



Fish and Wildlife Conservation: Agency Relevance & Funding

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Middlebury, Vermont
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Fish and Wildlife Agency Responsibilities:

- Management of game and fish
- Nongame species protection and conservation
- Endangered species recovery, conservation
- Protection and restoration of habitat
- Acquiring habitat for species
- Fish hatcheries
- Wildlife corridors
- Climate adaptation and other new issues
- Recreation, education and access
- Research and monitoring
- Law enforcement

Need for Evolution in Wildlife Governance

- Rapidly growing responsibilities and issues:
 - Climate change - drought, fire, flooding, erosion, water temperature, salinity, changing phenology
 - Habitat fragmentation and development
 - Invasive species - terrestrial and aquatic
 - Pollinator declines
 - Disease vector health threats
 - Exploding outdoor recreation
- Rapidly growing and ongoing costs
- Declining state budgets
- Declining hunting and fishing licenses





In Crisis: Vermont's Wildlife Governance

Wildlife Conservation Funding as a Percentage of Total Vermont DFW Budget

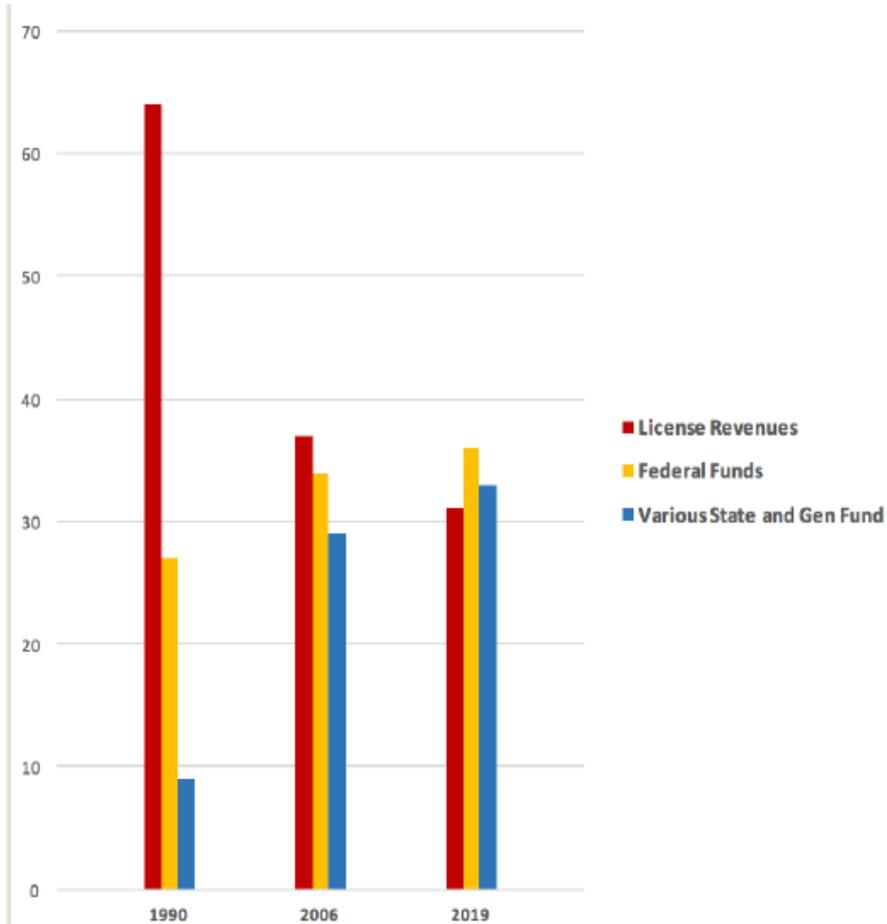
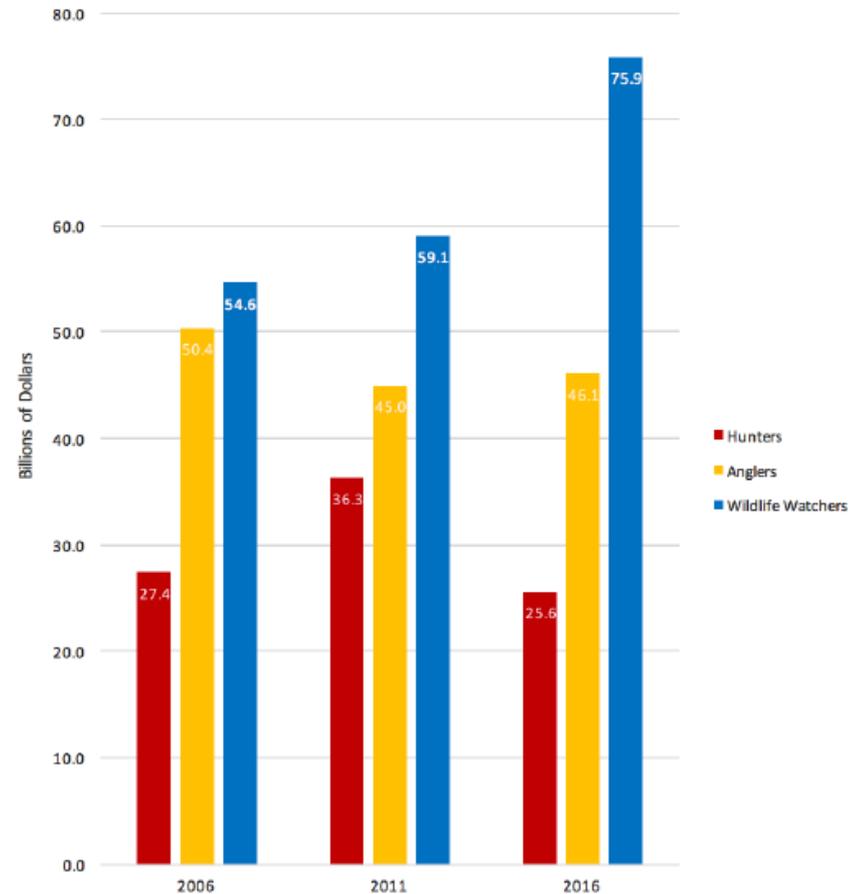


