

TITLE VII

Biodiversity

Minimum Requirement F.Y. 2022

\$480 million

F.Y. 2021 Enacted

\$320 million

Nature is declining at an unprecedented rate, with **over 1 million plant and animal species** facing extinction.

DESCRIPTION

Biodiversity programs help conserve the most biologically significant ecosystems on the planet. Results-oriented biodiversity programming applies scientific and evidence-based approaches to protect natural habitats vital to human health, poverty alleviation, and sustainable development.

WHAT DOES IT BUY?

Biodiversity programs build local capacity to conserve and protect ecosystems under threat, address global drivers of biodiversity loss, including illegal poaching and resource exploitation, and catalyze the growth of sustainable livelihoods and greater food security. Programs also work to ensure watersheds provide an abundance of clean water to millions of people across Africa and build local capacity to conserve and protect tropical forests under threat throughout Latin America.

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

- Nature is declining at an unprecedented rate, with over **1 million** plant and animal species facing extinction.
 - » Under current greenhouse gas emissions levels, up to **50% of species** are expected to lose most of their suitable living conditions by the end of the century.
- At least **1.6 billion people** rely on forests for their economic security, and 2.6 billion depend on fish as sources of food and income. Losses in biodiversity will produce widespread food insecurity and economic deprivation.
- **40% of intrastate conflicts** in the past 60 years can be traced to competition over natural resources.
- In 2017, thanks to USAID assistance, more than **1.5 million people** achieved a higher income, better jobs, and other economic gains through sustainable natural resource management and biodiversity conservation.

- Biodiversity maintains soil fertility, controls the prevalence of agricultural pests—such as **locusts** as seen in East Africa—and enables pollination to sustain agricultural productivity.
- Biodiversity funding safeguards fisheries in the Caribbean by using coral reefs and mangroves to shield coastal communities from natural disasters like hurricanes and tropical storms. The Bluefields fish sanctuary in Jamaica has contributed to a **70% decline** in illegal fishing and increased legal fishing hauls and fish size, resulting in greater food security.
- USAID investments in Namibia contributed to **zero** rhino poaching for the second year in a row as a result of local investments in training, equipment, conservation education, and new ranger outposts.

WHY SHOULD AMERICANS CARE?

- At its current pace, human activity could lead to the extinction of **1 million** plant and animal species over the coming decades. This loss would destabilize the natural productive cycles supporting all life on Earth.
- Conservation programs support sustainable livelihoods, political stability, and good governance in regions of strategic importance to U.S. interests. This support enhances the capacities of local and national economies to develop new and productive markets.
- Programs deter wildlife trafficking, poaching, and illegal trade in wildlife and wildlife products, which are severe conservation concerns and contribute to illicit economies that fuel conflict.

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COVID-19 IMPACTS

- As a result of the [pandemic](#) and its economic shocks, vulnerable people are reportedly relying more on the exploitation of natural resources for their livelihoods, including cutting more trees for firewood and hunting animals for food. These coping mechanisms may accelerate habitat destruction and increase the risk of other zoonotic diseases.

WHAT MORE COULD BE DONE?

- By increasing funding, the U.S. can reclaim its leadership role as a defender of ecological systems and habitats under threat worldwide.
- Significant investment is needed to stem biodiversity loss and the growing number of environmental challenges that will ultimately fall to today's children and youth.
- Additional funding would add more land and water to protected or managed status, support local capacity to manage and conserve natural resources, more effectively combat the illegal wildlife trade, and apply nature-based solutions to climate change.

FUNDING HISTORY

