

WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

2019-21 FISH & WILDLIFE REPORT



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February 2022

State of Wisconsin
DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES
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February 15, 2022

Edward Blazel
Assembly Chief Clerk
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Michael Queensland
Senate Chief Clerk
B20 South East, State Capitol
Madison, Wisconsin 53707

Subject: 2019-21 Fish & Wildlife Report

In accordance with s. 29.035, Wis. Stats., this report identifies the Department's use of fishing, hunting and trapping license fees and other revenues that have been deposited into the Fish & Wildlife Account for the biennium ending June 30, 2021.

Please contact Paul Neumann at (608) 266-0818 or at paul.neumann@wisconsin.gov if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'P. Cole'.

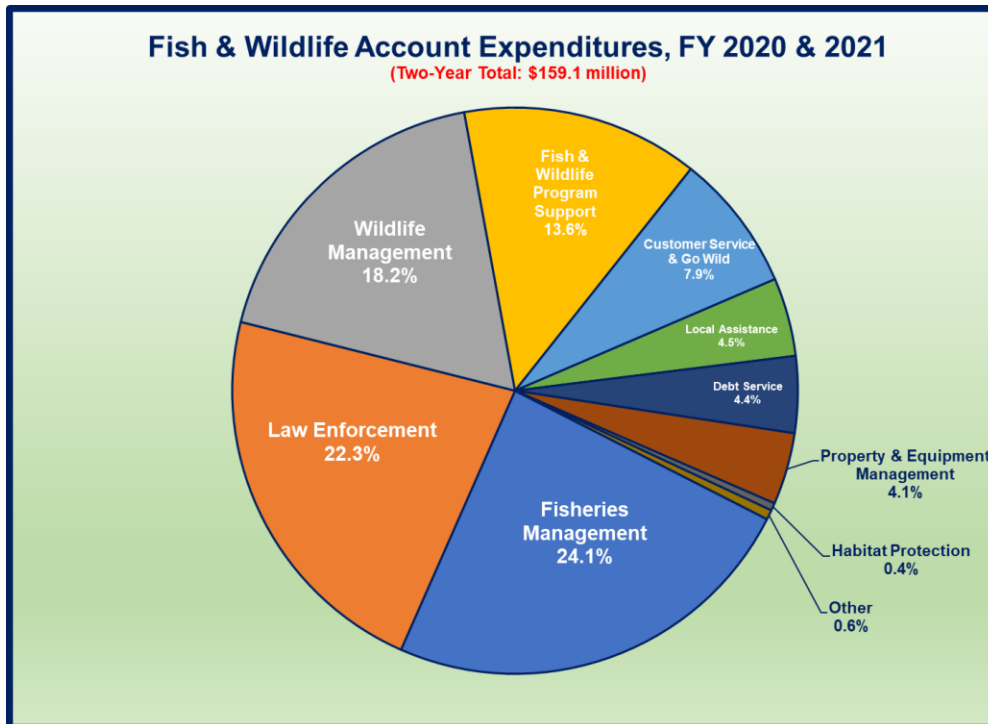
For Preston D. Cole
Secretary

cc: Ryan Hutter, DOA
Eric Hepler, LFB
Keith Warnke
Casey Krueger
Kari Lee-Zimmermann
Sean Kennedy
Steven Little
Tim Gary
Paul Neumann

Report Summary

The Fish & Wildlife Account, one of ten accounts that comprise the Conservation Fund, is the state's depository for hunting and fishing license fees and other revenues. It supports the DNR's fish and wildlife management and law enforcement programs and approximately 550 positions agencywide.

