



Delaware Division of Fish & Wildlife Wildlife Program Services and Funding



How are wildlife program services funded?

The Division of Fish & Wildlife's wildlife program services are primarily funded through Federal Pittman-Robertson (PR) grants generated by excise taxes on firearms and hunting equipment. PR grants require the Division to provide matching funds at \$1 (State) to every \$3 (Federal). Hunting and trapping license revenues are the main source of matching funds for Federal PR grants. 50-75% of the wildlife program operating budget depends on license revenues combined with Federal PR funds.

Why is an increase in fees necessary?

Additional revenues through a fee increase are needed to restore/enhance wildlife program services and prevent further program service reductions.

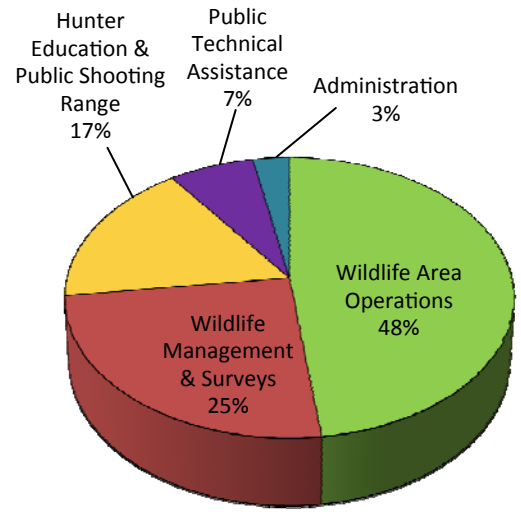
Due to declines in hunting and trapping license purchases/revenues and a reduction in wildlife program state General Funds, insufficient revenues are available to match available Federal PR funding for wildlife conservation and State Wildlife Area habitat management and access services. Not all State Wildlife Area users currently pay fees for management of State Wildlife Areas.

Comprehensive wildlife program services are limited by a projected license revenue shortfall of nearly \$550,000 in FY '17, which prevents matching \$1.1M in Federal PR grants, for a total lost funding opportunity of \$1.65M/year. ***Without sufficient state match funds, some Federal PR funds paid by Delaware hunters through excise taxes could be redistributed to other states.***

An increase in fees is being considered for hunting and trapping licenses, along with establishing a Conservation Access Pass, which would be required for anyone using State Wildlife Areas.

What has the wildlife program done to work within our budget?

- Identified additional \$200,000/year of eligible funding to match Federal PR funds
- Reduced staff (5 full-time positions vacant; 70% fewer seasonal employees)
- Reduced days/hours at the Ommelanden Shooting Range
- Eliminated wildlife food plots and reduced dove hunting sunflower plantings
- Closed access to State Wildlife Areas before and after hunting seasons to reduce road maintenance costs
- Reduced the number of days State Wildlife Areas are open to permit hunting
- Reduced or eliminated other maintenance/operational activities at State Wildlife Areas



Wildlife Program Services & Funding Distribution

More Bang for Your Buck!

Additional revenues through a fee increase provides an opportunity to deliver value-added services which could:

Restore Wildlife Program Services

- Ommelanden Shooting Range, wildlife food plots and dove sunflower plantings, Wildlife Area access and maintenance

Expand Statewide Hunting Seasons

- Expand turkey hunting season
- Expand certain hunting opportunities or seasons (e.g., deer, gray squirrel)
- Establish a second youth deer hunting day (for September)

Improve Habitat on State Wildlife Areas

- Upland and wetland habitat for a variety of wildlife species
- Impoundment management by a dedicated manager to enhance habitat, hunting and wildlife watching

Expand Hunting/Trapping Opportunities on State Wildlife Areas

- Open additional areas for certain types of hunting (e.g., agricultural fields for goose hunting)
- Expand trapping opportunities (earlier marsh trapping; fox, raccoon and coyote trapping to increase small game populations, benefitting hunters and trappers)
- Establish Mentored Hunt days in dedicated portions of State Wildlife Areas

Expand Wildlife Viewing Opportunities on State Wildlife Areas

- Wildlife viewing platforms, trails, parking, etc.
- Open additional sections for wildlife watching