

National Cooperators' Coalition
Supporting the USGS Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit Program

Date: 22 April 2024

To: U.S. Senate Appropriations Committee
U.S. House Appropriations Committee

From: National Cooperators' Coalition
Paul Johansen, Chair

Re: FY25 Appropriations USGS Ecosystems Mission Area: Cooperative Research Units

Dear Appropriators:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input to your FY2025 Appropriations process. Our coalition is requesting at least **\$36 million be appropriated to the U.S. Geological Survey's Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit program.**

The National Cooperators' Coalition is an alliance of nonfederal cooperators, supporters, and beneficiaries of the USGS Cooperative Research Unit (CRU) program. Our members include state fish and wildlife agencies, universities, and other organizations dedicated to wildlife conservation and research.

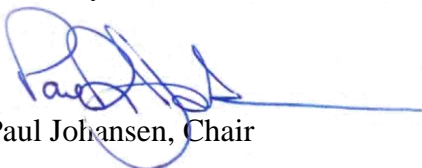
The CRU program plays a significant role in advancing scientific understanding and conservation efforts for fish and wildlife across the United States. Cooperative Research Units are dynamic hubs for collaborative research that cuts across disciplines, and play a central role in training the next generation of conservation scientists

The program's value is clear, as evidenced by its continuous growth since its inception in 1935. In FY 2023, CRUs generated \$48 million in external funds and \$22 million provided by universities. However, the lack of adequate federal funding continues to limit the capacity of CRUs to produce actionable science and establish new units where they've been requested.

The CRU program is supported by the USGS Ecosystems Mission Area. To empower the program to deliver on its full potential, we, the National Cooperators' Coalition, urge the appropriation of at least \$36 million. By investing in the CRU program, you are investing in the future of wildlife conservation in the United States.

We look forward to working with you and answering any questions you may have about this \$36 million request. Please reach out to ncc@wildlife.org if you have any questions.

Sincerely,



Paul Johansen, Chair

National Cooperators' Coalition

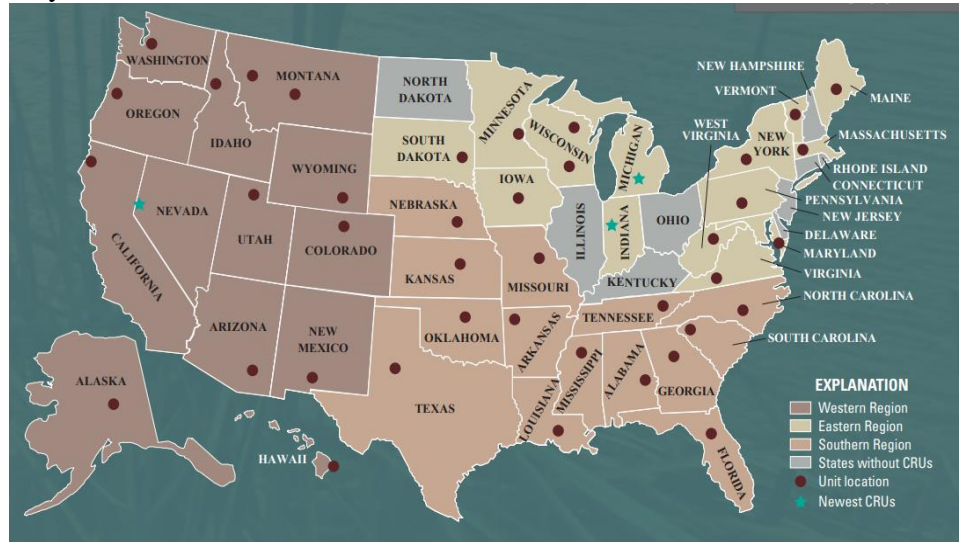
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USGS Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Units

Spanning **41 states** and strategically housed at **44 universities**, the **USGS Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Units (CRUs)** form a powerful network. These units function as collaborative hubs where researchers, students, and stakeholders from diverse backgrounds come together to tackle critical challenges facing fish and wildlife populations.

CRU research programs address a wide range of issues related to fish and wildlife conservation and management, and broader ecosystem health:

- Habitat loss and fragmentation
- Climate change impacts on fish and wildlife populations
- Sustainable management of fisheries and wildlife resources
- Invasive species
- Diseases affecting fish and wildlife
- Restoration of degraded ecosystems



Learn more about CRUs in the 2023 Annual Report: pubs.usgs.gov/publication/fs20243006

USGS map of all 50 States showing Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit (CRU) locations. Newest CRUs are indicated by a star: Nevada (Western Region) CRU, established in 2021; Michigan (Eastern Region) CRU, established in 2022; and Indiana (Eastern Region) CRU, established in 2023.

Quotes from new cooperators of the CRU program during the time of their establishment:

“We look forward to the tremendous opportunity that collaboration with the Indiana CRU will bring to our state and Purdue University,” [said](#) **Karen Plaut, executive vice president of research at Purdue University**. “It will have a direct impact on graduate education as well as research productivity and innovation.”

“For more than 30 years, the DNR has wanted to establish a USGS Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit at Michigan State University,” [said](#) then-**Michigan DNR Director Dan Eichinger**. “I’m excited that this goal has been achieved and look forward to scientists in the unit working with MSU faculty and DNR experts to help better inform our science-based management of Michigan’s natural resources.”

“Nevada’s creation of a Cooperative Research Unit Program is a monumental success for the scientific research and conservation efforts for the state’s wildlife and habitat,” [said](#) then-**Nevada Department of Wildlife Director Tony Wasley**. “This partnership brings the state’s top wildlife and research agencies together at the table and allows us to collaboratively address conservation and message our efforts consistently.”

