

Essays from U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Ecological Services Survey
REGION 4

Below are essay responses to the following survey question:

The integrity of the scientific work produced by USFWS Ecological Services could best be improved by:

191-R4-FL-S (survey number – region – state – manager (M) or staff (S))

Too many managers (gs-13) are too political (easily swayed by calls from regional offices and or politicians.) to make the correct decisions based on science.

192-R4-AR-S

Have politicians keep their noses out of things they don't know anything about. Have them stop meddling with changes to the endangered species act for political or monetary gain.

195-R4-TN-S

Field offices have highly qualified biologists who can make decisions and findings about species and habitats based on sound science. These findings are based on biological and ecological needs of the species and are but one facet to be considered in making a final decision. Wildlife laws have provisions and procedures for considering non-biological issues. Bottom line: Let ES biologists do their jobs; then incorporate their findings in the decision-making process as provided for in federal laws. Don't short cut around established procedures.

198-R4-FL-S

Making decisions based upon actual science and true effects to listed species after a full, complete and rigorous analysis of project impacts. Findings need to be based upon biology and ecology, not what is politically acceptable or tolerable to the applicants, politicians, developers and public.

213-R4-FL-S

Taking the politics out of the scientific decision making process; taking the fear and career intimidation off the backs of the biologists; promoting professionalism and integrity among the scientists.

222-R4-FL-S

Isolating FWS from politics.

226-R4-LA-S

Not watering down decisions made by staff by caving into political pressure!!!

236-R4-FL-S

Better separation of political appointees from decision making within FWS.

199-R4-FL-M

Respecting rather than penalizing integrity.

248-R4-FL-S

I believe that the real problem with the agency lies with upper level management. Most of the time the fundamental science used to formulate biological opinions is sound and the lead biologist submit a quality product to the supervisor. Upper level management then buckles under political pressure and the recommendations/biological opinion initially submitted is revised and watered down to allow the permit to be granted.

201-R4-FL-S

Removal of “air of fear” that staff experience just from asking questions of top management-even those non-scientific questions. I was once told after a staff meeting that it is not in my best interest to put the Field Supervisor “on the spot” with questions. In the 2 years following I have not asked any more questions even though I am unsure about issues in my office – for fear of reprisals

215-R4-FL-MS

Could be best improved by managers at all levels who are willing to listen; set aside political influences for “a moment”, consistently interact with staff, remove biases toward researchers, empower staff, etc.

240-R4-MS-S

Reduce the RO supervisory staff and increase the technical staff.

206-R4-FL-S

Starting at the executive office and working downwards electing/ appointing decision makers with a commitment to conservation ethic and support for endangered species recovery.

225-R4-MS-S

Reward management for making tough decisions on the side of the species not on the political side that favors development.

228-R4-GA-S

Promoting the priority of getting out into the field to learn the ecosystems

239-R4-NC-S

More backbone and less dog-and-pony show – more on the ground action.