Figure 2: Comparison of revenue streams.

Expenditures



Source: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
2016 National Survey of Fishing, Hunting, and Wildlife-Associated Recreation: National Overview

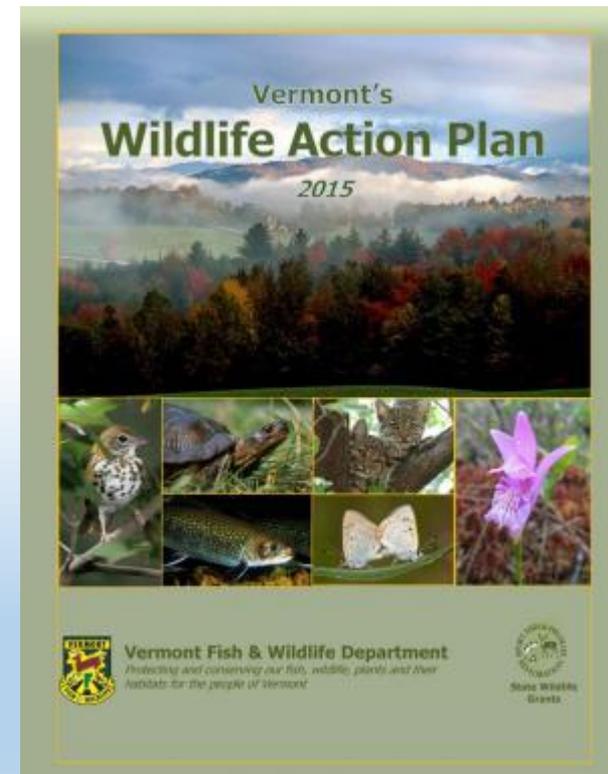
Figure 3: Graph showing expenditures by consumptives and non-consumptives since 2006.

