



# THE WILDLIFE SOCIETY

## Policy Brief Series

### State and Tribal Wildlife Grants

Congress created the State and Tribal Wildlife Grants (STWG) program in 2000 to assist states and their partners with the conservation of nongame wildlife. STWG is the only federal program that directly supports states in preventing wildlife from becoming endangered. It is also the primary program supporting implementation of State Wildlife Action Plans (SWAPs), which detail on the ground conservation actions in each state working to keep common species common.

#### Methods

Congress appropriates funds for the State Wildlife Grant Program on an annual basis. Funds are apportioned to states, commonwealths, and U.S. territories based on a formula (Figure 1). Funds are administered by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS).

As a condition for receiving STWG funding, each state and territorial fish and wildlife agency developed a SWAP. These plans are approved by the FWS and are implemented using the STWG program. SWAPs are updated at least every ten years.

STWG funds must be used to address conservation needs such as research, surveys, species and habitat management identified within the SWAP. Funds may also be used to update, revise, or modify a SWAP.

States, the District of Columbia, and the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico must provide a minimum 25% match for planning-related activities such as mapping critical lands and habitats and a 50% match for all other types of eligible activities like implementation projects. Territories are exempt from these matching fund requirements.

#### Results

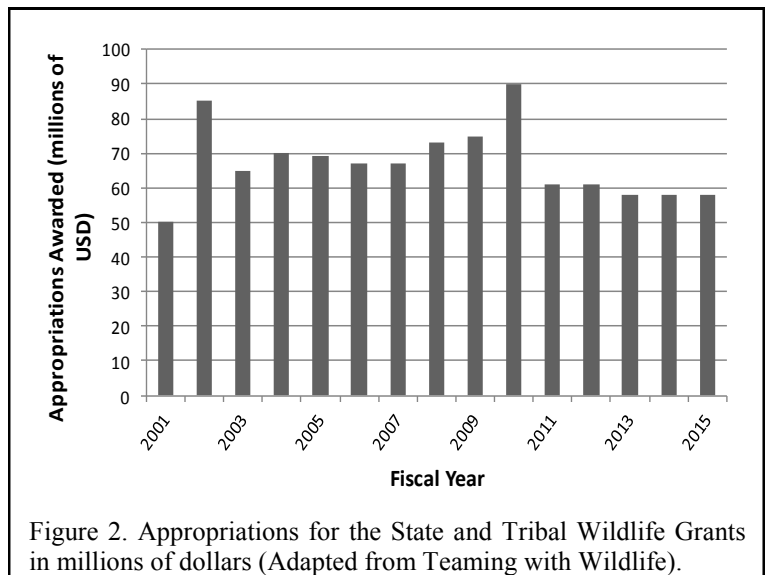
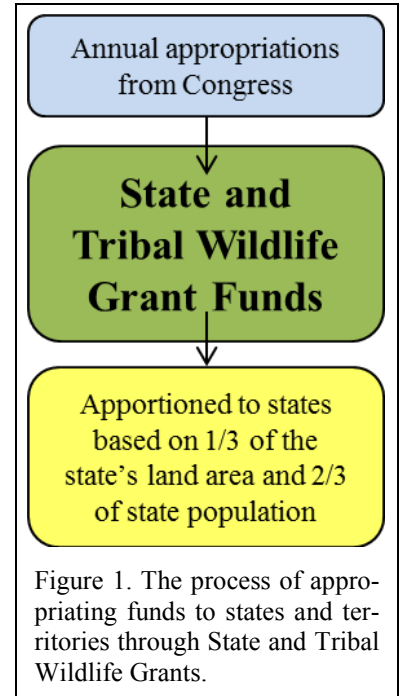
Over \$1 billion has been appropriated to STWG as of Fiscal Year (FY) 2015.<sup>1</sup> STWG aids in the conservation of more than 12,000 species of fish and wildlife that are at-risk. All 50 states and 5 territories have created SWAPs in response to STWG.

#### Discussion

STWG funds help wildlife from being federally listed as threatened or endangered. Appropriations for SWTG range from \$90 million in FY 2010 down to \$58 million in FY 2015 (Figure 2).<sup>1</sup> Reduced funding for STWG restricts state wildlife agencies' abilities to prevent further declines in at-risk species. Previous budget reductions and sequestration have had a serious and disproportionate impact on STWG. Other federal programs emphasize management of game wildlife, so STWG is vital for the protection of nongame wildlife.

#### Implications for Wildlife Professionals

STWG fosters a strong partnership between federal, state, and non-governmental agencies working toward conservation goals established in SWAPs, enabling wildlife professionals to implement on-the-ground activities conserving over 12,000 public-trust species.



# State Wildlife Grants Program: Features



Swift Fox (Credit: Tony Ifland, USFWS).

## Swift Fox Recovery<sup>2, 5</sup>

State and Tribal Wildlife Grant funds (STWG) aided the Swift fox's (*Vulpes velox*) removal from the federal endangered species candidate list. The success of the swift fox involved the cooperation between state, federal, tribal and private entities in six western states receiving STWG funds. The reintroduction of 40 swift foxes in the Fort Peck Indian Reservation from 2006 to 2009 involved the Montana Fish, Wildlife, and Parks, the World Wildlife Fund, and the Fort Peck Indian Reservation. The reservation now has a stable Swift fox population.

## Survey of Mountain Plovers in Nebraska<sup>2</sup>

STWG funds can be used to survey the range of a species. In Nebraska, biologists used funding from STWG to survey the Mountain plover (*Charadrius montanus*). Prior to the survey, the biologists knew of only two nesting pairs of the species in Nebraska. Throughout the survey hundreds more of the birds were discovered. The survey also increased the biologists' knowledge of habitats where the birds nest, indicating fallow farm land is commonly used. With that information, biologists were able to encourage farmers to till around the nests, increasing the survival rate of chicks. Nebraska now has a thriving Mountain plover population, which helped contribute to FWS decision to not list the Mountain Plover as endangered or threatened in 2011.



Mountain Plover (Credit: Seabamirum, Flickr).

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## Sources

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- 4 U. S. Fish & Wildlife Service. State Wildlife Grant Program – Overview. 2014. <<http://wsfrprograms.fws.gov/Subpages/GrantPrograms/SWG/SWG.htm>> Accessed 22 Aug 2014.
- 5 American Prairie Reserve. 2014. Swift Fox Reintroduction and Study. <<http://www.americanprairie.org/projectprogress/science-and-wildlife/swift-fox-reintroduction-and-study>> Accessed 12 Sept 2014.



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