

TESTIMONY OF JEFF TRANDAHL, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
NATIONAL FISH AND WILDLIFE FOUNDATION
BEFORE THE HOUSE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, JUSTICE, SCIENCE, AND RELATED AGENCIES
REGARDING THE FY 2010 BUDGET FOR
THE NATIONAL OCEANIC AND ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Subcommittee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony regarding FY 2010 funding for the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (Foundation). We appreciate the Subcommittee's past support and respectfully request your approval of funding through the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) at the following levels:

- **\$3 million through the National Ocean Service's Ocean and Coastal Management appropriation; and**
- **\$2 million through the National Marine Fisheries Service's Operations, Research and Facilities appropriation.**

In 2009, the Foundation is celebrating its 25th Anniversary and a remarkable history of bringing private partners together to leverage federal funds to conserve fish, wildlife, plants and their habitats. Since 1994, when Congress expanded the Foundation's mandate to specifically include NOAA's mission, we have worked effectively with the agency to build nationally significant public-private partnerships to restore and protect marine and coastal resources. **This FY 2010 funding request is fully authorized and would allow the Foundation to uphold our mission and expand our successful partnership with NOAA.** The Foundation is required by law to match each federally-appropriated dollar with a minimum of one non-federal dollar. We consistently exceed this requirement by leveraging federal funds at a 3:1 average ratio while providing thought leadership and emphasizing accountability, measurable results, and sustainable conservation outcomes.

As of FY 2008, the Foundation has awarded over 10,000 grants to more than 3,500 national and community-based organizations through successful partnerships with NOAA and other federal agencies including the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and other Department of Interior agencies, Environmental Protection Agency, and USDA Forest Service and Natural Resources Conservation Service. This collaborative model brings together multiple federal agencies with state, tribal and local governments and private organizations to implement conservation strategies that directly benefit NOAA's goal to conserve coastal and ocean resources through ecosystem-based management.

This Subcommittee's support is critical to our success in attracting additional funding for marine and coastal conservation through corporate and foundation contributions, legal settlements, and direct gifts. As a neutral convener, the Foundation is in a unique position to work with the federal agencies, state and local government, corporations, foundations, conservation organizations and others to build strategic partnerships to address the most significant threats to fish and wildlife populations and their habitats. Currently, the Foundation

has active partnerships with more than 30 corporations and foundations and 17 federal agencies. Examples of those benefiting marine and coastal conservation include:

- A new five-year, \$2 million partnership was established in 2008 with NOAA, **Covanta Energy**, and **Schnitzer Steel**, to pilot a program, *Fishing for Energy*, through which fishermen dispose of derelict gear, free of charge, and Covanta converts to create energy. In its first year, this successful partnership has collected and disposed of over 122 tons of derelict fishing gear from 10 gear collection ports in the Northeastern United States.
- **ArcelorMittal**, the world's largest steel company, established a \$2.5 million partnership with the Foundation in 2008 to restore the freshwater ecosystems of the Great Lakes.
- **DuPont** continued its partnership with the Foundation through the Delaware Estuary Watershed Grants Program providing both technical and financial support to projects benefiting the restoration of migratory fish, oysters and coastal habitats in Delaware Bay.
- **Shell Oil** continued their 10 year partnership with the Foundation in 2008 by supporting conservation projects along the Gulf Coast, on Long Island Sound and in Alaska. To date, Shell and the Foundation have helped more than 100 organizations conserve and restore coastal and marine habitat with more than \$40 million in grants and matching funds.

During FY 2001-2006, the Foundation received an average appropriation of \$2 million annually to further the mission of NOAA's National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) and National Ocean Service (NOS). The Foundation leveraged NOAA funding with corporate and foundation contributions, other federal funds and non-federal matching funds to restore and protect marine species and habitats. In FY 2007-2008, the Foundation sustained key partnerships through cooperative agreements with NOAA's Restoration Center, Coral, and Marine Debris programs. **To continue this success and more fully support NOAA's restoration and stewardship mandate, we respectfully request that the Subcommittee approve \$5 million for the Foundation in FY 2010.**

Implementation of Strategic Conservation Initiatives

The Foundation initiated grant-making through our new keystone initiatives in FY 2008, which focus on select species of fish, wildlife, and sensitive habitats. We will continue this work with FY 2009 funds. **With NOAA funding restored in FY 2010, we will accelerate implementation of these strategic initiatives, many of which seek to address the affects of climate change through wildlife and natural resource adaptation.** It is widely known that climate change is a threat to ocean resources, marine species, and coastal habitats. With our partners, the Foundation has identified several marine species and ecosystems in need of immediate conservation action, a few of which are described below.

Marine Protected Areas

Marine Protected Areas play a critical role in the conservation of marine resources and span a range of habitats including open ocean, coastal areas, estuaries and inter-tidal zones. In 2000, President Clinton signed an Executive Order which called for the development of a scientifically-based, comprehensive national system of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) and

establishment of a new Marine Protected Area Center at NOAA. The Bush Administration retained and supported the Executive Order and designated several new marine monuments in the Pacific. The MPA Center, in conjunction with the Department of the Interior, has developed a Framework for the National System of MPAs (Framework) which recognizes the importance of collaboration at all levels of government to work together at regional, national and international levels to strengthen the management, protection, and conservation of existing MPAs and establish new or expanded MPAs.