State Wildlife Action Plans: “A plan to conserve all Vermont’s wildlife and the habitats they depend on”

“As a wildlife conservation guide for the entire state—not just the F/W Department—the Wildlife Action Plan includes strategies that almost any individual or organization can implement. The most common strategies proposed here to alleviate problems impacting Species of Greatest Conservation Need also aren't new:

they include *habitat restoration*; the provision of *education and technical assistance* to landowner and land managers; providing *financial and economic incentives* and *encouraging wildlife-compatible resource use*.”

“The Action Plan's recommendations underscore the need for proactive, cost-effective conservation efforts and increased collaboration, coordination and sharing of data and expertise among all those interested in wildlife conservation.”



National Blue Ribbon Panel on Sustaining America's Diverse Fish and Wildlife Resources

- (Multiyear “Teaming With Wildlife” effort ramping down)
- Blue Ribbon Panel: agencies, NGOs, outdoor industry
- 2016 Conclusions and Report:
 - As species decline and habitats deteriorate, benefits such as water purification, pollination, recreation, food and fiber production that are essential to human health and economic prosperity are compromised.
 - State F/W agencies ID'd thousands of species needing immediate conservation. Only a small fraction are being addressed because of limited \$.

Solution - Recovering America's Wildlife Act?

Introduced in House (07/12/2019)

116TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 3742

To amend the Pittman-Robertson Wildlife Restoration Act to make supplemental funds available for management of fish and wildlife species of greatest conservation need as determined by State fish and wildlife agencies, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JULY 12, 2019

Mrs. DINGELL (for herself, Mr. FORTENBERRY, Mr. LOWENTHAL, Mr. VELA, Ms. LEE of California, Mr. CRIST, Mr. RODNEY DAVIS of Illinois, Mr. AMODEI, Mr. ROUZER, Mr. FITZPATRICK, Ms. VELÁZQUEZ, Ms. SCHAKOWSKY, Ms. ESHOO, Ms. BONAMICI, Ms. KUSTER of New Hampshire, Mr. HILL of Arkansas, Mr. HASTINGS, Mr. SCHRADER, Ms. DEAN, Ms. JACKSON LEE, Mr. KILMER, Mr. QUIGLEY, Mrs. NAPOLITANO, Mr. AUSTIN SCOTT of Georgia, Mr. COLE, Mr. GAETZ, Mr. VEASEY, Mr. CARBAJAL, Mr. UPTON, Mr. PAPPAS, Mrs. AXNE, Mr. MICHAEL F. DOYLE of Pennsylvania, Mr. SOTO, Mr. COURTNEY, Mrs. RADEWAGEN, Mr. MAST, Mr. CUELLAR, Mr. SIMPSON, Mr. COOPER, Mr. BLUMENAUER, Mr. MARSHALL, Mr. RUTHERFORD, Mr. BROWN of Maryland, Mr. KRISHNAMOORTHY, Ms. DELBENE, Mr. RASKIN, Mr. BUDD, Mr. LUJÁN, Mr. STIVERS, Ms. HAALAND, Mr. COHEN, Mr. RUSH, Mr. FLEISCHMANN, Mr. HUFFMAN, Mr. LARSON of Connecticut, Mr. GRIJALVA, Ms. NORTON, Miss González-Colón of Puerto Rico, Mr. LONG, Mr. KILDEE, Mr. CARTWRIGHT, and Ms. TLAI) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Natural Resources, and in addition to the Committee on the Budget, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned

A BILL

To amend the Pittman-Robertson Wildlife Restoration Act to make supplemental funds available for management of fish and wildlife species of greatest conservation need as determined by State fish and wildlife agencies, and for other purposes.

Highlights of RAWA – HR 3742

- Would provide \$1.4 billion in dedicated annual funding for efforts by states and tribes to recover wildlife species at risk.
- State agencies have identified 12,000 species of wildlife and plants in need of assistance in their federally-approved State Wildlife Action Plans. The SWAPs would guide spending from the bill.
- Tribal Nations would receive \$97.5 million annually to fund proactive wildlife conservation on 140 million acres they manage.
- At least 10 percent of the funds would be used to recover species listed under the ESA.