This report specifically summarizes the Department's use of Fish & Wildlife Account revenues across 10 major categories for the biennium ending June 30, 2021. It excludes expenditure information for other funding sources including federal grants, general purpose revenue (GPR), bonding, and gifts and grants. As the graph and table illustrate below, nearly two-thirds of all spending from the Account comes from the three core programs of Fisheries Management, Wildlife Management and Law Enforcement.



| FISH & WILDLIFE ACCOUNT EXPENSES, BY CATEGORY | | |
|--|---------------------------------------|----------------|
| Expense Category | FY 2020 & FY 2021 Expenses | % Share |
| Fisheries Management | 38,362,899 | 24.1% |
| Law Enforcement | 35,479,560 | 22.3% |
| Wildlife Management | 28,984,339 | 18.2% |
| Fish & Wildlife Program Support | 21,573,516 | 13.6% |
| Customer Service & Go Wild | 12,537,380 | 7.9% |
| Local Assistance | 7,123,555 | 4.5% |
| Debt Service | 6,965,370 | 4.4% |
| Property & Equipment Management | 6,531,437 | 4.1% |
| Habitat Protection | 690,717 | 0.4% |
| Other | 878,192 | 0.6% |
| Grand Total | \$ 159,126,964 | 100.0% |

ACCOMPLISHMENTS FOR FY 2020 & FY 2021

Fisheries Management

- Launched a study to better understand **panfish population trends** and their responses to angling and predator populations in Wisconsin lakes.
- **Stocked over 5.3 million fish in Wisconsin's waterways in FY20**, including one million fish in inland streams and 2.8 million cold-water fish in the Great Lakes. In addition, inland lakes were stocked with approximately 1.4 million cool-water fish, which are sometimes referred to as warm-water fish. Cool/warm-water fish stocks larger than fry, such as fingerling, yearling, and adult, included approximately one million walleye, 160,000 northern pike, 61,900 muskellunge, 72,300 largemouth bass, and 50,000 lake sturgeon.
- **Stocked over 6.4 million fish in Wisconsin's waterways in FY21**, including one million fish in inland streams and 3.2 million cold-water fish in the Great Lakes. In addition, inland lakes were stocked with approximately 2.2 million cool-water fish, which are sometimes referred to as warm-water fish. Cool/warm-water fish stocks larger than fry, such as fingerling, yearling, and adult, included approximately two million walleye, 59,600 northern pike, 8,600 muskellunge, and 111,000 largemouth bass.
- Completed the **statewide Sturgeon Management Plan** in 2020 that was approved by the Natural Resources Board in 2021. The plan maintains, protects, restores, and promotes sturgeon populations and their habitats in Wisconsin for the benefit of the resource and all stakeholders.
- Engaged stakeholders in FY21 to develop an updated **statewide Walleye Management Plan**. This plan is scheduled to be completed during FY23. The final plan will set goals, objectives, strategies, and actions to sustain and enhance walleye populations and habitat throughout Wisconsin.
- Completed **inland trout habitat improvement projects** on 34 streams for 20.7 miles in FY20, and 59 streams for 48.5 miles in FY21. Two spring pond habitat projects totaling 1.27 acres were completed during FY21. Projects involved installation of instream habitat structures, bank stabilization, floodplain connectivity, channel restoration, riparian vegetation management, spring pond habitat improvement, and replacement of road culverts causing fish passage blockage and habitat impairment. Beaver management on trout streams also continued with 326 streams on contract with the USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service.
- Monitored the status of **classified trout streams**. During FY20 and FY21, 45 new classified trout streams were added, 26 existing trout streams received classification upgrades, and nine trout streams were declassified.
- Sampled over 1,300 lake, river, and stream sites in FY20 and FY21 to **assess fish population, habitat health, and angler harvest**. This number is lower than the 1,700 surveyed during the previous biennium but reflects an enormous effort on the part of all staff to safely adapt protocols and sampling schedules to shifting requirements, precautions, and mandates during a global pandemic. Wisconsin is now in its second decade of standardized monitoring of fish populations and habitat in its lakes, rivers, and streams. The upgraded and standardized monitoring system, along with a state-of-the-art database management system that was updated and migrated to state servers this year, has provided Wisconsin's fisheries biologists and administrators the ability to examine important statewide and local trends in fish population dynamics and harvest, providing necessary insight for **effective regulation development and long-term planning**.

