



Ecological Society of America
1990 M Street, NW
Suite 700
Washington, DC 20036

April 16, 2015

The Honorable Lisa Murkowski
Chairman
Appropriations Subcommittee on
Interior, Environment and Related Agencies
US Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Tom Udall
Ranking Member
Appropriations Subcommittee on
Interior, Environment and Related Agencies
US Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Chairman Murkowski and Ranking Member Udall:

On behalf the Ecological Society of America, the world's largest society of professional ecologists, we urge you to support \$1.6 billion for the US Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) in Fiscal Year 2016, a nine percent increase over FY 2015.

The Service's provides important work in habitat conservation and endangered species protection through its 551 National Wildlife Refuges, 70 National Fish Hatcheries, 65 fishery resource offices and 86 ecological services field stations. A study from the FWS Division of Economics found that recreational visits to the agency's wildlife refuges generated \$2.4 billion in sales to regional economies.

The Service also plays a vital role in interagency efforts monitor and control the spread of invasive plant and animal species. The agency reports that invasive species cost the United States over \$120 billion in damages every year. The Burmese python, Asian carp, Asian tiger mosquito, emerald ash borer, cheat grass, quagga mussel and the brown marmorated stink bug are among the most notorious of the 6,500 invasive species established in the United States.

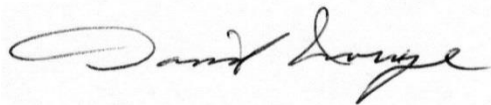
In addition to hindering efforts to protect threatened and endangered wildlife, these invasive species pose a costly threat to agriculture, recreational activities and human health. It is important that the Service's Wildlife and Habitat Management program has sufficient funding to provide national wildlife refuges the early detection and rapid response necessary to pinpoint nonnative species before have an opportunity to disrupt habitats and neighboring communities.

The agency's Fish and Aquatic Conservation program is among key agency programs that work to prevent new aquatic invasions, which are uniquely difficult to detect, track and eradicate. Within this program, FWS is proposing an increase of \$669,000 over FY 2015 for Aquatic Invasive Species Prevention, which the Society supports.

The Society is also supportive of the Service's efforts to connect Americans to the great outdoors as well as its youth and education programs that provide education and job training for careers and opportunities that promote greater understanding of the environment.

We hope that Congress can continue to sufficiently invest in the agency's efforts to preserve and protect our nation's diverse ecosystems while furthering our understanding and appreciation of the natural world.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "David Inouye". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "D" and "I".

Dr. David W. Inouye
ESA President