Vermont's Share if RAWA Passes:

- Recovering America's Wildlife Act: \$11,483,550
- *STWG Allocation (FY 2018): \$514,934
- Increase in funding: \$10,968,616
- 25% *state match required* (estimated): \$3,827,850

*Funds are allocated to states using a formula based on 1/2 land area and 1/2 population size. No state can get < 1% or > 5%.

*Estimated match (25%) can include, but is not limited to in-kind contributions, private donations, state general funds, and/or funds leveraged from private academic institutions at the discretion of the state.

State F/W Directors' evolution:



ASSOCIATION of FISH & WILDLIFE AGENCIES

AFWA Is

AFWA Acts

AFWA Informs

AFWA Inspires

FISH AND WILDLIFE RELEVANCY ROADMAP



ABOUT THE ROADMAP

The Fish and Wildlife Relevancy Roadmap will be a practical guide that state and provincial fish and wildlife conservation agencies can use to overcome barriers to broader relevance, public engagement and support. The roadmap will not be prescriptive. It will provide multiple pathways to respond to the diverse social, economic, demographic, political and environmental changes that states and provinces face. The Roadmap is being developed by a team of over 60 leaders from state, federal, provincial and private conservation organizations and others with an interest in conservation. The roadmap will be completed in time for the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies Annual Meeting in September 2019 in St. Paul, Minnesota.

Relevancy Roadmap Resources

- Fish and Wildlife Relevancy Roadmap- DRAFT Report
- Fish and Wildlife Relevancy Roadmap **Fact Sheet**
- Relevancy Roadmap Process Diagram with Team Members
- List of Barriers to Relevancy-Draft (Oct 2018)
- AFWA Fish and Wildlife Relevancy Resolution (Adopted SEP 2019)

---Additional resources will be posted in the near future---

Resources on Fish and Wildlife Relevancy

- State Fish and Wildlife Agency Transformation: An annotated bibliography (July 2018)
- Governance Principles for Wildlife Conservation in the 21st Century
- America's Wildlife Values: The Social Context of Wildlife Management in the U.S.
- Nature of Americans Study

---Additional resources will be posted in the near future---



RELEVANCY ROADMAP FACT SHEET

WHAT IS THE RELEVANCY ROADMAP?

The Relevancy Roadmap will be a practical guide that state and provincial fish and wildlife conservation agencies can use to overcome barriers to broader relevance, public engagement, and support. The roadmap will not be prescriptive. It will provide multiple pathways to respond to the diverse social, economic, demographic, political, and environmental changes that states and provinces face.

WHY SHOULD FISH AND WILDLIFE AGENCIES CARE ABOUT BROADER RELEVANCY?

Fish and wildlife agencies depend on public support to fulfill their essential conservation mission. Historically, these

WHO ASKED FOR A RELEVANCY ROADMAP?

The Directors of state and provincial fish and wildlife agencies called for development of the Relevancy Roadmap. In 2016, the [Blue Ribbon Panel on Sustaining America's Diverse Fish and Wildlife Resources](#) recommended that states examine societal changes and take action to engage and serve broader constituencies. Building on initial work by the Blue Ribbon Panel's Relevancy Working Group, several state agency directors, the Wildlife Management Institute, and other experts on fish and wildlife relevancy developed a process for building a roadmap to enhance conservation through broader engagement. In September 2018 the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies passed a [resolution](#) supporting the development of the Relevancy Roadmap.

