



CENTER FOR BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY

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The Listing And Critical Habitat Designation Crisis Is A Funding Problem, Not A Prioritization Problem.

Triaging Protection For Species Already Known To Be Endangered Is Not A Solution. Increasing Funding For Listing/Critical Habitat To The Same Proportional Level As Other Endangered Species Programs is the Only Rational Solution.

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) Endangered Species Act (ESA) funding increased from \$41.1 million to \$262 million (637%) between 1992-2002 (see Figure 1). Every ESA program increased at least 335%, except listing/critical habitat designation, which increased only 122% (see Figure 2). Adjusted for inflation, the listing/critical habitat budget actually decreased from \$7.4 million to \$5.1 million between 1992-2001 (see Figure 3).¹ It is the only ESA program to have decreased in real dollar value.

In 1992 the listing budget comprised 18% of the USFWS ESA budget. By 2002 it comprised just 3% (see Figure 4).

The singling out of the listing/critical habitat program for fiscal starvation is not the fault of Congress: on average, Congress provided 82% of the listing/critical habitat funds requested by the Secretary of Interior between 1992-2002. The failure is primarily the fault of the Secretary of Interior for not requesting sufficient funds. The Secretary dramatically increased requests for other ESA programs between 1992-2002 and consequently received dramatic funding increases. The listing/critical habitat program is the only program for which the Secretary did not request significant increases.

The Secretary of Interior requested \$8.5 million for the FY 2002 listing/critical habitat program, while noting that this would only provide funds to address 5% of the known backlog. For FY 2003, the Secretary requested only \$9.0 million. Given that the federal candidate list has grown since the FY 2002 funding request, and that it includes only a portion species known to be imperiled, the current funding level will require 30-50 years to address the backlog of listings and critical habitat designations. The U.S. Department of Interior Inspector General reached a similar conclusion in 1990.

Before asking the USFWS to develop a listing priority system based on a vastly inadequate funding plan, the Secretary of Interior should request sufficient funds to at least minimally staff the listing program. If the listing program were to have increased in proportion to the entire ESA budget since 1992, it would be \$47 million. This would allow the USFWS to address the current backlog in 6-10 years.

¹ Though the consumer price index for 2002 has not yet been determined, the \$9.0 million allocated for listing/critical habitat designation in FY 2002 is less than the 1992 figure when adjusted for inflation.

Figure 1. The USFWS Listing/Critical Budget Has Not Increased In Proportion To The Total ESA Budget.

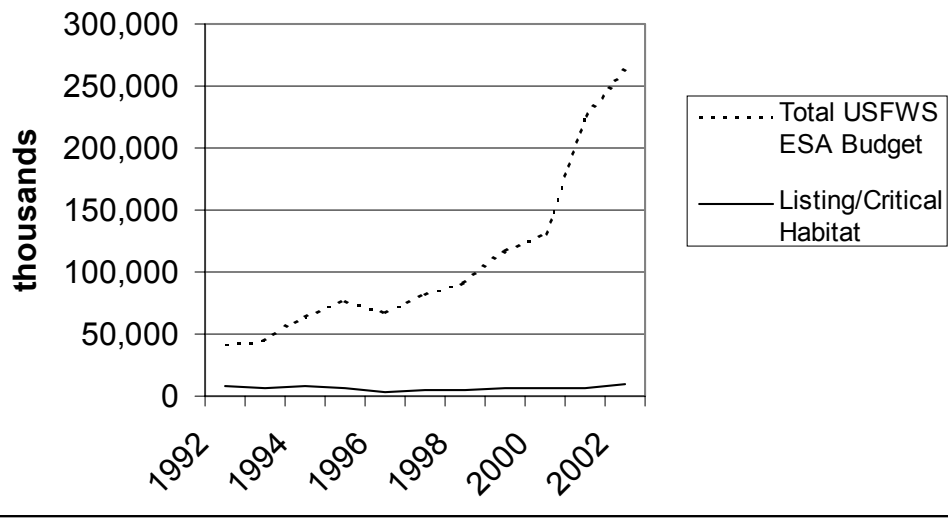


Figure 2. Listing/Critical Habitat is the Only USFWS ESA Program Not to Have Significantly Increased Since 1992

