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### § 2901. Congressional findings and declaration of purpose

#### (a) Findings

The Congress finds and declares the following:

(1) Fish and wildlife are of ecological, educational, esthetic, cultural, recreational, economic, and scientific value to the Nation.

(2) The improved conservation and management of fish and wildlife, particularly nongame fish and wildlife, will assist in restoring and maintaining fish and wildlife and in assuring a productive and more esthetically pleasing environment for all citizens.

(3) Many citizens, particularly those residing in urban areas, have insufficient opportunity to participate in recreational and other programs designed to foster human interaction with fish and wildlife and thereby are unable to have a greater appreciation and awareness of the environment.

(4) Historically, fish and wildlife conservation programs have been focused on the more recreationally and commercially important species within any particular ecosystem. As a consequence such programs have been largely financed by hunting and fishing license revenues or excise taxes on certain hunting and fishing equipment. These traditional financing mechanisms are neither adequate nor fully appropriate to meet the conservation needs of nongame fish and wildlife.

(5) Each State should be encouraged to develop, revise, and implement, in consultation with appropriate Federal, State, and local and regional agencies, a plan for the conservation of fish and wildlife, particularly those species which are indigenous to the State.

#### (b) Purpose

It is the purpose of this chapter—

(1) to provide financial and technical assistance to the States for the development, revision, and implementation of conservation plans and programs for nongame fish and wildlife; and

(2) to encourage all Federal departments and agencies to utilize their statutory and administrative authority, to the maximum extent practicable and consistent with each agency's statutory responsibilities, to conserve and to promote conservation of nongame fish and wildlife and their habitats, in furtherance of the provisions of this chapter.

(Pub. L. 96-366, §2, Sept. 29, 1980, 94 Stat. 1322.)

#### SHORT TITLE

Pub. L. 96-366, §1, Sept. 29, 1980, 94 Stat. 1322, provided: "That this Act [enacting this chapter] may be cited as the 'Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act of 1980'."

### § 2902. Definitions

As used in this chapter—

(1) The term "approved conservation plan" means the conservation plan of a State approved by the Secretary pursuant to section 2904(a) of this title.

(2) The term "conservation plan" means a plan developed by a State for the conservation of fish and wildlife which meets the requirements set forth in section 2903 of this title.

(3) The terms "conserve", "conserving", and "conservation" mean to use, and the use of, such methods and procedures which are necessary to ensure, to the maximum extent practicable, the well being and enhancement of fish and wildlife and their habitats for the ecological, educational, esthetic, cultural, recreational, and scientific enrichment of the public. Such methods and procedures may include, but are not limited to, any activity associated with scientific resources management, such as research, census, law enforcement, habitat acquisition, maintenance, development, information, education, population manipulation, propagation, technical assistance to private landowners, live trapping, and transplantation.

(4) The term "designated State agency" means the commission, department, division, or other agency of a State which has primary legal authority for the conservation of fish and wildlife. If any State has placed such authority in more than one agency, such term means each such agency acting with respect to its assigned responsibilities but such agencies, for purposes of this chapter, shall submit a single conservation plan.

(5) The term "fish and wildlife" means wild vertebrate animals that are in an unconfined state, including, but not limited to, nongame fish and wildlife.

(6) The term "nongame fish and wildlife" means wild vertebrate animals that are in an unconfined state and that—

(A) are not ordinarily taken for sport, fur, or food, except that if under applicable State law, any of such animals may be taken for sport, fur, or food in some, but not all, areas of the State, any of such animals within any area of the State in which such taking is not permitted may be deemed to be nongame fish and wildlife;

(B) are not listed as endangered species or threatened species under the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (16 U.S.C. 1531-1543); and

(C) are not marine mammals within the meaning of section 1362(5)<sup>1</sup> of this title.

Such term does not include any domesticated species that has reverted to a feral existence.

(7) The term "Secretary" means the Secretary of the Interior.

(8) The term "State" means any of the several States, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, American Samoa, the Virgin Islands, Guam, the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

(Pub. L. 96-366, §3, Sept. 29, 1980, 94 Stat. 1323.)

<sup>1</sup> See References in Text note below.

## REFERENCES IN TEXT

The Endangered Species Act of 1973, referred to in par. (6)(B), is Pub. L. 93-205, Dec. 28, 1973, 87 Stat. 884, which is classified generally to chapter 35 (§1531 et seq.) of this title. For complete classification of this Act to the Code, see Short Title note set out under section 1531 of this title and Tables.