Current General Sources of State F/W Funding

- All states: Hunting, Fishing and/or Trapping Licenses & Permits
- All states: Nonresident Licenses – “Big Bucks”
- General Funds (not all states)
- Interest income on deposited funds
- Federal wildlife programs

Lesser Funding Sources:

- License plates (40 states)
- Income tax check-off (35 states)
- Habitat and wildlife stamps
- Donations, grants, partnerships and agreements



Other Sources of Alternative Funding for F/W

- Increased fines for wildlife violations
- Restitution for lost resources
- Sales of forfeited equipment
- Registration fees (watercraft, ATVs, RVs)
- General obligation bonds
- Other: Public user fees, severance taxes, real estate transfer fees, meal/fuel/gas/hotel taxes



Examples of Effective State Wildlife/Conservation Funding

- **Missouri:** 1/8 of 1% sales tax – since 1976 - \$120 m
- **Arkansas:** 1/8 of 1% sales tax – 1998 – Wildlife, Parks, Heritage, Anti-Litter
- **Minnesota:** 3/8 of 1 cent – 2008 - Wildlife Habitat, Parks and Trails, Clean Water, Arts - \$300 m (\$200 for conservation)
- **Virginia:** sales tax on outdoor rec gear – 1998 - \$13 m
- **Texas:** sales tax on gear – 1993 - \$38 m

New: Georgia Outdoor Stewardship Act

- 2018 bill - overwhelming bi-partisan support
- Constitutional Amendment #1 passed Nov. 6, 2019 with 83% vote!
- Dedicates up to 80% of the existing sales tax on outdoor sporting goods: NO NEW TAX
- Initial amount approved by legislature is \$20 m/yr (up to \$40 m with legislative approval)
- Sunsets in 10 years



To be Used For:

- State/local parks and trails
- Stewardship of conservation land (maintenance/restoration)
- Acquiring critical areas for wildlife, clean water, hunting/fishing, military base buffering, natural resource-based outdoor recreation

Oregon: Funding Needed to Implement ODFW's Mission

➤ **Expand conservation efforts (\$46.7 million / biennium)**

- Oregon Conservation Strategy/Nearshore Strategy
- Research, monitoring, and inventories of species and habitats to fill data gaps
- Improve data management, analysis, and distribution
- Restore ecosystems to resiliency
- Increase enforcement of wildlife laws to protect and conserve natural resources
- Establish conservation partnerships with landowners, agencies, industry, and others

➤ **Improve fishing/hunting opportunities and eliminate fee increases (\$22.3 million / biennium)**

- Reduce the need for license fee increases
- Target new funding and marketing to improve hunting and fishing opportunities
- Provide additional fishing opportunities for urban and underserved communities
- Improve research, monitoring, and management of game/non-game species
- Expand collaborative efforts to improve and restore habitat
- Expand enforcement, focusing on areas currently with limited enforcement presence

➤ **Connect Oregonians with the outdoors (\$8.3 million / biennium)**

- Expand conservation education with emphasis on urban areas and partnerships
- Develop wildlife viewing opportunities and facilities
- Develop new communication strategies to reach broader, more diverse audiences
- Increase volunteers and "citizen scientists"
- Expand marketing and outreach to increase participation in wildlife recreation
- Increase diversity in participation and the workforce

➤ **Deferred maintenance (\$9.6 million / biennium)**

- Respond to Secretary of State audit
- Adopt multi-biennial bonding approach
- Undertake additional assessment of funding needs
- Additional spending in rural communities

NCEL 11.12.19

Total Funding Need = \$86.9 million

- 23% increase in current budget
- 15% increase in FTE
- Scalable

Funding Sources Selected for OR Legislative Consideration

➤ Oregon Income Tax Return Surcharge Rate of 0.62%

Applied to individual (non-corporate) tax returns.
Exemption for low income filers.

Annual cost to family of 4: \$50,000 = \$17.64;
\$75,000 = \$29.47; \$100,000 = \$42.08

➤ Wholesale Beverage Surcharge Rate of 2.19%

Applied to cost of beverages subject to the Bottle Bill;
not a beverage container deposit.

6 pack of soda = 7 cents;
6 pack of domestic beer = 11 cents;
6 pack of microbrew beer = 19 cents

More Than 100 Funding Options Considered

- Marijuana Tax
- Recreational Equipment Tax
- Beverage Container Surcharge
- Unredeemed Bottle Deposits
- Wildlife License Plate
- General Fund/Lottery Fund Allotments
- Income Tax Return Surcharge
- Agricultural Chemical Fee
- Wild Bird Seed Tax
- Recreational Vehicle Tag
- Real Estate Transfer Tax
- Rental Car Fee
- Lodging Fee
- Donations



State bills on F/W agency functions and funding

Oregon HB 2402 (2015) set up a task force of stakeholders and agencies to review the needs of the fish and wildlife agency and make recommendations to the legislature.

