

Summaries of Selected Projects

Competitive State Wildlife Grant Program, Fiscal Year 2024

Total Amount Available: \$7,420,360

Competitive State Wildlife Grant Program

Region 1

Guam Department of Agriculture – Division of Aquatic and Wildlife Resources

Title: Increasing detection probability, resiliency, and expanding occupancy of Guam’s endangered Slevin’s skink through habitat enhancement on Cocos Island, Guam

Recipient(s): Guam

Project Summary: Slevin’s skink is federally listed as endangered and identified in Guam’s Wildlife Action Plan as a Species of Greatest Conservation Need. This project implements recovery actions for the skink and includes an evaluation of the effectiveness of management methods and habitat improvement. On Cocos Island, the partners will create habitat structures designed to increase the total area occupied by the skink. Data collected through this project will be shared with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and other conservation partners and used in ongoing joint recovery efforts.

Federal Funds: \$494,277; **Non-Federal Match:** \$0 (*exempt*)

Hawai’i Department of Land and Natural Resources

Title: Establishing a second population of the endangered ‘ākohekohe: a conservation translocation from Maui to Hawai’i Island.

Recipient(s): Hawai’i

Project Summary: Current research indicates the federally endangered and endemic Hawai’ian honeycreeper ‘ākohekohe could become extinct as early as 2026 without swift conservation action to arrest its decline. Hawai’i Department of Land and Natural Resources and the University of Hawai’i Pacific Cooperative Studies Unit will conduct essential studies to improve and refine effectiveness of management methods. Another priority in Hawai’i’s Wildlife Action Plan is to protect key habitat for the honeycreeper. The partners will establish a second population of ‘ākohekohe on Hawai’i Island as a safeguard against potentially damaging weather events and disease threats that are intensifying due to climate change.

Federal Funds: \$499,951; **Non-Federal Match:** \$166,651

Hawai'i Department of Land and Natural Resources

Title: Restoring 'alalā (*Corvus hawaiiensis*) to the wild on Hawai'i Island

Recipient(s): Hawai'i

Project Summary: The 'alalā or Hawai'ian crow has been protected in Hawai'i since 1931 and was federally listed as endangered in 1967. The species no longer exists in the wild, while approximately 110 individuals remain within conservation breeding centers in Hawai'i. The 'Alalā Working Group, a partnership of State, Federal, academic, and non-profit conservation leaders, is implementing a critical reintroduction program to reduce the probability of the crow's extinction. This award to Hawai'i Department of Land and Natural Resources will be augmented with additional non-federal resources. Project objectives include construction of 'alalā release structures, habitat protection and restoration, and monitoring of released 'alalā.

Federal Funds: \$741,300; **Non-Federal Match:** \$247,100

Hawai'i Department of Land and Natural Resources

Title: Last Call for Kāhuli

Recipient(s): Hawai'i

Project Summary: Hawai'ian endemic land snails, known as kāhuli, have experienced devastating levels of extinction due largely to introduced predators and climate change. To address these and other threats, the Hawai'i Department of Land and Natural Resources - Snail Extinction Prevention Program (SEPP) is building its capacity to propagate snails in captivity and constructing predator-proof fence units. In addition to maintaining propagation of 40 species from five islands that are already in captivity, SEPP will conduct two years of surveys for rare and endangered snails across remote areas of O'ahu. Captive rearing efforts would immediately be implemented for any targeted species that are discovered.

Federal Funds: \$250,000; **Non-Federal Match:** \$83,335

Hawai'i Department of Land and Natural Resources

Title: Improving restoration outcomes for Hawai'ian picture-wing *Drosophila*

Recipient(s): Hawai'i

Project Summary: The Hawai'i Department of Land and Natural Resources will work with the Universities of Hawai'i and Nevada-Las Vegas to develop innovative new management practices for picture-wing *Drosophila* flies. Rapid declines of federally listed, rare, and even relatively common *Drosophila* flies have been observed across Hawai'i. In addition to conventional conservation strategies such as surveys, threat assessment, and hostplant restoration, the partners will experiment with use of probiotic supplements in insectary-reared flies. These supplements have the potential to improve reproduction and increase tolerance to higher temperatures. Investigating the effectiveness of this approach is expected to help the partners successfully establish *Drosophila* populations in the wild.

