest land and water system in the world dedicated to wildlife conservation. The nearly 10 percent decrease in H.R. 6091 would harm nearly 4,000 acres of wetlands; delay more than 250 actions needed to recover listed species; increase invasive plant infestation by nearly 400,000 acres; eliminate 45 law enforcement officers; and impact visitor services, leading to a decline in visitation that would result in a loss of \$16.9 million in economic activity, 268 jobs, and \$608,000 in tax revenue for local communities for each 1 percent decline in visitation.

Cooperative Landscape Conservation and Adaptive Science – FWS has undertaken a comprehensive initiative to work more effectively and efficiently across jurisdictional boundaries to address increasingly large-scale and

complex threats to natural resources at the landscape level, such as climate change, drought, and invasive species. H.R. 6091 cuts this initiative by 90 percent that would virtually end this effort and terminate 22 Landscape Conservation Cooperatives that provide needed science and technical capacity ranging across the U.S., including partnerships with all 50 states and with Canada, Mexico, and countries in the Pacific.



Office of Law Enforcement – Wildlife faces escalating criminal threats worldwide, including illicit trade, unlawful commercial exploitation, illegal destruction of habitat, and environmental hazards. The cut of more than 15 percent in H.R. 6091 would result in the elimination of nearly 22 percent of the elite special agent force, severely hindering numerous enforcement efforts such as finding and breaking up smuggling rings that traffic in wildlife products such as rhinoceros horn, sea turtle parts, and jaguar skins and working with states to prevent poaching of U.S. game species and other commercially significant U.S. resources. The decrease also would result in the elimination of 5 positions at the National Fish and Wildlife Forensics Laboratory, the only forensics laboratory in the world dedicated to solving wildlife crimes.

Migratory Birds – Migratory birds are integral to healthy natural systems as predators, prey, seed dispersers, and pollinators and are actively appreciated and enjoyed by millions of people across the country. The first *State of the Birds* report in 2009 documented broad declines in U.S. bird populations showing nearly all native Hawaiian birds plummeting to the verge of extinction, as well as 39 percent of ocean birds, half of coastal shorebirds, 30 percent of aridland birds, and 40 percent of grassland birds. Yet the nearly 16 percent cut for Migratory Bird Management would severely limit key programs such as crucial survey and monitoring, including research on golden eagles and seabirds to prevent harm from siting of wind turbines, and actions to conserve plunging grassland bird populations.

The bill also cuts in half the already meagerly funded Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Fund which is vital in work to conserve birds that move between the U.S. and Latin America and the Caribbean. Americans love these creatures that grace their backyards and communities; the budget will not be balanced by a 50 percent reduction in this relatively tiny \$3.8 million program.

International Conservation – Wildlife recognize no borders and the wealth of the U.S. in comparison to desperate situations around the globe means that modest conservation investments internationally can reap significant returns. H.R. 6091 cuts International Affairs by more than 15 percent and would harm efforts to train key stakeholders in Africa and Mexico, conserve imperiled amphibians, and prevent unsustainable trade in native U.S. species.

The bill makes even more significant cuts in the flagship Multinational Species Conservation Funds, reducing them by 50 percent which will severely hamper efforts to protect elephants, rhinoceros, tigers, great apes and marine turtles.

Environmental Contaminants – This program leads federal efforts in protecting wildlife and habitat from harmful pollutants such as pesticides, endocrine disruptors, heavy metals, oil and other industrial chemicals and in responding to spills of oil and other dangerous substances, including the devastating Deepwater Horizon disaster. The damaging 14.5 percent cut would further overstretch its already insufficient number of expert contaminant biologists and also likely result in a reduction of restoration funding leveraged from responsible parties.

Partnership Programs – The budgets of several key cooperative programs have also been slashed including:

- **The State and Tribal Wildlife Grants** program that was created by Congress in 2000 to assist states and tribes in voluntary efforts to protect more than 14,000 at-risk wildlife species from becoming endangered. The bill slashes this program by nearly 50 percent, a reduction that would impose significant cutbacks in habitat protection and restoration, invasive species management, research, and work with private landowners.
- **The North American Wetlands Conservation Fund** that supports protection and restoration of wetlands. H.R. 6091 decreases the program by more than 37 percent. More than half of the original wetlands in the U.S. have been lost already and this cut would

exacerbate declines of migratory birds and other fish and wildlife dependent on wetlands and drive up the costs of erosion control, water treatment, and flood protection that natural wetlands provide for free.

- **The Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program** through which the FWS assists landowners in restoring degraded habitat on their property. With two-thirds of America's land privately owned, landowners play an important role in maintaining diverse ecosystems and wildlife. The nearly 25 percent reduction in this voluntary program would result in a loss of more than \$58 million in non federal match and would stop restoration of 9,300 acres of wetlands, 57,000 acres of uplands, and 168 miles of riparian corridors.



Sage Grouse, C. Robert Smith/ Elk Meadow Images/National Geographic

Bureau of Land Management

Overall, the bill cuts the agency by about 5 percent, but there are some crucial increases and decreases affecting wildlife.

