



Foreign Assistance for International Conservation

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The United States provides foreign assistance to support myriad global objectives, including the conservation of wildlife and ecosystems. The United States provides foreign assistance in the form of financial, programmatic, and technical support to address international conservation activities.

International conservation activities include those relating to species protection, habitat restoration, and forest recovery, among other priorities. Several federal agencies administer these programs, including the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), the U.S. Forest Service, the U.S. Department of the Treasury, the Department of State, and the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID).

Many Members of Congress have demonstrated interest in international conservation, particularly with respect to biodiversity issues, conservation funding, and congressional oversight. In particular, some Members maintain an active interest in international conservation treaties to which the United States is a signatory, such as the [Convention on International Trade of Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora \(CITES\)](#). Recently, concerns over conservation efforts have escalated in the wake of a [report](#) asserting a significant loss in biodiversity due to human interactions with natural resources.

Table 1 provides a list of selected U.S. international programs that address biodiversity and conservation. It includes a description of each program, as well as the enacted funding levels for FY2018-FY2020. The funding in **Table 1** is for specific programs, for financial commitments to international treaties or organizations, or from a line item in appropriations law or a committee report that identifies funding for a set of activities. This list and these funding levels are not exhaustive, as some activities may be conducted as part of multi-sectoral projects with focus areas not limited to conservation. Conservation also may be a secondary objective of programs targeting adjacent issues.

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Table I. Enacted Appropriations for Selected Federal Programs That Address International Conservation, FY2018 to FY2020
(in millions of U.S. dollars)

Program	Description	FY2018	FY2019	FY2020
USAID Biodiversity Programs	Biodiversity conservation activities conducted by USAID aim to help developing countries maintain biodiversity and habitats, and the environmental services they provide. USAID funds projects and activities in approximately 60 countries throughout the world and emphasizes sustainable development and community-based conservation.	269.0	285.0	Not less than 315.0
USAID/State Wildlife Poaching and Trafficking Programs	This category covers funding under several accounts that address wildlife trafficking. A portion of funds is appropriated to in-country programs in Africa and Asia. Another portion of this work is conducted by the International Narcotics Control and Law Enforcement Program to develop criminal justice systems and capabilities addressing wildlife crime in foreign countries.	Not less than 90.7	Not less than 90.7	Not less than 100.7
International Conservation Programs	This funding supports commitments under international treaties that address conservation. Some examples include the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora, U.N. Convention to Combat Desertification, RAMSAR Convention on Wetlands, Intergovernmental Platform for Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES), and International Tropical Timber Organization.	7.0	7.0	7.0
U.N. Environmental Programs	This funding goes toward the United Nations Environmental Program (UNEP), which works in themes related to climate change, disasters, ecosystems, environmental governance, chemicals and waste, resource efficiency, and sustainability.	10.0	10.0	10.6
Department of the Treasury Global Environmental Facility	Global Environment Facility (GEF) is a multilateral environmental trust fund that supports projects with global environmental benefits related to six areas: biodiversity, climate change, international waters, the ozone layer, land degradation, and persistent organic pollutants.	139.6	139.6	139.6
Department of the Treasury Tropical Forest Conservation	This program funds “debt-for-nature” transactions, in which a developing country partner’s debt is exchanged for local funds to conserve tropical forests.	0.0	0.0	15.0
Department of State and USAID Sustainable Landscapes Programming	Sustainable Landscapes Programs aim to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from deforestation and forest degradation.	Not less than 123.5	Not less than 125.0	Not less than 135.0
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Multinational Species Conservation Fund (MSCF)	The MSCF issues grants to support conservation efforts benefitting certain species, including African and Asian elephants, rhinoceroses, tigers, great apes, tortoises, freshwater turtles, and marine turtles. The grants target species and address habitat conservation, law enforcement, and technical assistance for conserving species under the MSCF.	11.1	11.6	15.0
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Neotropical Migratory Bird Fund	This funding provides grants for the conservation of hundreds of bird species that migrate among North and South America and the Caribbean.	3.9	3.9	4.9
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service International Affairs	This program addresses wildlife conservation, wildlife trade, and the implementation of several U.S. wildlife laws. Sub-programs include the Wildlife Without Borders Program and the International Wildlife Trade.	15.8	15.8	18.8
[International Conservation Sub-program]	This program consists of sub-programs that address regions or specific species. Funding is used to provide technical and financial assistance to conserve high-priority species and habitats.	[8.3]	[8.3]	[10.8]
[International Wildlife Trade Sub-program]	This program is responsible for implementing CITES (FWS is the scientific authority under CITES) and various domestic laws of the United States to ensure the international wildlife trade is not harmful to endangered and threatened wildlife around the world.	[7.5]	[7.5]	[8.0]
U.S. Forest Service International Program	The U.S. Forest Service International Program promotes sustainable forest management and biodiversity internationally. Specific activities include managing protected areas, protecting migratory species, engaging in landscape-level forest planning, providing fire management training, curbing invasive species, preventing illegal logging, promoting forest certification, reducing the impacts of forest use, and developing non-timber forest products.	9.0	9.0	12.0

Sources: Pertinent annual appropriations laws and committee reports for Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies and State and Foreign Operations and Related Agencies from FY2018 to FY2020. Congressional budget justifications for the Department of the Interior and State and Foreign Operations for FY2020.

- a. **Notes:** [] = subset of program. FY2020 appropriations for Biodiversity Programs under USAID identifies funding for some conservation programs in the explanatory statement, including the Andean Amazon Program (\$24.5 million); Brazilian Amazon Program (\$11.0 million); Central Africa Regional Program for the Environment (\$43.0 million); and Great Apes Conservation (\$40.0 million); among others.

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