Federal Funds: \$305,023; **Non-Federal Match:** \$101,663

Hawai'i Department of Land and Natural Resources

Title: Collection of 'anianiau from the wild to develop husbandry techniques and build an insurance population

Recipient(s): Hawai'i

Project Summary: The 'anianiau is a species of Hawai'ian honeycreeper that is endemic to the Island of Kaua'i and at risk of extinction due primarily to the expansion of avian malaria spread by invasive mosquitoes. The 2018 population of around 9,000 birds has likely diminished to around 2,500 today, according to estimates from the Hawai'i Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR) and its partners. There is an immediate need to establish a captive population of 'anianiau, conduct key research, and improve management protocols, toward the goal of releasing captive-reared birds in the wild. The project will be implemented by a broad partnership of zoos, universities, and non-profit conservation organizations along with DLNR.

Federal Funds: \$743,341; **Non-Federal Match:** \$286,978

Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies

Title: Expanding the Motus network in the Pacific and intermountain western United States to facilitate management of Species of Greatest Conservation Need

Recipient(s): California, Idaho, Oregon, Washington

Project Summary: Many bird, bat, and insect Species of Greatest Conservation identified in Wildlife Action Plans are at risk of severe population declines or extinction without conservation action, but interventions are limited by a lack of information. The Motus Wildlife Tracking System is a network of automated radio telemetry receiving stations that enables researchers to track animal movements. Cooperating fish and wildlife agencies, WAFWA, and American Bird Conservancy will install 30 new stations and retrofit 50 existing stations with new receivers. This will enable the partners to better understand the migratory and movement pathways for four key species: monarch butterfly, hoary bat, silver-haired bat, and western purple martin.

Federal Funds: \$841,885 (*partial award; final budget TBD*); **Non-Federal Match:** \$336,084

Region 3

Iowa Department of Natural Resources

Title: Bat Conservation in Iowa and Illinois, 2025 through 2027

Recipient(s): Iowa, Illinois

Project Summary: The Iowa and Illinois Departments of Natural Resources are working together to expand acoustic monitoring of at-risk bats, improve habitat on public and private lands, and evaluate the effectiveness of habitat management methods. The project targets bat species identified as Species of Greatest Conservation Need in the two States' Wildlife Action Plans, including the federally listed Indiana bat, northern long-eared bat, and other bat species that are proposed or under review for Federal listing. Among other objectives, the partners will increase knowledge of bat biology and improve current stewardship practices in the two States.

Federal Funds: \$500,000; **Non-Federal Match:** \$168,430

Recipients	Federal Funds	Non-Federal Match	Grant or Subaward
Iowa (Lead)	\$250,000	\$85,096	Grant
Illinois	\$250,000	\$83,334	Grant

Michigan Department of Natural Resources

Title: Assessment and conservation of Blanding’s and spotted turtles in Michigan and Ohio, Phase 3

Recipient(s): Michigan, Ohio

Project Summary: The Michigan and Ohio Departments of Natural Resources are continuing their successful partnership to conserve at-risk turtles at a large landscape scale. This project will collect key information on the status, distribution, and ecology of Blanding’s and spotted turtle populations in Michigan and Ohio to inform and prioritize management efforts. Both species have experienced range-wide declines and are currently in review for Federal listing under the Endangered Species Act. Data and other key information generated through this project will be shared with other stakeholders and partners and contribute to range-wide recovery efforts for these species.

Federal Funds: \$499,952; **Non-Federal Match:** \$183,637

Recipients	Federal Funds	Non-Federal Match	Grant or Subaward
Michigan (Lead)	\$263,568	\$95,125	Grant
Ohio	\$236,385	\$88,512	Grant

Minnesota Department of Natural Resources

Title: Habitat enhancement for Species of Greatest Conservation Need in conservation areas of Minnesota and Wisconsin

Recipient(s): Minnesota, Wisconsin

Project Summary: The Minnesota and Wisconsin Departments of Natural Resources will improve and expand high priority habitats for at-risk reptile and pollinator Species of Greatest Conservation Need across the two states. Targeted species include rusty patched bumble bee which is federally endangered and monarch butterfly which is a candidate for Federal listing. A wide variety of conservation actions will be implemented within priority conservation areas, including prescribed burning, brush removal, invasive plant control, and pollinator plantings. Wisconsin will also provide technical assistance to private landowners to help manage and improve natural communities and habitats for these and other declining species identified in the agencies’ Wildlife Action Plans.

