



ASSOCIATION of  
FISH & WILDLIFE  
AGENCIES



golden-winged warbler

# STATE WILDLIFE ACTION PLAN

## Blueprints for Conserving Our Nation's Fish, Wildlife, and Habitats

### WHAT is a State Wildlife Action Plan?

**State Wildlife Action Plans** are the blueprints for conserving the nation's fish, wildlife, biodiversity, and their habitats. Development and implementation of these plans is led by each state and territorial fish and wildlife agency in collaboration with local, state, and federal agencies, tribes, universities, private landowners, and fish and wildlife enthusiasts. The plans are required by Congress, approved by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and are updated at least every 10 years with the best available science.

Each State Wildlife Action Plan identifies the Species of Greatest Conservation Need, their essential habitats, key threats/stressors, priority conservation actions, and research and monitoring needs. The 2015 plans identified over 12,000 Species of Greatest Conservation Need, including fish, mammals, birds, amphibians, insects, reptiles and plants. The third generation of the plans will launch in 2025.



American pika

### WHY are State Wildlife Action Plans Needed?

Effective conservation requires a plan. The actions identified in State Wildlife Action Plans are needed to restore habitat and conserve thousands of species of fish and wildlife, including federal/state endangered and threatened species and others that will likely face listing in the future without intervention. Improving the status of Species of Greatest Conservation Need will reduce regulatory costs and conflicts, help sustain and grow the \$564 billion outdoor recreation economy, and safeguard our extraordinary fish and wildlife for current and future generations.



Arkansas darter, male in spawning coloration



American burying beetle

### WHO uses State Wildlife Action Plans?

Local, state, tribal, and federal governments use State Wildlife Action Plans to guide their conservation work and avoid impacts to Species of Greatest Conservation Need. Private conservation organizations and resource management agencies use the plans to guide voluntary conservation efforts on private lands through targeted education, outreach and technical assistance programs. The plans have also led to creative partnerships between industry, states, and territories to proactively conserve species and habitats through voluntary measures. Since conservation partners are involved in the development of State Wildlife Action Plans, they are invested in helping to put the plans into action.



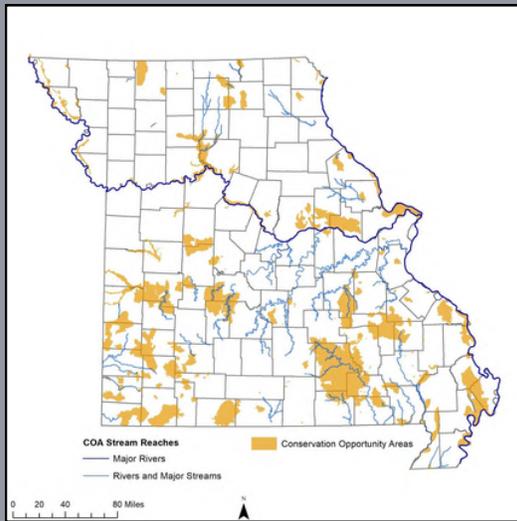
Showy lady's slippers

“Every American benefits when we have healthy and accessible fish and wildlife. We need to start down a new path where we invest proactively in conservation rather than reactively. Doing so will help us avoid contentious endangered species battles that inhibit business, slow the economy, and pass on the high cost of species recovery to the next generation.”

~ John Morris, CEO of Bass Pro Shops & David Freudenthal, former Governor of Wyoming

# HOW are State Wildlife Action Plans Funded?

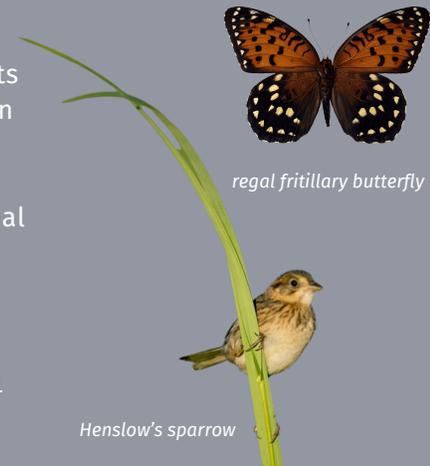
Since 2000, the states and territories have received an average of ~\$1 million each in annual federal funding through the State and Tribal Wildlife Grants program to develop and implement State Wildlife Action Plans. Although this funding has led to the recovery of or has helped preclude listing for dozens of species, current funding levels do not match the funding needed to cost-effectively conserve over 12,000 Species of Greatest Conservation Need. In 2016, the [Blue Ribbon Panel on Sustaining America's Diverse Fish and Wildlife Resources](#) recommended that \$1.3 billion be invested annually to fully implement State Wildlife Action Plans. Sustained and predictable funding, through legislation, is needed today to proactively conserve at-risk fish and wildlife and their habitats.



## MAPPING WHERE VOLUNTARY CONSERVATION ARE NEEDED

State Wildlife Action Plans include maps that identify priority landscapes where investments in voluntary and incentive-based conservation is needed to conserve Species of Greatest Conservation Need on public and private working lands. These maps are used at regional and national scales for range wide and full lifecycle conservation of species and their habitats.

Figure 1. [Missouri Department of Conservation Map of Conservation Opportunity Areas](#)



## ONLINE CONSERVATION STRATEGY

States, like Oregon, are working to improve accessibility and transparency of their State Wildlife Action Plans by using interactive websites or dashboards. This helps the public and conservation partners access the plans and align their conservation priorities with goals and performance measures included in State Wildlife Action Plans. This improves the effectiveness, efficiency, and accountability of conservation work targeting Species of Greatest Conservation Need.



Figure 2. [The Oregon Conservation Strategy \(State Wildlife Action Plan\) is web-based and searchable](#)



## BEGINNING WITH HABITAT

Many states have programs, like Maine's Beginning

with Habitat Program, that provides tools and technical assistance to municipalities, private landowners, and conservation partners to support on-the-ground conservation of high value habitats. This type of proactive conservation is good for wildlife, habitat, taxpayers, business, and communities and fuels shovel-ready, job-creating habitat projects.



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