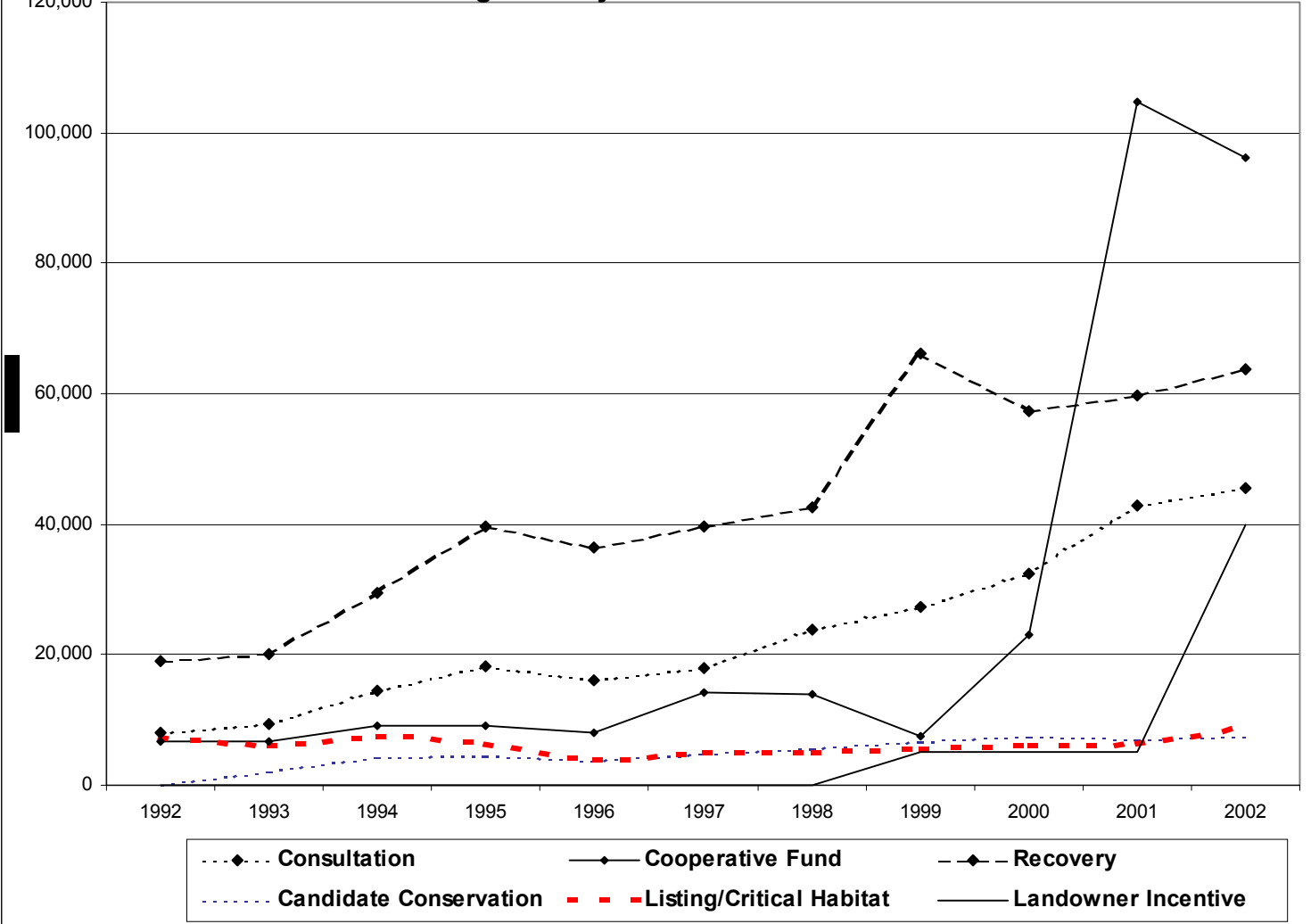


Figure 3. The Listing/Critical Habitat Budget Has Declined in Real Dollars Since 1992.

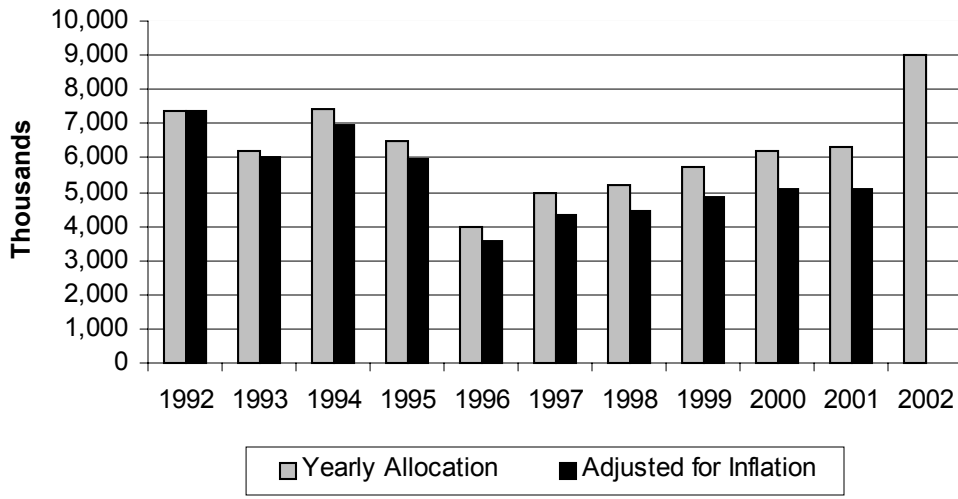


Figure 4. Listing/Critical Habitat Has Declined as Percentage of the USFWS ESA Budget