Wildlife Management

- In FY20 and FY21, **statewide CWD surveillance** efforts were focused on annual areas of interest, disease assessment, disease detection, and hunter request testing for adult deer anywhere in the state. CWD surveillance was conducted within the Southern Farmland Zone, designated CWD surveillance areas, and a statewide sweep to include the second year of increased sampling in 19 counties in west-central Wisconsin and the first year of increased sampling in 18 counties in northern Wisconsin. In FY21 the sweep began in 17 counties in Northeast Wisconsin and also saw the implementation of the option for hunters to electronically submit CWD sample data through Go Wild.
- Continued CWD **Adopt-a-Kiosk** and **Adopt-a-Dumpster** (AAD) programs, and FY20 was the first year that a cost-share option was available for AAD.
- In 2020, with the cooperation of participating counties, the department provided **wildlife damage abatement assistance** to 964 agriculture producers who experienced damages to commercial agricultural crops caused by wild deer, elk, bear, geese, and/or turkey.
- In 2020, in cooperation with USDA-Wildlife Services, the **Wolf Conflict Program** responded to 148 wolf complaints, verifying wolves involved in 98 of these reports. Compensation was paid for verified livestock losses, missing calves, hunting dogs and pet dogs.
- In FY2019 and FY2020, 100 **ruffed grouse** were trapped annually, examined, and translocated to Missouri as part of a **species restoration program**. Wildlife Management provided health assessments, disease testing, and handling assistance to the Missouri Department of Conservation for a ruffed grouse translocation effort. The combined efforts of the exam and travel plans resulted in zero mortalities of birds during transit and successful drumming counts in areas where the ruffed grouse were released.
- Monitored over 100 elk within the newly established **Black River elk herd**, including annual calf collaring and winter trapping for collar replacement. This herd continues to grow at about 15-20% per year since initial introduction in 2015-2016.
- Produced and stocked 131,100 **pheasants** (FY19 and FY20 combined) from the **Poynette State Game Farm**. Production efforts were reduced in 2020 due to Covid-19 pandemic.
- **Deer Management Assistance Program (DMAP)**
 - In FY20 Wildlife Management had 109 new enrollments, 86 re-enrollments, staff conducted 201 site visits and prescribed management recommendations for 64,127 acres.
 - In FY21 Wildlife Management had 141 new enrollments, 124 re-enrollments, staff conducted 304 site visits and prescribed management recommendations for 96,000 acres.
- Constructed a new facilities at **Crex Meadows** and **Navarino Wildlife Area** that will provide a place for engaging the community and will facilitate the experiential learning of future generations of natural resource professionals.
- Completed **disabled hunter access project** at **Woodboro Wildlife Area**. Barrier rocks on several hunter walking trails were adjusted to allow entry by all-terrain wheelchairs and an ADA accessible hunting blind was constructed on a wildlife opening. In Wildlife Areas statewide there are approximately 50 ADA hunting blinds and 13 wheelchair accessible wildlife observation blinds.

APPENDIX I—EXPENSE CATEGORY DEFINITIONS

Fisheries Management

The Fisheries Management program protects, maintains, and develops Wisconsin's fisheries and aquatic resources. It manages fisheries in 15,000 lakes, 84,500 miles of streams and rivers, two Great Lakes, and a portion of the Mississippi River. It serves approximately one million resident and nearly 300,000 non-resident adult anglers.

Law Enforcement

Law Enforcement provides law enforcement, public safety, environmental compliance, resource protection and recreational safety to the people and visitors of Wisconsin. This effort is accomplished through a three-pronged approach of enforcement, education and community involvement with the goal of voluntary compliance and fair and equal treatment.

Wildlife Management

Wildlife Management works to protect and manage Wisconsin wildlife populations and their habitats, and to promote wildlife enjoyment and appreciation for the benefit of current and future generations. In total, wildlife staff manage around 664,000 acres of land (made up of wildlife, state natural areas and many state fishery areas). Their charge is to protect, conserve, manage, and regulate the use of Wisconsin's wildlife and its habitats for people to hunt, trap, or watch wildlife on public land.