Federal Funds: \$500,000; **Non-Federal Match:** \$166,668

Attachment 1. Summaries of FY 2024 Selected Projects

Recipients	Federal Funds	Non-Federal Match	Grant or Subaward
Minnesota	\$250,000	\$83,334	Grant
Wisconsin	\$250,000	\$83,334	Grant

Region 4

North Carolina Department of Natural Resources

Title: An integrative conservation assessment of SGCN crayfishes in North Carolina, South Carolina, and Georgia to fill critical needs for conservation planning

Recipient(s): North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia

Project Summary: The three agencies and their partners will evaluate the taxonomic and conservation status of crayfish Species of Greatest Conservation Need in the Coastal Plain, including several listed as state threatened or endangered. They will assess threats through fieldwork and surveys, with an emphasis on identifying potential pathways for invasive introductions. In addition, the cooperators will develop a data portal that will allow agency staff and partners to query and visualize spatial genetic structure coincident with occurrence data. This will help guide management and conservation planning for these declining species.

Federal Funds: \$748,618; **Non-Federal Match:** \$271,523

Recipients	Federal Funds	Non-Federal Match	Grant or Subaward
North Carolina (Lead)	\$269,645	\$89,988	Grant
South Carolina	\$280,859	\$93,620	Grant
Georgia	\$198,114	\$87,915	Grant

South Carolina Department of Natural Resources

Title: Characterizing the suitability of salt marsh habitat for spawning horseshoe crabs (*Limulus polyphemus*) and foraging shorebirds including the rufa red knot (*Calidris canutus rufa*)

Recipient(s): South Carolina, Delaware

Project Summary: South Carolina Department of Natural Resources and Delaware Natural Resources and Environmental Control will investigate spawning of American horseshoe crab in marshy areas. Previous research has shown that horseshoe crabs spawn regularly in salt marsh habitat. However, more information is needed to understand if marsh spawning has impacts on the migratory and nesting success of shorebirds such as the federally listed rufa red knot, which feeds on the crab’s eggs. Project objectives include: identifying salt marsh areas where the crabs are spawning, quantifying environmental conditions in marshes where crab eggs are found, and quantifying whether migratory shorebirds preferentially use marsh areas where the crabs spawn.

Federal Funds: \$499,786; **Non-Federal Match:** \$191,848

Recipients	Federal Funds	Non-Federal Match	Grant or Subaward
South Carolina (Lead)	\$362,536	\$ 146,098	Grant
Delaware	\$137,250	\$45,750	Grant

Region 6

Nebraska Game and Parks Commission

Title: Breeding and migration ecology of at-risk birds and bats within restored woodlands of the Missouri River Corridor

Recipient(s): Nebraska, Iowa

Project Summary: The Motus Wildlife Tracking System is a network of automated radio telemetry receiving stations that enables researchers to track animal movements. The Nebraska Game and Parks Commission and the Iowa Department of Natural Resources will improve understanding of wildlife movements along the Missouri River corridor by expanding the Motus network in both States. Tracking movements of imperiled wood thrush, northern long-eared bats, little brown bats, and tricolored bats will help the agencies identify critical stopover areas and understand the species' migratory behaviors and migratory connectivity.

Federal Funds: \$500,000; **Non-Federal Match:** \$166,704

Recipients	Federal Funds	Non-Federal Match	Grant or Subaward
Nebraska (Lead)	\$250,000	\$83,337	Grant
Iowa	\$250,000	\$83,367	Grant

Wildlife Action Plan Enhancement Subprogram

Region 1

Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands –Division of Fish and Wildlife

Title: Assessment of climate change vulnerability for Species of Greatest Conservation Need in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands

Recipient(s): Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI)

Project Summary: Climate adaptation analyses will strategically strengthen the third iteration of the CNMI Wildlife Action Plan, which is expected to be finalized in October 2025. The division will produce climate change vulnerability assessments and ranks for 110 Species of Greatest Conservation Need, strengthen the climate change resilience framework of the Plan, and provide information for use by other entities in the Micronesian region to help support coordinated climate adaptation efforts.

Federal Funds: \$147,727; **Non-Federal Match:** \$0 (*exempt*)

Region 3

Minnesota Department of Natural Resources

Title: Enhancing digital access to Minnesota's Wildlife Action Plan with a dashboard and spatial data viewer

Attachment 1. Summaries of FY 2024 Selected Projects

Recipient(s): Minnesota

Project Summary: Funding will support an online Minnesota Wildlife Action Plan dashboard to provide interactive digital access to databases that house information about Species of Greatest Conservation Need, habitats, threats, and conservation actions. A dynamic spatial data viewer will provide mapping of Plan information including ranges of species, habitats, and Minnesota's Wildlife Action Network and Conservation Focus Areas. These Plan upgrades will make it more accessible and increase usage of the Plan by a wider array of conservation partners and the public.

Federal Funds: \$148,500; **Non-Federal Match:** \$49,500