Section 1362(5) of this title, referred to in par. (6)(C), was redesignated section 1362(6), by Pub. L. 102-582, title IV, §401(a), Nov. 2, 1992, 106 Stat. 4909.

## TERMINATION OF TRUST TERRITORY OF THE PACIFIC ISLANDS

For termination of Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands, see note set out preceding section 1681 of Title 48, Territories and Insular Possessions.

**§ 2903. Conservation plans**

The conservation plan for any State must—

(1) provide for the vesting in the designated State agency of the overall responsibility for the development and revision of the conservation plan;

(2) provide for an inventory of the nongame fish and wildlife, and such other fish and wildlife as the designated State agency deems appropriate, that are within the State and are valued for ecological, educational, esthetic, cultural, recreational, economic, or scientific benefits by the public;

(3) with respect to those species identified under paragraph (2) (hereinafter in this section referred to as “plan species”), provide for—

(A) the determination of the size, range, and distribution of their populations, and

(B) the identification of the extent, condition, and location of their significant habitats;

(4) identify the significant problems which may adversely affect the plan species and their significant habitats;

(5) determine those actions which should be taken to conserve the plan species and their significant habitats;

(6) establish priorities for implementing the conservation actions determined under paragraph (5);

(7) provide for the monitoring, on a regular basis, of the plan species and the effectiveness of the conservation actions determined under paragraph (5);

(8) provide for plan review and revision, if appropriate, at intervals of not more than 3 years;

(9) ensure that the public be given opportunity to make its views known and considered during the development, revision, and implementation of the plan; and

(10) provide that the designated State agency consult, as appropriate, with Federal agencies, and other State agencies during the development, revision, and implementation of the plan, in order to minimize duplication of efforts and to ensure that the best information is available to all such agencies.

(Pub. L. 96-366, §4, Sept. 29, 1980, 94 Stat. 1323.)

**§ 2904. Approval of conservation plans and certain nongame fish and wildlife conservation actions****(a) Approval by Secretary of plans**

(1) Any State may apply to the Secretary for approval of a conservation plan.

(2) Applications for the approval of conservation plans shall be made and reviewed by the Secretary in such manner as the Secretary shall by regulation prescribe.

(3) As soon as practicable, but not later than 180 days, after the date on which a State submits (or resubmits in the case of prior disapproval) an application for the approval of a conservation plan the Secretary shall—

(A) approve the conservation plan, and designate it as an approved conservation plan, if he determines that the plan—

(i) meets the requirements set forth in section 2903 of this title, and

(ii) is substantial in character and design; or

(B) disapprove the conservation plan if he determines that—

(i) the plan does not meet the requirements set forth in section 2903 of this title, or

(ii) to implement any part of the plan on the basis of the specifications, determinations, identifications, or priorities therein would threaten the natural stability and continued viability of any of the plan species concerned.

If the Secretary disapproves a plan, he shall give the State concerned a written statement of the reasons for disapproval and provide the State opportunity for consultation with respect to deficiencies in the plan and the modifications required for approval.

**(b) Effect of approval of plans**

If the Secretary approves the conservation plan of any State under subsection (a)—

(1) that portion of such plan that pertains to wildlife conservation shall be deemed to be an approved plan for purposes of section 6(a)(1) of the Act of September 2, 1937 [16 U.S.C. 669e(a)(1)], commonly referred to as the Pittman-Robertson Wildlife Restoration Act [16 U.S.C. 669 et seq.]; and

(2) that portion of such plan that pertains to fish conservation shall be deemed to be an approved plan for the purposes of section 6(a)(1) of the Act of August 9, 1950 [16 U.S.C. 777e(a)(1)] commonly referred to as the Dingell-Johnson Sport Fish Restoration Act [16 U.S.C. 777 et seq.].

**(c) Conservation actions**

If the Secretary approves the conservation plan of any State under subsection (a), those conservation actions set forth in the plan which pertain to nongame fish and wildlife shall be deemed to be eligible as nongame fish and wildlife projects for which reimbursement is available under section 2905 of this title.

**(d) Nongame conservation actions in the absence of an approved plan**

In the absence of an approved conservation plan, and on a showing of need by the State, the