

Biological Research

Subactivity	FY 2000 Estimate	Uncontrol. & Related Changes	Program Changes ¹	FY 2001 Budget Request	Change from FY 2000
Biological Research and Monitoring	113,232	+1,690	+8,508	123,430	+10,198
Biological Information Management and Delivery	10,484	+259	+10,500	21,243	+10,759
Cooperative Research Units	13,180	+228	+700	14,108	+928
Total Requirements \$000	136,896	+2,177	+19,708	158,781	+21,885

¹ See Program Change Section for details.

Activity Summary

Introduction

The USGS Biological Research Activity generates and distributes information needed in the conservation and management of the Nation's biological resources. This program serves as the Department of the Interior's (DOI) biological research arm and continues the strong traditions for management-oriented research developed within the Department's land management bureaus. Core biological research capability in 16 research centers and associated field stations and 39 Cooperative Research Units supports research on fish, wildlife, and habitats that is used by Federal and State Government and non-governmental organizations. A list of science centers appears at the end of the discussion of the information component. A list of cooperative research units appears in the discussion of that activity.

Information generated by the Biological Research program also contributes to achieving bureau goals for improved management of the Nation's water resources; availability of maps and map data; and improved decisionmaking regarding land and water use. These goals are supported by the efforts conducted in three subactivities: Research and Monitoring, Information Management and Delivery, and Cooperative Research Units.

Research and Monitoring — The USGS serves the needs of DOI bureaus by providing scientific information through research, inventory and monitoring investigations. Biological studies develop new methods and techniques to identify, observe, and manage fish and wildlife and their habitats; inventory populations of animals, plants and their habitats; and monitor changes in abundance, distribution, and health of biological resources through time and in direct relation to their causes. Scientists work to maintain the health, diversity, and ecological balances of biological resources while meeting public needs such as game harvests and the use of public lands and waters.

USGS biologists work toward these goals in collaboration with other scientists, customers, and partners. Biologists combine their expertise with that of the other USGS disciplines in interagency ecosystem initiatives from South Florida to the Pacific Northwest where scientists are working together to understand, evaluate, and provide options for restoring fish and wildlife habitats and better resource management decisions. In a collaborative process, USGS involves

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the users of scientific results by engaging them in the identification and prioritization of their information needs as research is planned. DOI bureaus and other customers and partners are involved in this process, and where appropriate, are involved in an adaptive process to find solutions and develop new methods by testing research results in the field.

Information Management and Delivery — The USGS strives to enhance the flow of scientific and technical information and the utility of that information among its partners. Through the development of a National Biological Information Infrastructure (NBII), this program strives to make information from current and previous research accessible to all users. The NBII is linked to the Internet, and will link government and private information sources nationwide to facilitate the rapid sharing of information among researchers and users. Further, the NBII will greatly expand the exposure and usefulness of biological information.

Cooperative Research Units — This cooperative program allows government and non-government entities with common interests and responsibilities for natural resource management to cooperatively address biological resources issues. Through this unique program, biologists from Federal and State Governments and academia are able to work as a team and focus their expertise and creativity on resolution of biological resources issues. Federal support of the Cooperative Research Units program is matched with State and university contributions of expertise, equipment, facilities, and project funding. Through university affiliations, Federal scientists train future natural resource professionals.

Federal Role

The USGS biologists work with others to provide the scientific understanding and technologies needed to support the sound management and conservation of our Nation's biological resources. The USGS works to meet the needs of all DOI bureaus for scientific and technological information concerning biological resources. In addition, other Federal agencies, States, and even private entities are looking to USGS as the premiere source of biological information. The USGS contains one of the Nation's largest collections of expert scientists and technicians in the field of biology. Many outside interests look to the USGS to produce the highest quality biological information available.

Customers and Partners

The USGS is creating a culture in which customers are considered close partners in our research. This focus on knowing and meeting partners' needs, establishing a goal for partner satisfaction and measuring our performance toward reaching that goal has improved the quality of our products and services. The partner Service Plan, revised and published annually, establishes a partner satisfaction goal against which performance is measured.

The biological resources program of the USGS established a goal to provide products to customers that would result in more than 80 percent of them rating their satisfaction with those products as satisfied or very satisfied. A customer survey of the users of the biological products in the 1998 GPRA report found that 96% ($\pm 2\%$) were satisfied (46%) or very satisfied (50%), with 350 out of 772 customers responding. Satisfaction with Long-term Data Collections and Management Efforts was 96% ($\pm 3\%$), satisfaction with Systematic Analyses And Investigations Delivered To Customers 97% ($\pm 3\%$), and satisfaction with Decision Support Systems/Predictive

Models was 90% ($\pm 14\%$). All respondents were satisfied with USGS courtesy, 97% ($\pm 2\%$) were satisfied with the product's currentness, 96% ($\pm 2\%$) with the relevance, 94% ($\pm 3\%$) with the completeness, and 93% ($\pm 3\%$) with the timeliness of delivery. In addition to measuring customer satisfaction with different aspects of our products, the survey provided very helpful comments and suggestions from our customers. For example, customers praised the new procedures for electronic reporting of bird banding data, which reduced the reporting burden on banders and facilitated their record keeping, but some found the instructions to be incomprehensible. The feedback verifies successes and identifies features that should be improved.