Fish & Wildlife Program Support

This expense category is comprised of several programs that provide administrative support to fisheries, wildlife and law enforcement activities. *The Department is prohibited from expending more than 16% of funding from the fish and wildlife account in any fiscal year for these administrative purposes.*

Finance

Finance administers and manages the Department's accounting, operating budget, purchasing needs, financial and grant reporting, controllership functions, etc.

Facilities & Lands

Facilities & Lands provides an array of professional and technical internal services, including real estate, infrastructure engineering and construction, facilities management, fleet management, safety and risk management, long- and short-range property planning, and policy development that guide DNR real asset operations.

Technology Services

Technology Services provides information technology (IT) consulting, administration, and support for DNR infrastructure (e.g., servers, databases, networks), end user devices (e.g., computers, cell phones, software), shared system development platforms (e.g., GIS), IT project and portfolio management, and related IT services.

Human Resources

Human Resources provides services which include recruitment and selection, compensation, payroll and benefits, training and development, and compliance with state and federal labor laws.

Secretary's Office & Division Leadership

The Secretary's Office & Division Leadership implement policies established by the Governor, Legislature, and Natural Resources Board, and is responsible for providing policy direction and supervision for all Department activities and overseeing staff in the Madison office, regional offices, customer service centers and work sites throughout the state.

Legal Services

Legal Services provides legal support and representation in development, implementation, review, and enforcement of Department programs. Its responsibilities include providing legal advice on the Department's authority for daily operations, drafting or reviewing proposed legislation and administrative rules, training of Department staff, serving as counsel at administrative hearings, determining Department compliance with applicable state, local and federal statutes and regulations, and resolving legal problems on a case-by-case basis.

Management & Budget

Management & Budget guides the agency's biennial budget development, provides revenue estimates for current and future fiscal years, coordinates the fiscal estimate process, manages the Pittman-Robertson and Sport Fish Restoration grants awarded by the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, and responds to both external and internal requests for budget-related information.

Community Financial Assistance

Community Financial Assistance (CFA) administers grant and loan programs to develop and support projects that protect public health, natural resources, the environment and outdoor recreational opportunities.

Environmental Analysis & Sustainability

Environmental Analysis and Sustainability facilitates cross-agency coordination on important project and policy proposals, leads social science research for internal programs, provides laboratory services and certification, and assures proactive DNR participation and clear communications with business, internal and government customers.

Office of Communications

The Office of Communications oversees agency communication efforts and consults with management and programs to direct the department's communications, public affairs management, marketing and outreach initiatives. It also serves as a focal point for department media requests and contacts statewide.

Rent

Includes rent expenses for administrative buildings, including the central office headquarters in downtown Madison.

Customer Service & Go Wild

This category is comprised of the Customer & Outreach Services program, which manages license sales and general information service delivery at DNR Service Centers, online sales through the *Go Wild* system and statewide DNR call center operations. The program is responsible for the development and implementation of information systems that are used to issue hunting and fishing licenses, and business outreach services for contracted DNR sales agents.

Local Assistance

This category includes funds distributed to local units of government and other entities for the following:

- Aids to counties and tribes for wildlife or fish management projects (e.g., game food seeding, prescribed burning, lake and stream improvements, etc.)
- Payments in lieu of taxes to jurisdictions to offset the loss of property tax revenue related to Department land purchases and land owned by any federal agency.
- Payments to assist landowners with excessive levels of crop damage from deer, geese, turkeys, bear, elk, and cougar, and to assist urban area municipalities with nuisance populations of deer and/or geese.
- Payments for the administration of the deer donation program and for the associated venison processing costs.
- Aids to maintain and improve the breeding habitat for migratory waterfowl.

Debt Service

This category includes principal and interest costs to pay off bonds issued to fund the acquisition, construction or improvement of administrative facilities, fish hatcheries, and wildlife areas.

Property & Equipment Management

This category includes property management services, prescribed burning on Department lands, equipment maintenance and replacement, and the construction, improvement, and maintenance of facilities.

Habitat Protection

This category is comprised of the Natural Heritage Conservation (NHC) program, which works in collaboration with partners and stakeholders to: identify, protect, and manage native plant and animal species and natural communities; to enhance and restore populations and habitats; and to promote knowledge, appreciation, and stewardship of Wisconsin's native species and ecosystems.

