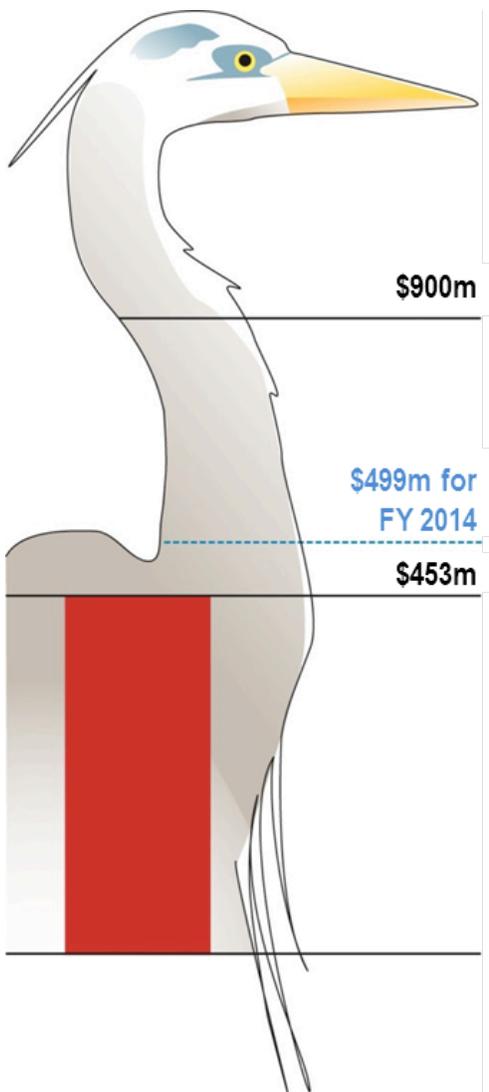




Funding the National Wildlife Refuge System

\$499 Million in FY 2014



A comprehensive analysis by CARE finds that the National Wildlife Refuge System needs at least \$900 million in annual operations and maintenance funding to properly administer its 150 million acres, provide quality recreation programs, restore habitats, fulfill its management duties on marine national monuments in the Pacific, and more. At its highest funding level in FY10, the System received only \$503 million – little more than half the needed amount. Since that time, congressional appropriations have not only failed to account for rising costs, but have been steadily backsliding toward levels that, in real dollars, have not been seen since FY06. To begin to bridge that growing gap between what is needed and what has been received, **CARE urges Congress to provide at least \$499 million for Refuge System operations and maintenance in FY14.**

A Small Investment with Big Returns

Investing in the National Wildlife Refuge System's 561 refuges and 38 wetland management districts yields big returns for wildlife and people alike – and the benefits aren't restricted by refuge boundaries. America's wildlife refuges:

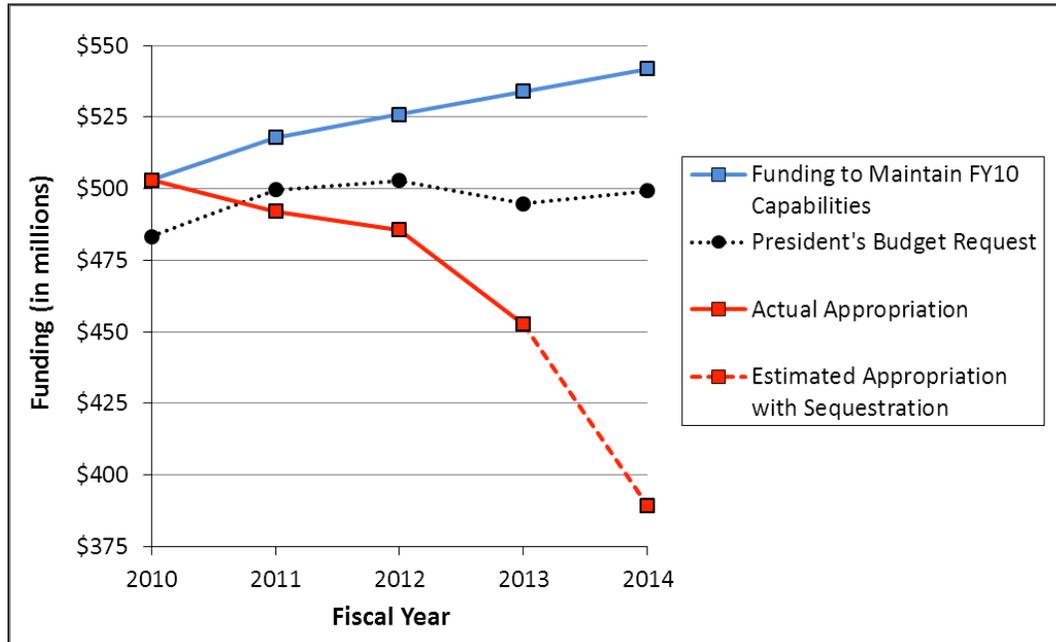
- Protect at least 700 bird species, 220 mammals, 250 reptiles and amphibians, 1,000 species of fish, and countless invertebrates and plants – some 280 of which are threatened or endangered.
- Attract more than 47 million people annually for hunting, fishing, wildlife-watching, and other recreational offerings.
- Generate between \$2.1 and \$4.2 billion annually to regional economies and employ about 34,000 U.S. workers through visitor spending.
- Provide an estimated \$32.3 billion each year in environmental benefits such as filtering water before it reaches municipal supplies, capturing excess rainwater, and attenuating storm surges.

To secure such an impressive return on investment, the Refuge System must have sufficient funding to:

- Conduct management and restoration activities (e.g., invasive species removal) to provide healthy habitats that attract wildlife and, in turn, draw visitors.
- Keep refuges open and staffed so that quality recreational opportunities continue to be offered and visitor programs (e.g., hunting and fishing programs) can be added or expanded.
- Maintain facilities and equipment used to serve the public and manage habitat.
- Provide law enforcement officers needed to keep refuge resources and the people who come to appreciate them safe.

Feeling the Cut

If sequestration cuts continue, the Refuge System's FY14 appropriation could drop to only about \$389 million – a cut of \$114 million, or 23%, compared with FY10. On the ground, however, it will feel more like a \$153 million, or 30%, cut. That is because each year, the Refuge System needs an increase of \$8 million to cover the rising cost of fuel, utilities, rent, and other fixed expenses.* Because budgets have not kept pace with rising costs, the gap between the level of funding needed to maintain the Refuge System's capabilities and the level of funding appropriated by Congress has widened dramatically. To begin to bridge that gap, CARE seeks a middle ground and urges Congress to provide the Refuge System with at least \$499 million in FY14.



* Prior to FY11, the Refuge System required an annual increase of \$15 million to cover rising costs and maintain management capabilities; a salary freeze for federal employees has reduced the annual need to \$8 million.

The Cooperative Alliance for Refuge Enhancement (CARE) is a national coalition of 22 wildlife, sporting, conservation, and scientific organizations. Together, these organizations represent a national constituency numbering more than 16 million Americans. Working together, and with the support of more than 200 refuge Friends groups, CARE educates Congress, the Administration, and the public about America's magnificent National Wildlife Refuge System.

American Birding Association
 American Fisheries Society
 American Sportfishing Association
 Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies
 Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation
 Defenders of Wildlife
 Ducks Unlimited, Inc.
 Izaak Walton League of America
 Marine Conservation Institute
 National Audubon Society
 National Rifle Association

National Wildlife Federation
 National Wildlife Refuge Association
 Safari Club International
 The Corps Network
 The Nature Conservancy
 The Wilderness Society
 The Wildlife Society
 Trout Unlimited
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