



Recovering America's Wildlife Act Endangered Species Recovery Fund: Expedited Species Recovery, Federal Project Implementation

Dedicated funding for states, territories, and tribes to implement locally led, on-the-ground conservation projects continues to be the backbone of this legislation, and a new, temporary fund has been added to expedite the recovery of endangered and threatened species and the implementation of infrastructure, public land, and other federal projects.

Title III: Endangered Species Recovery and Habitat Conservation Legacy Fund

This is a one-time investment totaling \$750 million, distributed over four years (\$187.5 million from FY23-FY26), that will support the following programs:

- **Endangered Species Recovery Grants:** \$300 million for the congressionally chartered National Fish and Wildlife Foundation to manage a new, competitive grants program aimed at expediting the recovery of threatened and endangered species. Funding will support proposals that reduce the growing backlog of recovery plans that are waiting to be finalized or implemented. One-fourth of ESA listed species are still awaiting a recovery plan, and many existing plans are outdated. Investing in these plans will recover endangered species more quickly, and create added certainty for private landowners, industry partners and other stakeholders.
- **Project Consultation Funding:** \$300 million to support added capacity at the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service that will allow them to meet the surge of infrastructure, public land restoration, and other projects in the works as a result of the bipartisan infrastructure law and passage of the Great American Outdoors Act (among others). The Service is responsible for ensuring projects do not jeopardize endangered and threatened species by consulting with the federal agencies in charge of implementing a project. This funding will help prevent a backlog in consultation that could slow important projects down.
- **Expanded Wildlife & Habitat Partnership Programs:** \$112.5 million for popular, voluntary partnership programs that benefit a wide range of wildlife and habitats, and provide financial support for private landowner conservation efforts on farms and forests. These programs include the Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program, the Coastal Program, the North American Wetlands Conservation Act, Migratory Bird Joint Ventures, and other programs.
- **Voluntary Conservation Agreements:** \$37.5 million will be provided to expand popular voluntary conservation agreements that help private landowners and others to implement and comply with the ESA, including [Habitat Conservation Plans](#), [Safe Harbor Agreements](#), and [Candidate Conservation Agreements with Assurances](#).

Limitations: None of this funding can be used to list a species, designate critical habitats under the Endangered Species Act, acquire federal land, reintroduce or recover non-essential experimental populations of endangered wildlife, or to recover any species outside the United States or its territories.

Ramp-up in state funding: *The Legacy Fund will not increase the overall cost of the bill because it is paired with a gradual ramp up in the states' funding.* This approach is a win-win since it allows for a temporary influx of federal funding to support important and needed ESA recovery work, while also giving state fish and wildlife agencies more time to build out their capacity to meet the 25% match requirement. Unused and unmatched funds will be made available for programs conserving waterfowl and other migratory birds. Funding for Tribal fish and wildlife agencies will not be ramped up and remains \$97.5 million per year. The states will be funded at \$850 million in FY23, \$1.1 billion in FY24, \$1.2 billion in FY25 and \$1.3 billion in FY26 and thereafter.