Other

This category includes hunter and trapper education and safety programs, aquatic invasive species research and control efforts funded from voluntary contributions, and other miscellaneous expenses.

APPENDIX II—DETAILED SUMMARY OF FISH & WILDLIFE ACCOUNT EXPENDITURES

| Expenditure Category | Ch. 20 Appropriation | Appropriation Title | FY 2020 Expenditures | FY 2021 Expenditures | FY 2020 & 2021 Expenditures |
|--|-------------------------|---|-------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Fisheries Management | 20.370(1)(kr) | Commercial Fish Protection & Great Lakes Resource Surcharge | 0 | 25,000 | 25,000 |
| | 20.370(1)(ku) | Great Lakes trout and salmon | 1,922,405 | 1,235,742 | 3,158,147 |
| | 20.370(1)(kv) | Trout habitat improvement | 1,445,849 | 1,690,163 | 3,136,012 |
| | 20.370(1)(kw) | Sturgeon Stock and Habitat | 122,738 | 241,145 | 363,883 |
| | 20.370(1)(mu) | General program operations--state funds | 15,919,194 | 15,760,663 | 31,679,857 |
| Fisheries Management Total | | | 19,410,185 | 18,952,713 | 38,362,899 |
| Law Enforcement | 20.370 (3)(cr) | Law Enforcement--radios, conservation fund | 2,189,722 | 580,189 | 2,769,911 |
| | 20.370(3)(mu) | General program operations--state funds | 15,998,480 | 16,711,169 | 32,709,649 |
| Law Enforcement Total | | | 18,188,202 | 17,291,358 | 35,479,560 |
| Wildlife Management | 20.370(1)(hq) | Elk hunting fees | 47,221 | 102,728 | 149,950 |
| | 20.370(1)(hr) | Pheasant restoration | 196,283 | 167,440 | 363,723 |
| | 20.370(1)(ht) | Wild turkey restoration | 353,135 | 1,044,297 | 1,397,432 |
| | 20.370(1)(hu) | Wetlands habitat improvement | 262,572 | 334,012 | 596,584 |
| | 20.370(1)(hw) | Pheasant stocking and propagation | 330,853 | 624,050 | 954,903 |
| | 20.370(1)(hx) | Bonus Deer Permit Fees; CWD | 210,782 | 810,818 | 1,021,600 |
| | 20.370(1)(lr) | Beaver control; fish and wildlife account | 36,200 | 633 | 36,833 |
| | 20.370(1)(ls) | Control of wild animals | 290,200 | 290,200 | 580,400 |
| | 20.370(1)(mu) | General program operations--state funds | 12,005,492 | 11,877,423 | 23,882,914 |
| Wildlife Management Total | | | 13,732,739 | 15,251,600 | 28,984,339 |
| Fish & Wildlife Program Support | 20.370(1)(mu) | General program operations--state funds | 799,327 | 856,385 | 1,655,712 |
| | 20.370(8)(mu) | General program operations--state funds | 9,406,003 | 8,832,589 | 18,238,592 |
| | 20.370(9)(mu) | General program operations - state funds | 812,039 | 867,173 | 1,679,212 |
| Fish & Wildlife Program Support Total | | | 11,017,369 | 10,556,147 | 21,573,516 |
| Customer Service & Go Wild | 20.370(9)(hu) | Handling and other fees | 977,816 | 1,562,500 | 2,540,316 |
| | 20.370(9)(hv) | Fee amounts for statewide automated issuing system | 2,420,211 | 2,130,169 | 4,550,380 |
| | 20.370(9)(mu) | General program operations - state funds | 2,587,202 | 2,859,483 | 5,446,685 |
| Customer Service & Go Wild Total | | | 5,985,228 | 6,552,152 | 12,537,380 |

