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International Species Conservation Funds

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International species conservation is addressed by several funds, including those under the Multinational Species Conservation Fund (MSCF) and the Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Fund (NMBCF). This report provides a brief overview of MSCF and NMBCF and their funding and legislative status.

Multinational Species Conservation Fund

The Multinational Species Conservation Fund, which currently benefits tigers, the six species of rhinoceroses, Asian and African elephants, marine turtles, and great apes (gorillas, chimpanzees, bonobos, orangutans, and the various species of gibbons), has generated a tremendous amount of constituent interest. The fund supports conservation efforts benefitting these species, often in conjunction with efforts under the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES), to which the United States is a party.¹

MSCF provides funding in the form of technical and cost-sharing grants to range countries for the conservation of African and Asian elephants, rhinoceroses, tigers, great apes, and marine turtles and their habitats. The grants target species and address habitat conservation, law enforcement, and technical assistance for conserving species under the MSCF. Efforts to conserve species under the MSCF benefit from funding and in-kind support provided by partners and collaborators. According to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), which runs the program, almost \$89.0 million was provided by partners and collaborators for efforts under the MSCF from FY2008 to FY2012. This is nearly double the amount appropriated (\$59.0 million) for these efforts during the same period. According to FWS, the African Elephant Fund provided funding for projects that aimed to conserve forest elephants in the Democratic Republic of Congo. These activities included assisting the Congolese National Wildlife Agency and efforts to reduce to poaching in the country and the ivory trade throughout the world.

Funds might also come from purchases of the Multinational Species Conservation Funds Semipostal Stamp (authorized under P.L. 111-241).² On September 22, 2011, the U.S. Postal Service introduced the “Save Vanishing Species” semipostal stamp. It will be available for no less than two years. In its first year of issuance, 16.5 million stamps were sold, raising approximately \$1.6 million for activities that conserve species supported by the MSCF.³

For FY2014, the Administration requested \$9.8 million for species programs under MSCF, which is \$0.3 million above the FY2013 level of funding reported by FWS. Funding for these species programs comes to FWS within the Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act. **Table 1** shows funding levels for the MSCF and the NMBCF for FY2009-FY2013 and the FY2014 request. The MSCF is authorized under five acts, described below:

¹ For more information, see CRS Report RL31654, *The Endangered Species Act: A Primer*, by M. Lynne Corn and Kristina Alexander, and CRS Report RL32751, *The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES): Background and Issues*, by Pervaze A. Sheikh and M. Lynne Corn.

² Proceeds from the sale of certain postage stamps would be used to help implement the MSCF. According to P.L. 111-245, funds from the stamps should not offset annual appropriations to the MSCF, nor should they be taken into account in any decision related to funding MSCF or FWS. The stamps would be available to the public for at least two years.

³ U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, *U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Fiscal Year 2014 Budget Justifications*, Department of the Interior, Budget Justification, 2013, pp. MS-5.

- The African Elephant Conservation Act (16 U.S.C. §4201) authorizes matching grants for conservation, research, management, and protection of this species. Projects are carried out in cooperation with African nations and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). Appropriations are authorized for \$5.0 million annually from FY2007 to FY2012.
- The Rhinoceros and Tiger Conservation Fund (16 U.S.C. §5301) assists in conserving tigers and the six species of rhinos. Matching grants support governments and NGOs in projects to conserve habitat, survey populations, improve law enforcement, and educate the public. Appropriations are authorized for \$10.0 million annually from FY2007 to FY2012.
- The Asian Elephant Fund (16 U.S.C. §4261) is similar to the above programs in purposes and scope. An additional emphasis, where the elephants are draft animals, is to promote their humane treatment and encourage captive breeding. Appropriations are authorized for \$5.0 million annually from FY2007 to FY2012.
- The Great Ape Conservation Fund (16 U.S.C. §6303) is similar to the above programs in purposes and scope. Species of interest are lowland and mountain gorillas, chimpanzees, bonobos (a species closely related to chimpanzees), orangutans, and the species of gibbons (Genus *Hylobates*—about 8-10 species, according to anthropologists). Appropriations are authorized for \$5.0 million annually from FY2006 to FY2010.
- The Marine Turtle Conservation Act (16 U.S.C. §6601) was passed on July 2, 2004. This law provides grants for the conservation of marine turtle populations and their nesting habitats in the wild. This law authorizes \$5 million in annual appropriations from FY2005 to FY2009 for conservation efforts and establishes a marine turtle conservation fund within the MSCF.

Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Fund

The Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Act (16 U.S.C. §§6101-6109) provides grants for the conservation of hundreds of bird species that migrate among North and South America and the Caribbean. The act requires spending 75% of the funds on projects outside of the United States. The act was reauthorized in 2006. The legislation expands the program to include Canada, authorizes appropriations until 2009, and creates a separate fund for the NMBCF. Authorization for appropriations expired in FY2010. The FY2014 request for this program is \$3.8 million, equivalent to the FY2012 enacted level. (See **Table 1**.)

Legislative Activity

The 113th Congress is considering reauthorizing funding for several conservation funds organized under the MSCF. A summary of these efforts is listed below:

- H.R. 39 proposes to extend the authorization for funding the African Elephant Conservation Fund, the Rhinoceros and Tiger Conservation Fund, and the Asian Elephant Conservation Fund at their current level to FY2018.

- H.R. 1328 would reauthorize the Great Ape Conservation Act for an additional five years (FY2014 to FY2018), allow for multi-year grants to facilitate the continuation of conservation projects, and authorize a panel of experts to meet every five years to make recommendations on conservation plans and strategies, among other things.
- H.R. 1329 would reauthorize funding for the Marine Turtle Conservation Act at \$5 million annually from FY2014 to FY2018. The bill would amend language that limits conservation activities authorized under the bill to marine turtles in foreign countries. The proposed language would allow conservation activities to address marine turtles in foreign countries and U.S. states, territories, and possessions.
- H.R. 262 and S. 231 would reauthorize the Multinational Species Conservation Funds Semipostal Stamp Act by extending the availability of stamps to the public to six years instead of two years.

Table I. Appropriations for Multinational Species Conservation Fund and Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Fund, FY2008-FY2013 Request

(in U.S. \$ thousands)

Multinational Species Conservation Fund	FY2009 Enacted	FY2010 Enacted	FY2011 Enacted	FY2012 Enacted	FY2013 Continuing Resolution	FY2014 Request
African Elephant	\$2,000	\$2,000	\$1,697	\$1,645	\$1,655	\$1,805
Tiger and Rhinos	2,500	3,000	2,695	2,471	2,481	2,632
Asian Elephant	2,000	2,000	1,697	1,645	1,660	1,645
Great Apes	2,000	2,500	2,194	2,059	2,072	2,059
Marine Turtle	1,500	2,000	1,697	1,646	1,656	1,646
Total MSCF	10,000	11,500	9,980	9,466	9,524	9,787
Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Fund	4,750	5,000	3,992	3,786	3,809	3,786

Source: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, *U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Fiscal Year 2013 Budget Justifications*, Department of the Interior, Budget Justification, 2012, pp. MS-1, <http://www.fws.gov/budget/2013/FY%202013%20FWS%20Greenbook%20Final.pdf>.

Notes: Through January 15, 2014, agencies in the Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies appropriations bill are being funded under a short-term continuing resolution (CR) enacted on October 17, 2013 (P.L. 113-46). The CR generally extended appropriations for continuing projects and activities at the FY2013 post-sequestration, post-rescission levels.

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