



U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

# Leaving a Lasting Legacy

## *Permits as a Conservation Tool*

*Human demands on animals and plants can leave them vulnerable. Permits enable the public to engage in specific activities, such as enabling scientists to conduct research on protected species to develop information needed to assist with species conservation.*

*Permits provide a means to balance use and conservation, and allow us to monitor activities to determine how they affect protected wildlife and plant populations.*



*White-faced ibis, protected under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act.*  
USFWS

During the past one hundred years, the United States has enacted wildlife laws and ratified international treaties to protect our heritage of wild animals, plants, and their habitats. Each of the following laws or treaties has unique purposes, and uses permits in specific ways to protect species:

- Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act (BGEPA)
- Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES)
- Endangered Species Act
- Lacey Act
- Marine Mammal Protection Act
- Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA)
- Wild Bird Conservation Act

### **Who are we?**

These offices work together to conserve wildlife and plants in accordance with conservation laws and treaties:

*Endangered Species* staff in regional offices administer native endangered and threatened species permits under the Endangered Species Act.

*International Affairs* (Management Authority) primarily issues permits to import and export protected species into and out of the United States. Other permitted activities include take of certain marine mammals; take and interstate and foreign commerce of non-native endangered and threatened species; and cooperative breeding programs for exotic birds.

*Law Enforcement* administers licenses and permits at regional offices and certain port locations for the commercial import or export of wildlife, exception to

designated ports, and export and re-export of certain CITES wildlife.

*Migratory Bird* staff in regional offices administer permits for certain activities with migratory birds (MBTA) and bald and golden eagles (BGEPA).

#### What is our vision?

Our vision includes:

- **Conserving Wildlife, Plants, and their Habitats**

*Objective:* Consider the risks and benefits of proposed activities to species, and use the best available science and expertise to make our decisions.

*Objective:* Use permits to authorize and monitor activities consistent with the conservation, protection, and enhancement of wildlife, plants, and their habitats.

- **Serving and Working with People**

*Objective:* Expand our use of technology to improve customer service and access to information.

*Objective:* Provide the public with timely decisions in a clear and consistent manner.

- **Commitment to Excellence**

*Objective:* Coordinate across permit programs and develop clear policy.

*Objective:* Process permits fairly and consistently in a timely manner.

Our mission is to promote long-term conservation of animals, plants, and their habitats and encourage joint stewardship with others.

#### How do we use current technology to help us meet our vision?

The Service Permit Issuance and Tracking System (SPITS) database is used to:

- Issue and track permit actions and species data.
- Promote timely permit issuance.
- Share species and management data.
- Increase coordination across programs, reduce paperwork, and improve consistency.
- Conduct searches and generate reports.

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*“To work for the common good is the greatest creed.”*

— *Albert Schweitzer*

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*Fairy slippers, protected under CITES*  
Peter Carboni/USFWS

#### Where can I request a copy of the vision document?

The vision document, including planned actions, is available from our website at <http://permits.fws.gov> or from one of the permit offices.

*Endangered Species* permit contacts can be found at <http://endangered.fws.gov/>

*International Affairs* permit contacts, can be reached at 800/358 2104.

*Law Enforcement* permit contacts can be found at <http://www.le.fws.gov/>

*Migratory Birds* permit contacts can be found at <http://permits.fws.gov/mbpermits/birdbasics.html>

We appreciate the valuable comments provided by scientific and conservation organizations and the public on our permitting process. This input served as a springboard to develop a vision document, action plan, and mission statement.



*Lange's metalmark butterfly, protected under the Endangered Species Act.*  
Jerry Powell

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1 800/358 2104  
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