

Department of the Interior Departmental Manual

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Part 142: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Chapter 5: Assistant Director - Ecological Services

Originating Office: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

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5.1 Assistant Director - Ecological Services advises the Director of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) and provides national leadership for the conservation of species and the habitats on which they depend, including species protected by the Endangered Species Act (ESA), the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act, the Coastal Barrier Resources Protection Act, the Marine Mammal Protection Act, and the Clean Water Act. Through leadership in environmental contaminants; environmental reviews of Federal projects; listing and recovery of candidate, threatened, and endangered species; and management of decision support and mapping tools, the program works closely with our partners to meet our conservation challenges. Staff within the Ecological Services program at headquarters are responsible for: preparing justifications for the budget and allocation of the budget once received from Congress; developing national policies and guidance to facilitate implementation of the ESA; preparing and reviewing rulemakings and coordinating litigation related to the program; conducting and reviewing environmental reviews with other Federal agencies; providing outreach and building partnerships to advance the program's goals; and coordinating the Cooperative Endangered Species Conservation Fund and its expenditures. The Assistant Director supervises the following divisions:

A. Division of Conservation and Classification is responsible for:

- (1) Identifying domestic and foreign species that qualify as candidates for Federal listing under the ESA.
- (2) Processing petitions and taking listing actions that are warranted.
- (3) Listing and up-listing (i.e., reclassifying a species from threatened to endangered) species.
- (4) Providing guidance on policy implications associated with litigation related to the ESA, the National Environmental Policy Act, and other natural resource statutes.
- (5) Supporting the Department's Solicitors and the Department of Justice in litigation efforts.

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(6) Preparing responses to requests made under the Freedom of Information Act.

(7) Compiling and submitting the Service's annual Expenditures Report to Congress under the ESA.

B. Division of Environmental Review is responsible for implementing the Service's authorities to provide technical assistance to other Federal agencies to minimize the impacts of their operations on fish, wildlife, and plants and the habitats on which they depend. This work includes:

(1) Working closely with other Federal agencies to advance priorities for energy, transportation, ecosystem restoration, water supply, and other needs, while simultaneously protecting our trust resources.

(2) Providing advice to Federal agencies so they may assist in the conservation and recovery of candidate and listed species as they carry out their primary mission in a manner that is not likely to jeopardize listed species or adversely modify or destroy critical habitat.

(3) Providing assistance to guide the development of Habitat Conservation Plans with private landowners and other non-Federal entities that protect habitat for threatened and endangered species.

(4) Forging cooperative conservation efforts with other Federal, State, and tribal wildlife agencies, recognizing that the authorities, resources, and cooperation of all partners are required to achieve conservation objectives for impacted species.

C. Division of Budget and Technical Support supports the core functions of Ecological Services and works to build an integrated and collaborative network of information management and decision support tools for the Service. This work includes:

(1) Developing current and out-year budgets for the Ecological Services program nationwide, including budget formulation, justification, presentation, and execution.

(2) Serving as System Manager for the Environmental Conservation Online System (ECOS), through which the Service provides leadership, oversight, and management of more than 30 database modules that capture activities and accomplishments across the Service.

(3) Reviewing the Service's current policies and management practices to find new and better ways to get results on the ground.

(4) Maintaining and updating the Service's comprehensive inventory of wetlands and coastal barrier maps.

(5) Providing the services of the Analytical Control Facility for contaminant sampling and quality control.

D. Division of Restoration and Recovery provides national leadership and guidance in planning and implementing restoration and conservation actions on the ground to support imperiled species and their habitats. Staff provides assistance with:

- (1) Responding to oil spills and related issues.
- (2) Providing support on assessment and restoration activities as part of the Department's Natural Resource Damage Assessment and Restoration (NRDAR) program.
- (3) Developing regulatory action on species that qualify for delisting (i.e., removing a species from protection under the ESA) or down-listing (i.e., reclassifying a species from endangered to threatened).
- (4) Processing delisting and down-listing petitions.
- (5) Providing advice to Federal agencies so they may assist in the conservation and recovery of candidate and listed species.
- (6) Promoting program accomplishments and objectives through our web site, social media tools, and other products to share our news with the public and our partners.

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Assistant Director – Ecological Services