Sage Grouse and Resource Management Planning – In two of its very few bright spots, the bill provides increases requested by the President for sage grouse conservation efforts in the Wildlife and Fisheries Management account and for Resource Management Planning, more than 30 percent and 12 percent over FY 2012 respectively. Bureau of Land Management (BLM) lands encompass half of the remaining habitat for the sage grouse, an imperiled bird that has lost 3.1 percent of its population each year over a 42-year period. The agency has undertaken a comprehensive initiative to reverse the decline and avert the need to list iconic bird under the ESA and the modest requested increase is absolutely necessary for this effort. The increase in Resource Management Planning is needed

to respond to the land management planning challenges of the coming decades, including management in the face of broad landscape level threats and responsible development of energy resources.

Renewable Energy – Given the greatly expanded effort to develop renewable energy on BLM lands, it is absolutely crucial that the agency have the funding to ensure development occurs in a balanced fashion that sustains fish and wildlife populations and their habitat. Yet the nearly 15 percent cut for the Renewable Energy Program in the bill would make it difficult to implement the recently finalized solar energy program or complete review of over 100 pending applications for solar, wind, and geothermal projects before the BLM in a way that will avoid areas with potential natural resource conflicts, including wildlife conflicts, especially sage grouse, golden eagles, desert tortoise, or other sensitive species.

Challenge Cost Share – The bill zeroes out the Challenge Cost Share Program through which BLM works with partners to restore habitat, monitor fish and wildlife, maintain archeological sites, and repair trails. This cut will result in the loss of on average a two-to-one match that has been reported by the agency.

Forest Service

Although the Forest Service (FS) receives an overall increase of 1.8 percent there are damaging cuts to certain programs.

Land Management Planning – H.R. 6091 zeroes out the planning budget entirely, leaving the agency without the resources to develop the intelligent plans that will be needed to sustain our forests, wildlife, and water in a world that faces increasingly complex ecological problems. Accompanying report and legislative language states the Committee's displeasure with the new forest planning rule, allowing the agency to use prior rules for planning but then provides no funding to do so.

Research and Development – The bill cuts the Forest Service R&D program by nearly 24 percent which would severely limit the research that is needed to support science-based fish and wildlife management on National Forest Lands and beyond.

U.S. Geological Survey

Similar to the BLM and FS the bill singles out some programs for greater cuts while protecting others.

Ecosystems – As with Forest Service R&D, the Ecosystems Division provides the basic science necessary for conservation of fish, wildlife and habitat, yet H.R. 6091 slashes it by nearly 18 percent. The bill does fund the \$1 million increase requested by the administration for research on White Nose Syndrome that is devastating bat populations, but that funding will now come at the expense of other crucially needed scientific work.

Land and Water Conservation Fund

The Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) supports protection for lands in our national wildlife refuges, forests, parks and other federal and state public lands. H.R. 6091 would slash it by 80 percent, crippling the program. Every day, 6,000 acres of open space is lost in the U.S. to habitat fragmentation and destruction. Once these lands are lost, they can never be recovered.

ANTI-ENVIRONMENTAL RIDERS

H.R. 6091 includes 34 damaging anti-environmental riders. Below are some that would seriously harm wildlife and habitat. For the full list of riders and more comprehensive descriptions, please see:

www.defenders.org/FY13-Riders

Undermining Endangered Species Protections

Legislatively Delists Gray Wolves in Wyoming – Sec. 117 would require the Fish and Wildlife Service to issue a final rule removing gray wolves in Wyoming from protection under the ESA 60 days after enactment. The Wyoming state management plan would allow wolves to be killed by any means, anytime and anywhere, even on national forests and other federal lands, in almost 90 percent of the state. This provision would pre-empt science and process under the ESA instead of letting federal biologists do their job and would leave gray wolves in Wyoming at the mercy of the disastrous state management plan.

Avoiding Protections for Endangered Salamanders – Language in the Committee report would require the FWS to produce recommendations for voluntary conservation measures that could be used to prevent the listing of four Texas salamanders.

Riding Right Over Protections for Our Public Lands

Weakening National Forest Planning and Public Participation – One provision (Sec. 408) would allow the FS to disregard the new 2012 planning rule and use prior rules, throwing

forest planning into limbo and uncertainty and indefinitely stalling progress toward a forest restoration paradigm that supports forest and ecosystem health for our water and wildlife. Another provision (Sec. 437) would repeal the Appeals Reform Act, doing away with the law that allows for full public participation by providing for appeals and notice and comment related to FS projects.



Steelhead, North Umpqua River, Oregon

Facilitating More Logging on National Forests – A provision in Title III would enable logging on hundreds of thousands of post-burn acres that were burned by a fire during 2011-2012 without requirements to conduct meaningful environmental review. Another provision (Sec. 426) would extend for another year a failed forest management experiment in the Sierra Nevada that has generated conflict and litigation and diverted funding from newer science-based collaborative models.

