



CRS Report for Congress

Multinational Species Conservation Fund

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Summary

The Multinational Species Conservation Fund is a relatively small program within the Fish and Wildlife Service that has generated enormous constituent interest, chiefly concerning its funding levels. This report describes the fund briefly, and summarizes recent and proposed appropriations levels.

The Multinational Species Conservation Fund (MSCF), which currently benefits tigers, the six species of rhinoceroses, Asian and African elephants, marine turtles, and great apes (gorillas, chimpanzees, bonobos, orangutans, and the various species of gibbons), has generated a tremendous amount of constituent interest. The fund supports conservation efforts benefitting these species, often in conjunction with efforts under the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) to which the United States is a Party.¹

For FY2008, \$7.9 million was provided for the MSCF and \$4.4 million was provided for the Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Fund (NMBCF). This is over \$3.5 million more than was requested for the MSCF and nearly \$0.5 million more than was requested for the NMBCF. The FY2009 funding request for the MSCF represents approximately a 45% decrease from the FY2008 enacted level, and is the same as the FY2008 requested level. The NMBCF was funded as a separate program for FY2008. For FY2009, the NMBCF is requested to have \$4.0 million. For FY2009, the Administration had proposed to fund the MSCF and the NMBCF separately.

¹ For more information, see CRS Report RL31654, *Endangered Species Act: A Primer*, by M. Lynne Corn, Eugene H. Buck, and Pamela Baldwin, and CRS Report RL32751, *The Convention on the International Trade of Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora: Background and Issues*, by Pervaze A. Sheikh and M. Lynne Corn.

Table 1 shows funding levels for the MSCF and the NMBCF for FY2004-FY2008. The MSCF is authorized under five acts, described below. In the 110th Congress, the African Elephant Conservation Act, Rhinoceros and Tiger Conservation Fund, and Asian Elephant Fund were reauthorized for funding until 2012.

The African Elephant Conservation Act (16 U.S.C. 4201) authorizes matching grants for conservation, research, management, and protection of this species. Projects are carried out in cooperation with African nations and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). The authorization for appropriations expires in 2012.

The Rhinoceros and Tiger Conservation Fund (16 U.S.C. 5301) assists in conserving tigers and the 6 species of rhinos. Matching grants support governments and NGOs in projects to conserve habitat, survey populations, improve law enforcement, and educate the public. The authorization for appropriations expires in 2012.

The Asian Elephant Fund (16 U.S.C. 4261) is similar to the above programs in purposes and scope. An additional emphasis, where the elephants are draft animals, is to promote their humane treatment and encourage captive breeding. The authorization for appropriations expires in 2012.

The Great Ape Conservation Fund (16 U.S.C. 1603) is similar to the above programs in purposes and scope. Species of interest are lowland and mountain gorillas, chimpanzees, bonobos (a species very closely related to chimpanzees), orangutans, and the species of gibbons (Genus *Hylobates* — about 8-10 species, according to anthropologists). The authorization for appropriations expires in 2010.

The Marine Turtle Conservation Act (16 U.S.C. 6601) was passed on July 2, 2004. This law provides grants for the conservation of marine turtle populations and their nesting habitats in the wild. This law authorizes \$5 million in annual appropriations from FY2005 to FY2009 for conservation efforts and establishes a marine turtle conservation fund within the MSCF.

The Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Act (16 U.S.C. 6101-6109) provides grants for the conservation of hundreds of bird species that migrate among North and South America and the Caribbean. The act requires spending 75% of the funds on projects outside of the United States. The act was reauthorized in 2006. The legislation expands the program to include Canada, authorizes appropriations until 2009, and creates a separate fund for the NMBCF. The NMBCF is no longer included in the Administration's request under the MSCF.

**Table 1. Funding for Multinational Species Conservation Fund,
FY2004-FY2008 and FY2009 Request**

(in U.S. \$, thousands)

Multinational Species Conservation Fund	FY2004 Enacted	FY2005 Enacted	FY2006 Enacted	FY2007 Enacted	FY2008 Enacted	FY2009 Request
African elephant	\$1,383	\$1,380	\$1,379	\$1,379	\$1,477	990
Tiger and Rhinos	1,383	1,478	1,576	1,576	1,969	990
Asian elephant	1,383	1,381	1,379	1,379	1,477	990
Great Apes	1,383	1,381	1,379	1,379	1,969	990
Marine Turtle	0	99	691	691	984	297
Total MSCF	5,532	5,719	6,404	6,404	7,876	4,300
Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Fund ^a	3,951	3,944	3,941	3,941	4,430	4,000

- a. This program was first authorized in FY2002, and is not part of the MSCF, although the transfer was proposed in the President's budgets for FY2002 - FY2007. However, because Congress has rejected the transfer four times, the program is not included in the column totals for FY2004-FY2006, or for the FY2007 request. The FY2009 request did not include the NMBCF in the MSCF. crsphgw