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| Expenditure Category | Ch. 20 Appropriation | Appropriation Title | FY 2020 Expenditures | FY 2021 Expenditures | FY 2020 & 2021 Expenditures |
|--|-------------------------|--|-------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Local Assistance | 20.370(5)(aq) | Resource aids - Canadian agencies migratory waterfowl aids | 167,029 | 175,443 | 342,472 |
| | 20.370(5)(ar) | Resource aids - county conservation aids | 152,448 | 130,926 | 283,375 |
| | 20.370(5)(au) | Resource aids - Ducks Unlimited, Inc payments | 31,150 | 0 | 31,150 |
| | 20.370(5)(cz) | Resource aids -- interpretive center | 7,714 | 7,714 | 15,429 |
| | 20.370(5)(dq) | Aids in lieu of taxes | 301,462 | 303,012 | 604,475 |
| | 20.370(5)(fq) | Wildlife damage claims and abatement | 2,483,855 | 2,660,117 | 5,143,972 |
| | 20.370(5)(fr) | Wildlife abatement control grants | 18,274 | 21,077 | 39,352 |
| | 20.370(5)(fs) | Venison Processing | 112,431 | 146,796 | 259,227 |
| | 20.370(5)(fv) | Wolf depredation program | 0 | 27,802 | 27,802 |
| | 20.370(5)(fw) | Resource aids - Natural Resources Foundation of Wisconsin payments | 0 | 376,302 | 376,302 |
| Local Assistance Total | | | 3,274,365 | 3,849,189 | 7,123,555 |
| Debt Service | 20.370(7)(aq) | Resource acquisition and development - principal repayment and interest | 77 | 0 | 77 |
| | 20.370(7)(at) | Recreation development-principal repayment and interest | 2,624,198 | 2,805,949 | 5,430,147 |
| | 20.370(7)(eq) | Administrative facilities - principal repayment and interest | 806,541 | 728,605 | 1,535,146 |
| Debt Service Total | | | 3,430,816 | 3,534,553 | 6,965,370 |
| Property & Equipment Management | 20.370(1)(jr) | Rental property and equipment--maintenance and replacement | 248,602 | 288,807 | 537,409 |
| | 20.370(1)(mu) | General program operations--state funds | 1,767,153 | 2,307,460 | 4,074,613 |
| | 20.370(2)(mv) | General program operations -- state funds; forestry (prescribed burning) | 363,162 | 663,704 | 1,026,866 |
| | 20.370(7)(fs) | Resource acquisition and development - state funds | 214,228 | 171,292 | 385,520 |
| | 20.370(7)(hq) | Facilities acquisition, development and maintenance -- conservation fund | 311,694 | 116,506 | 428,199 |
| | 20.370(7)(jr) | Rental property and equipment - maintenance and replacement | 55,963 | 22,867 | 78,830 |
| Property & Equipment Management Total | | | 2,960,801 | 3,570,636 | 6,531,437 |

APPENDIX II—DETAILED SUMMARY OF FISH & WILDLIFE ACCOUNT EXPENDITURES

| Expenditure Category | Ch. 20 Appropriation | Appropriation Title | FY 2020 Expenditures | FY 2021 Expenditures | FY 2020 & 2021 Expenditures |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------|---|-------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Habitat Protection | 20.370(1)(mu) | General program operations--state funds | 386,769 | 303,948 | 690,717 |
| Habitat Protection Total | | | 386,769 | 303,948 | 690,717 |
| Other | 20.855 (1)(bm) | Service fees for cancelled checks | 3,133 | 4,098 | 7,231 |
| | 20.370 (1)(er) | Parks & forests--campground reservation fees | 224 | 525 | 748 |
| | 20.370(1)(kq) | Taxes and assessments -- conservation fund | 21,074 | 16,071 | 37,145 |
| | 20.370(1)(lq) | Trapper education program | 48,400 | 48,400 | 96,800 |
| | 20.370(3)(at) | Education and safety programs | 350,983 | 218,056 | 569,039 |
| | 20.370(4)(ks) | Aquatic Invasive Species Control; Voluntary Contributions | 57,174 | 110,054 | 167,229 |
| Other Total | | | 480,988 | 397,204 | 878,192 |
| Grand Total | | | \$78,867,463 | \$80,259,501 | \$159,126,964 |