Undercutting Sound Management of Rangelands – Several provisions would promote unsustainable grazing on public lands. One of these (Sec. 112) would require exhaustion of all administrative remedies before a citizen suit could be filed to challenge decisions concerning grazing on BLM lands. A second (Sec. 113) would exempt from compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) grazing permits that allow ranchers to move their sheep from one place to another. A third (Sec. 412) exempts NEPA compliance for grazing permits that are in arrears or expired allowing continuation of poorly managed and abusive grazing practices on over 200 million acres of federal rangelands. Finally, a fourth (Sec. 431) actually amends the Federal Land Policy and Management Act to double the maximum authorized term of federal grazing permits.

Tying the Hands of Federal Land Managers – This provision (Sec. 438) arbitrarily limits the ability of federal land managers to close lands to hunting, fishing, or recreational shooting for all future years even though such closures may be warranted to conserve fish and wildlife populations or to protect public safety.

¹The Economics Associated with Outdoor Recreation, Natural Resources Conservation and Historic Preservation in the United States
www.nfwf.org/Content/ContentFolders/NationalFishandWildlifeFoundation/HomePage/ConservationSpotlights/TheEconomicValueofOutdoorRecreation.pdf

²Ibid

Key Wildlife Funding in Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies Appropriations Bills

Program	FY12 Enacted ⁱ (in millions)	FY13 Request (in millions)	FY13 House Interior Bill (in millions)	% Change (FY13 House Bill from FY12)	% Change (FY13 House Bill from FY13 Request)
Department of the Interior					
US Fish & Wildlife Service					
Endangered Species	176.0	179.7	134	-23.9	-25.4
National Wildlife Refuges	485.7	494.8	437.4	-9.9	-11.6
Migratory Bird	51.5	51.1	43.3	-15.9	-15.3
Office of Law Enforcement	62.1	63.9	52.7	-15.1	-17.5
International Affairs	13.0	13.1	11	-15.4	-16.0
Cooperative Landscape Conservation & Adaptive Science	32.2	33.1	3	-90.7	-90.9
Partners for Fish & Wildlife	54.8	55.9	41.2	-24.8	-26.3
Environmental Contaminants	13.1	14.4	11.2	-14.5	-22.2
Conservation Planning Assistance	35.8	36.7	30.6	-14.5	-16.6
Coastal	14.9	14.2	12.7	-14.8	-10.6
Fisheries & Aquatic Resource Conservation	135.3	131.6	127.2	-6	-3.3
Total Resource Management (Operations) ⁱⁱ	1,226	1,247	1,040	-15.2	-16.6
Cooperative Endangered Species Fund	47.7	60.0	14.1	-70.4	-76.5
State & Tribal Wildlife Grants	61.3	61.3	30.7	-49.9	-49.9
Neotropical Migratory Bird Fund	3.8	3.8	1.9	-50	-50
Multinational Species Conservation Fund	9.5	10.0	4.7	-50.5	-53
North American Wetlands Conservation Fund	35.5	39.4	22.3	-37.2	-43.4
Total USFWS ⁱⁱ	1,476	1,548	1,159	-21.5	-25.1
US Geological Survey					
Climate Science Centers	25.5	26.2	24.7	-3.1	-5.7
Science Support for DOI Bureaus	2.4	9	2.4	0	-73.3
Ecosystems	161.3	177.9	132.5	-17.9	-25.5
Bureau of Land Management					
Wildlife and Fisheries Management	50.2	65.6	65.6	+30.7	0
Threatened and Endangered Species Management	21.6	21.8	21.8	+0.9	0
Renewable Energy	19.7	26.8	16.8	-14.7	-37.3
Resource Management Planning	38.1	42.7	42.7	+12.1	0
Challenge Cost Share	7.5	7.5	0	-100	-100
Department of the Interior Total ⁱⁱⁱ	10,301	10,437	10,357	+0.5	-0.8
Forest Service					
Research and Development	231.0	226	176	-23.8	-22.1
Land Management Planning ⁱⁱⁱ	39.9	—	0	-100	—
Inventory and Monitoring ⁱⁱⁱ	161.7	—	161.7	0	—
Wildlife and Fish Habitat Management ⁱⁱⁱ	140.0	—	142.7	+1.9	—
Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Fund	39.9	40	40	+0.2	0
Department of the Interior and US Forest Service					
Land & Water Conservation Fund ^{iv}	322.4	450	66	-79.5	-85.3
Overall Funding Level in FY12 Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies Appropriations Bills^v					
Total Funding in Appropriations Bill	29,175	29,667	28,000	-4	-5.6

ⁱ Totals reflect 0.16% across-the-board cut.

ⁱⁱ Only selected programs included above. Total reflects both listed and non-listed programs.

ⁱⁱⁱ The President's request proposes to move these into 2 consolidated accounts: Integrated Resource Restoration and Land Management Planning Assessment and Monitoring

^{iv} Includes both Department of the Interior and Forest Service LWCF funding.

^v Includes all funding for Department of the Interior, US Forest Service, Environmental Protection Agency, and other programs in the bill.