

CRS Report for Congress

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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 which has generated enormous constituent interest, chiefly concerning its funding levels. This report describes the Fund briefly, and summarizes recent and proposed appropriations levels. It will be updated as events warrant.

The Multinational Species Conservation Fund (MSCF), which currently benefits tigers, the six species of rhinoceroses, Asian and African elephants, 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

The FY2006 request for the MSCF is \$8.3 million, which includes the Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Fund (NMBCF). This represents a 13.5% decrease from the FY2005 enacted level of \$9.6 million for the MSCF and NMBCF, which were funded at \$5.7 million and \$3.9 million, respectively. The NMBCF was funded as a separate program for FY2005. The President proposes to bring the NMBCF under the MSCF and to allocate \$4.0 million of the requested \$8.3 million for the MSCF to the NMBCF for FY2006. Congress rejected the proposed transfer in FY2005, as it had done in the three previous fiscal years.

¹ For more information, see CRS Report RL31654, *Endangered Species Act: A Primer*, by Pamela Baldwin, Eugene H. Buck, and M. Lynne Corn, 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 FY2003-FY2005, and the requested funding level for FY2006. The MSCF is authorized under five acts, described below.

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 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 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 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 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 NMBCF is separate from the MSCF, but the Administration has proposed to make it part of the MSCF for the past four fiscal years.

**Table 1. Funding for Multinational Species Conservation Fund,
FY2003-FY2005 and FY2006 Request**
(in U.S.\$, thousands)

Multinational Species Conservation Fund	FY2003 Enacted ^a	FY2004 Enacted	FY2005 Enacted	FY2006 Requested
African elephant	\$1,192	\$1,383	\$1,381	\$1,000
Tiger and Rhinos	1,192	1,383	1,477	1,100
Asian elephant	1,192	1,383	1,381	1,000
Great Apes	1,192	1,383	1,381	900
Marine Turtle	0	0	99	300
Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Fund ^b	[2,980]	[3,951]	[3,944]	[4,000]
Total	4,769 ^c	5,532 ^c	5,719	4,300

a. There was a 0.65% across-the-board reduction in all accounts under P.L. 108-7, which included FY2003 appropriations for the Multinational Species Conservation Fund (MSCF). Thus, while the text of the law and its accompanying Joint Statement of Managers (H.Rept. 108-10) showed nominal amounts, the reduction was applied to the nominal amount and is shown here.

b. 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, FY2003, FY2004, and FY2005. However, because Congress has rejected the transfer four times, the program is not included in the column totals for FY2003-FY2005; and for the FY2006 request.

c. Due to rounding, columns sum to slightly less than this total.