

June 30, 2021

The Honorable Rosa L. DeLauro
Chair, Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives

The Honorable Kay Granger
Ranking Member, Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives

Dear Chair DeLauro and Ranking Member Granger,

Our organizations support the U.S. Geological Survey's Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Program and we ask that you allocate at least \$27 million to the program for fiscal year 2022 to provide for the much-needed expansion of the program with two new units in Michigan and Indiana.

The USGS Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Units (CRUs) are highly productive, cost-effective, and reputable sources of scientific information that further fish and wildlife management and conservation. Their work directly assists decision-makers in addressing the nation's greatest natural resource challenges, including climate change, disease, invasive species, and at-risk fish and wildlife.

Through a unique cooperative partnership of federal agencies, academic institutions, state fish and wildlife agencies, and non-governmental organizations (PL. 86-686), the CRU program provides actionable science and technical support for state and federal fish and wildlife managers. They uniquely address the applied science needs of management agencies while training diverse students to be the next generation of natural resource and conservation leaders. CRU graduates often go on to work directly for natural resource management agencies, further advancing the nation's conservation efforts.

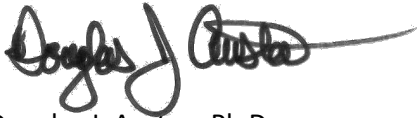
Currently, there are 40 CRUs across 38 states embedded in major research universities that bridge the gap between science and natural resource decisions. CRU scientists produce credible, applied science that meets the direct needs of cooperators and empowers the front lines of fish and wildlife conservation. Their research yields both very specific, short-term information and long-term state-of-the-art research on complex, longer-term questions to inform critical conservation work.

A CRU budget of at least \$27 million for FY2022 is \$2 million above last year's appropriation and provides for two important and highly needed new CRUs to be established at universities—Michigan State University and Purdue University. These two new units will address a major gap in the CRU program in the Great Lakes region and provide critical fish and wildlife science to advance regional conservation actions.

Furthermore, we support an additional \$5 million in each of the next 5 years for the CRU program to complete the Wildlife Migration Corridors Project for Big Game Species. This effort will leverage USGS science and collaboration capacity to comprehensively map migration corridors throughout the western states, aiding on-the-ground efforts to manage and conserve important species migration paths in the face of climate change, development, and other challenges.

We appreciated the support for the program in FY21 and we urge the Appropriations Committee to appropriate at least \$27 million for the Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Program in Fiscal Year 2022. Thank you for your consideration of our request.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Douglas J. Austen". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Douglas J. Austen, Ph.D.
American Fisheries Society

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Carol L. Chambers". The signature is cursive and elegant, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Carol Chambers, Ph.D.
The Wildlife Society

Cc: members of the U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Appropriations

AFS is the world's oldest and largest professional society of fishery and aquatic scientists and managers. The Society seeks to improve the conservation and sustainability of fishery resources and aquatic ecosystems by advancing fisheries and aquatic science and promoting the development of fisheries professionals. www.fisheries.org

The Wildlife Society and its network of affiliated chapters and sections represent professional wildlife biologists, managers, and educators dedicated to excellence in wildlife stewardship. The Society's mission is to inspire, empower, and enable wildlife professionals to sustain wildlife populations and habitat through science based management and conservation. www.wildlife.org