Oregon HB 2829 (2019) established the Oregon Conservation and Recreation Fund: \$1 m with \$1 m match for wildlife conservation, outdoor access, agency funding.

New Hampshire SB 48 (2018) – required the Fish and Game Commission to study and report on the efficiency and effectiveness of Fish and Game operations.

Vermont H 190 (introduced 2019) – Vermont Working Group on Wildlife Governance would form a working group of legislators to review and report on the functions and funding of the fish and wildlife agency in light of changing values.

Other State bills (not yet passed)

New Mexico SB 266 (2017) would require a review of the mission and purpose of the State Game Commission.



- **New Mexico SB 417 (2019)** would require the Game Commission to protect all wildlife “as a resource for the benefit, use and enjoyment of all New Mexicans, including future generations...”
- **Montana HB 161 (2019)** would require the F/W Department, Commission, and Director to use only facts and science in decision-making processes.
- **Colorado HB 1321 (2017)** would raise fees to sustain the Parks and Wildlife Division, and would require the division to create a report on the use of its lands by “non-consumptive users” and how they can contribute to its future.
- Various state efforts to restrict trapping, killing contests, inhumane hunting methods (AZ, CA, MT, NM, WY)

Washington Wildlife Leaders Forum: Nov. 2016



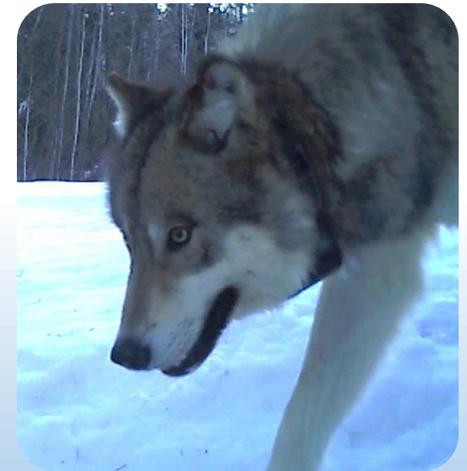
- 50 stakeholders: State agencies, Governor's office, legislators, conservation/wildlife/hunting/recreation groups, tribes
- **Long term goal:** Improve stewardship, citizen participation, and funding for conservation and management of *all* of WA's fish and wildlife
- Expert speakers from WA and nationwide
- Resulted in **4 priority challenges:**
 - **Raising public awareness** of importance of conserving F/W
 - **Funding** wildlife and habitat programs
 - Building a **broad coalition** of multiple stakeholders
 - Building **trust** of the Dept. of Fish and Wildlife

Agency Relevancy: 5 questions to ask your governor, F/W director, commissioners

1. Does F/W statutory mandate firmly establish wildlife, fish, and land as public resources without restriction or qualification?
2. Are commissioners appointed that represent conservation values?
3. Is agency funding earmarked to deprioritize conservation/habitat/non-game species?
4. Is there adequate coordination and cooperation among your natural resource agencies?
5. Are there innovative funding models supported by conservation groups that benefit all citizens, not just those who fish and hunt?

