

# DoD Natural Resources Program

## Program Overview

The Department of Defense's (DoD) Natural Resources Program (NR Program) supports the military's combat readiness mission by ensuring continued access to the ~25 million acres of military land, air, and water resources needed to accomplish vital testing, training, and operational activities. The NR Program invests significant resources to implement long-term conservation programs which, in turn, help sustain our nation's priceless natural heritage. Many installations are open to the public and offer excellent outdoor recreation opportunities.

The Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD) provides policy and guidance, management and oversight, and tools and resources to the DoD Components via the DoD NR Program so the Components can implement their natural resources programs in compliance with all federal environmental laws including the Sikes Act, Endangered Species Act (ESA), Migratory Bird Treaty Act, National Environmental Policy Act, Marine Mammal Protection Act, and all relevant Executive Orders.

Current key NR Program priorities include preventing new species listings, facilitating species de-listings, and encouraging off-base conservation to enhance on-base mission flexibility.

## Why Does DoD Need a Natural Resources Program?

Many DoD landscapes are unique and becoming increasingly rare. These habitats provide food and shelter to ~490 federally-listed plant and animal species, and over 550 species at-risk of needing listing protections, including 75 species that occur only on DoD lands. Healthy natural landscapes are critical to DoD's mission success, as DoD requires high quality lands, free of legal and environmental encumbrances, to conduct readiness activities.



Future anglers pose with their catch at Beale Air Force Base, CA.  
Photo: media.defense.gov/2014/Apr/24/2001887995/-1/-1/0/140418-F-XX999-002.JPG

The NR Program strives to maintain the **long-term sustainability of DoD's lands and resources** to enable realistic, mission essential testing, training, and operations. Protecting species and managing natural resources supports the military mission by strengthening imperiled species populations, and maintaining habitat and



Red-Cockaded Woodpecker  
Photo: USFWS

landscape resilience. By properly managing imperiled species, critical habitats, invasive species, fire, and other key NR issues on base, DoD can **avoid or minimize mission impacts** that could otherwise result in natural resources related restrictions or delays.

## Integrated Natural Resources Management Plans (INRMPs)

DoD is responsible for the lands and waters under its control. This includes managing highly diverse habitats from desert to forest, coasts to mountains, sagebrush to longleaf pine. DoD accomplishes this via INRMPs. INRMPs use an ecosystem-based approach, and balance conservation and mission activities to provide "no net loss" to testing, training, and operational activities. Installations coordinate their INRMPs with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and appropriate state fish and wildlife agency (per the Sikes Act), and with other natural resources and installation planning efforts. Close coordination helps ensure that natural resources management activities are efficient and effective.



An active duty Navy diver measures a large coral colony (*Porities rus*) located in Apra Harbor, Guam, during a survey in August 2017. Photo: Lee Shannon

There are 339 military installations (146 Army, 78 Navy, 96 Air Force, 17 Marine Corps, and 2 Defense Logistics Agency) that require an INRMP.



## Natural Resources Policy

To help the Military Components, the NR Program provides policy and guidance on preparing and implementing INRMPs. DoD Instruction 4715.03 is the



Enabling the Mission, Defending the Resources  
Department of Defense Natural Resources Program



NR Program's primary policy document. It describes DoD policy for the integrated management of natural resources on property managed or controlled by DoD. DoD Manual 4715.03 provides procedures to prepare, review, update, and implement INRMPs in compliance with the Sikes Act and in accordance with DoD Instruction 4715.03.

## Funding Programs

DoD supports several competitive funding programs that encourage diverse natural resources efforts.



*Mojave Desert, Fort Irwin, CA*

- ◆ The Strategic Environmental Research and Development Program ([SERDP](#)) awards ~\$60M per year for basic and applied research and development for resource conservation and resilience, munitions response, environmental restoration, and weapon systems and platforms.
- ◆ The Environmental Security Technology Certification Program ([ESTCP](#)) awards ~\$40M per year for demonstration and validation of energy and environmental technology.
- ◆ The [DoD Legacy Resource Management Program](#) awards ~\$2.5M per year for high priority natural and cultural resources projects that have regional, national, and multi-service benefits.
- ◆ The [Readiness and Environmental Protection Integration \(REPI\) Program](#) awards ~\$70M per year for easements, acquisitions, and stewardship endowments to serve as buffers to installation lands.

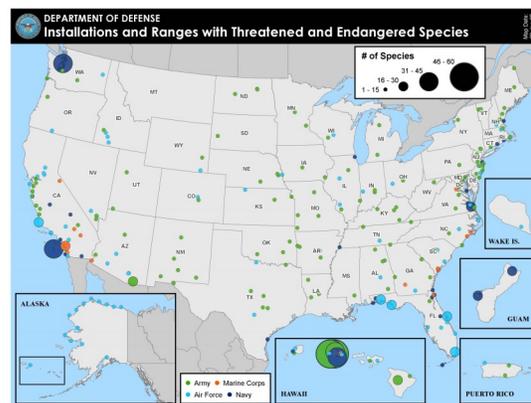


*After a recreational angler hooked this turtle, "Purple Heart," researchers outfitted it with a satellite tag and a PIT tag. A two-time Purple Heart recipient and his family released the turtle in June 2017.  
Photo: Virginia Aquarium & Marine Science Museum*

(e.g., Partners in Flight, Partners in Amphibian and Reptile Conservation), research and technical resourcing (e.g., [Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Units National Network](#)), and safety programs (e.g., Bird/Wildlife Aircraft Strike Hazard, wildland fire prevention). Tools, information, documents, webinars, and other products supported by the NR Program are available on DENIX ([www.DENIX.osd.mil/nr](http://www.DENIX.osd.mil/nr)).

## Emerging Issues

Through collaborative initiatives and by implementing installation INRMPs, DoD strives to not only address immediate needs, but to proactively manage for evolving missions and emerging natural resources challenges. The NR Program works to sustain intact and functioning ecosystems by restoring native habitats, managing at-risk species, supporting species recovery, rehabilitating degraded areas, controlling invasive species, and reducing fire and flood risk, all in support of DoD's mission.



*DoD manages and protects nearly 490 federally-listed species and more than 550 species at-risk.*

## For More Information

Check out our *Natural Selections* newsletter, website ([DENIX](#)), webinar presentations, and Twitter account at [@DoDNatRes!](#)



*Marines participate in an annual Mud Ops, using heavily armed amphibious assault vehicles around the base's Nuupia Ponds mud flats. The training creates mud mounds that provide nesting for the endangered Hawaiian stilt.*

*Photo: DoD photo by Lance Cpl. Matthew Bragg, U.S. Marine Corps*

## Contact Information

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## Tools and Resources

To maximize the effectiveness of management activities and support cooperative conservation, the NR Program actively supports partnership-based conservation efforts