



BULLETIN

from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE MARKS 60th ANNIVERSARY OF FEDERAL AID IN WILDLIFE RESTORATION PROGRAM

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service marked the 60th anniversary of the Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration program at a reception in Washington, DC, with Acting Director John Rogers presenting a symbolic \$3.2 billion check representing the total amount of money that has been distributed to state wildlife agencies under the program.

Thirty-seven states have received more than \$50 million and five states more than \$100 million each for wildlife conservation and recreation projects since the Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration Act, commonly called Pittman-Robertson, was enacted in 1937. The act, passed by Congress with the strong support of the Nation's hunting community and major firearms and ammunition companies, designated a Federal excise tax on firearms and ammunition to help pay for state wildlife conservation projects. A similar tax on archery equipment was passed by Congress and enacted in 1972.

"Pittman-Robertson has arguably been the most successful wildlife conservation program in history," Rogers said as he presented the check to Duane Shroufe, director of the Arizona Game and Fish Department and president of the International Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies.

"At the time it was passed, wildlife in America was in deep decline because of loss of habitat and the long Dust Bowl drought of the 1930s," Rogers noted. "Since then, the program's grants have been largely responsible for the recovery of white-tailed deer, pronghorn antelope, wood ducks, wild turkeys, and many other species. The Pittman-Robertson program truly has been a model for partnership between the Federal government and the states for conservation of wildlife."

In 1997 alone, states will share more than \$165 million distributed through the program. The amount each state receives is determined by a formula that considers land area and the number of hunting license holders in each state. Part of the total is set aside for hunter education programs and distributed according to the relative population of each state.

Since the program's inception, Texas has received the largest amount (\$152.1 million), followed by Alaska (\$135.2 million), Pennsylvania (\$131.3 million), California (\$125.7 million), and Michigan (\$123.6 million).

The funds are derived from an 11-percent excise tax on sporting arms and ammunition, a 10-percent tax on pistols and revolvers, and an 11-percent tax on certain archery equipment. One-half of

the tax on handguns and archery equipment is for state hunter education programs.

Projects include acquisition and improvement of wildlife habitat, introduction of wildlife into suitable habitat, research on wildlife problems, surveys and inventories of wildlife, development of wildlife-related recreational facilities, and hunter education programs, including construction and operation of public shooting ranges. The Pittman-Robertson program pays for up to 75 percent of the cost of the projects while states contribute at least 25 percent.

Based on the Pittman-Robertson model, Congress passed the Federal Aid in Sport Fish Restoration Act in 1950, now known as Dingell-Johnson, that applies an excise tax on fishing tackle, electric trolling motors, and sonar fish finders. These funds support state acquisition and improvement of sport fish habitat; fish stocking; research into fishery resource problems; surveys and inventories of sport fish populations; and development of boat ramps, fishing piers, and other recreational facilities.

Attached is a chart showing the amount each state has received in the past 60 years in Pittman-Robertson grants.

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