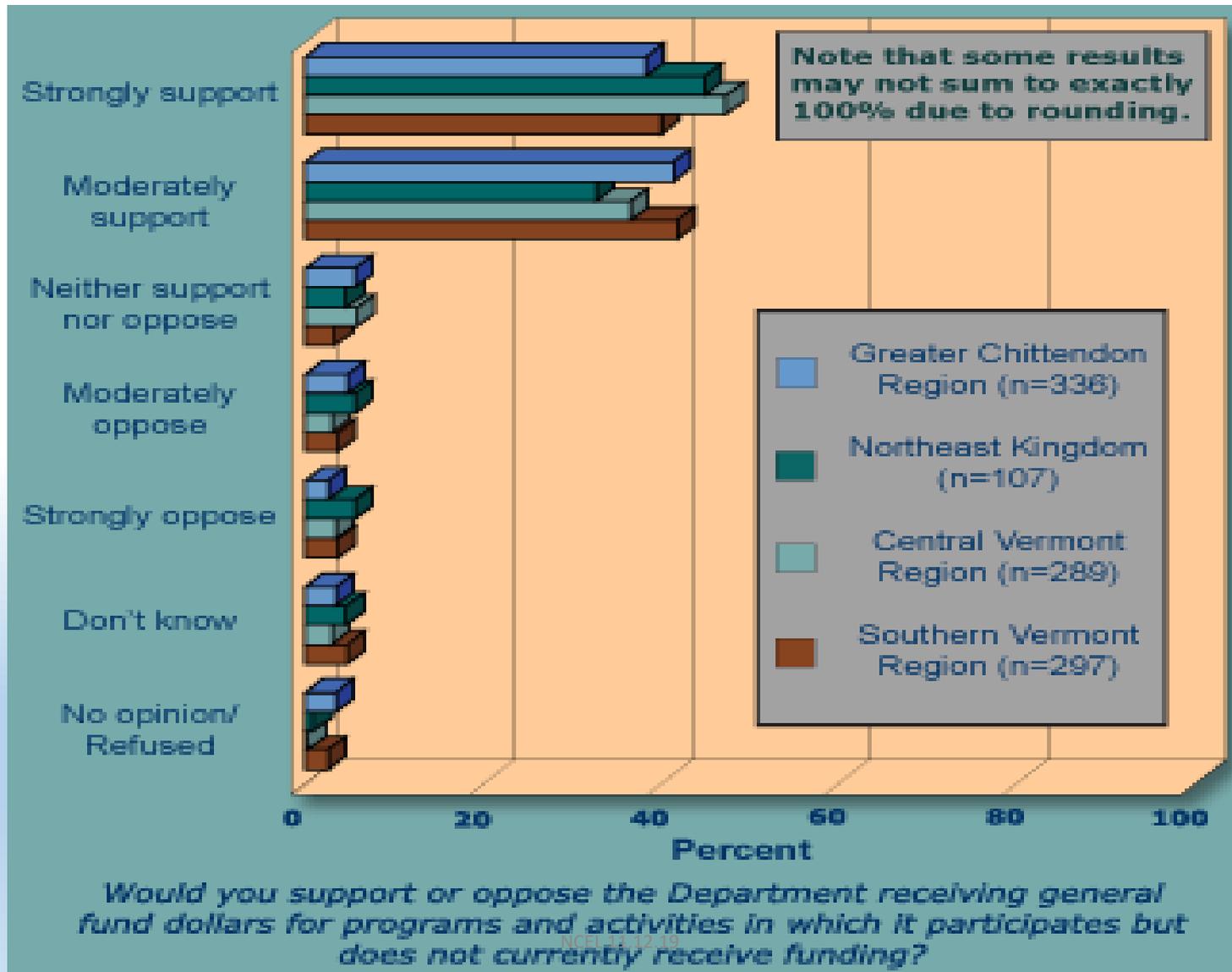
Wildlife and Conservation are Very Popular

- 87% sportsmen don't want cuts to conservation
- 80% Republicans, 77% Democrats want offshore drilling fees to pay for conservation and public land access
- 83% Americans support the Endangered Species Act; only 10% oppose
- Voters see protecting water, and all that entails, as a top priority
- Two-thirds of Americans see “protecting wildlife habitat” as a very important goal for conservation



Public Supports General Funds for Wildlife Departments

VERMONT SURVEY:



State Fish and Wildlife Agencies are Key to Saving Species, Ecosystems

- State wildlife agencies employ thousands of highly qualified biologists
- Manage millions of acres of terrestrial & aquatic habitat
- Close relationships with landowners
- Public attitudes have shifted away from traditionalism
- Federal participation is declining





Questions? Contact Ruth at ruth@ncel.net
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