With an FY 2010 appropriation as requested, NFWF will establish a National MPA Fund to complement the work of the MPA Center and help to implement the Framework of the National System. The Fund will be designed in partnership with the MPA Center to support effective management of federal, state, local and tribal governments MPA programs, including strengthening technical, scientific and enforcement capacity, and facilitate participation of stakeholders in planning efforts needed to ensure the success of the National System.

Hawaiian Resources Protection

Investment in the conservation and resilience of Hawaii's marine and coastal resources is a priority for the Foundation and our federal and corporate partners. In 2007, the Foundation established partnerships with NOAA, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service, State of Hawaii, Tesoro Oil Corporation and the Harold K.L. Castle Foundation to restore and protect Hawaii's coral reefs. By bringing these partners together, the Foundation not only assists in the coordination of coral reef conservation across federal agencies, but also increases the likelihood of each approved project's success, as these partners play a crucial role in providing technical support to program grantees. The Foundation has also played a key role in the removal of marine debris and invasive species in the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands, and made critical investments in bycatch reduction to benefit Pacific Loggerhead sea turtles. An FY 2010 appropriation of \$1 million through NOS would provide a dedicated source of funding to build on these successful partnerships and positively impact the future of Hawaii's marine ecosystem.

Sustainable Fisheries

As NOAA's foundation, we support the agency in the implementation of key objectives identified in its 2009-2013 strategic plan, including increasing the number of fish stocks managed at sustainable levels and increasing the number of protected species with stable or increasing populations. The Foundation has a long history of working with NOAA's National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) to increase fish populations and has developed strategic initiatives to target our investments to benefit specific species and habitats. For example, building on our experience with Pacific salmon, we are accelerating our grant-making to increase populations of Coho salmon in Oregon and California, focusing on the Russian, Lower Klamath and Shasta Rivers. Working with ranchers, wine growers, and other private landowners, the Foundation will support innovative techniques in alternative water storage and water-sharing programs to benefit fish and wildlife, agriculture, and the public.

The Foundation is also expanding investments in the development and implementation of limited access privilege programs ("LAPPs") and bycatch reduction strategies for the nation's marine fisheries. LAPPs (also called catch shares) promote healthy, productive and economically-viable

fisheries and were specifically authorized by the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Reauthorization Act of 2006. It is estimated that approximately \$30 million is needed per year for the next three years to help the Regional Fishery Management Councils meet their deadline of ending overfishing by 2011. With dedicated funding for catch shares in FY 2010, the Foundation would initiate a public-private partnership, consistent with the Fisheries Conservation and Management Fund (16 U.S.C. 1891b), to assist the Councils in developing new management strategies. In conjunction with this partnership, and building on the Foundation's successful efforts to reduce right whale bycatch in lobster fishing gear, we also will support innovative technology to minimize bycatch of federally-managed fisheries, sea turtles and seabirds.

Lastly, FY 2010 funding would enhance the Foundation's ongoing conservation grant programs including the *Coral Reef Conservation Fund, Marine Debris Prevention and Removal Program, and International Sea Turtle Conservation Fund*. These grant programs, which effectively leverage funds from multiple federal agencies and corporate partners, continued positive results in 2008 with priority project requests far exceeding available funds.

As the foundation for NOAA, the Foundation is uniquely positioned to leverage NOS and NMFS funding through federal and private sources to support our shared conservation objectives. NOAA appropriations of \$5 million in FY 2010 would be matched at a minimum by an additional \$5 million from non-federal sources. Some of the initiatives described in this request would also include funding through the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and have the potential to attract additional funding through corporate and foundation sponsorship, legal settlements, and direct gifts to the Foundation.

Efficiency, Performance Measures and Accountability

As you know, the Foundation has taken important strides to strengthen our performance measures and accountability. For example, the Foundation is working with scientists and other experts to develop species-specific metrics for each of our keystone initiatives that we will use to measure our progress in achieving our conservation outcomes. Our grant review and contracting processes have been improved to ensure we maximize efficiency while maintaining strict financial and evaluation-based requirements. We have enhanced our website with interactive tools such as webinars and a grants library to enhance the transparency of our grant-making, and instituted a new paperless application and grant administration system. In 2009, we will continue our efforts improve communication between and among our stakeholders and streamlining of our grant-making process.

The Foundation's grant-making involves a thorough internal and external review process. Peer reviews involve federal and state agencies, affected industry, non-profit organizations, and academics. Grants are also reviewed by the Foundation's issue experts, as well as evaluation staff, before being recommended to the Board of Directors for approval. In addition, according to our Congressional Charter, the Foundation provides a 30-day notification to the Members of Congress for the congressional district and state in which a grant will be funded, prior to making a funding decision.

Once again, Mr. Chairman, we greatly appreciate your continued support and hope the Subcommittee will approve funding for the Foundation in FY 2010.