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**Full Statute Name: United States Code Annotated. Title 16. Conservation. Chapter 9. Fish and Wildlife Service. § 742I. Enforcement authority for the protection of fish and wildlife resources.**

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**Popular Title:** Fish and Wildlife Improvement Act of 1978 **Primary Citation:** 16 U.S.C. 742I **Country of Origin:** [United States](#) **Last Checked:** January, 2015 **Date Adopted:** 1978

**Summary:**

The Fish and Wildlife Improvement Act of 1978 authorizes the Secretaries of the Interior and Commerce to establish, conduct, and assist with national training programs for State fish and wildlife law enforcement personnel. It also authorized funding for research and development of new or improved methods to support fish and wildlife law enforcement. The law provides authority to the Secretaries to enter into law enforcement cooperative agreements with State or other Federal agencies, and authorizes the disposal of abandoned or forfeited items under the fish, wildlife, and plant jurisdictions of these Secretaries.

**Statute Text:**

(a) Law enforcement training program

(1) In order to provide for and encourage training, research, and development for the purpose of improving fish and wildlife law enforcement and developing new methods for the prevention, detection, and reduction of violation of fish and wildlife laws, and the apprehension of violators of such laws, the Secretary of the Interior and the Secretary of Commerce may each--

(A) establish and conduct national training programs to provide, at the request of any State, training for State fish and wildlife law enforcement personnel;

(B) develop new or improved approaches, techniques, systems, equipment, and service to improve and strengthen fish and wildlife law enforcement; and

(C) assist in conducting, at the request of any appropriate State official, local or regional training programs for the training of State fish and wildlife law enforcement personnel.

Such training programs shall be conducted to the maximum extent practicable through established programs.

(2) There are authorized to be appropriated beginning with fiscal year 1980 such funds as may be necessary to carry out the purposes of subsection (b) of this section, and the Secretary of the Interior and the Secretary of Commerce may each require reimbursement from the States for expenditures made pursuant to subsections (b) (1) (A) and (C) of this section.

(b) Law enforcement cooperative agreement

Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the Secretary of the Interior and the Secretary of Commerce may each utilize by agreement, with or without reimbursement, the personnel, services and facilities of any other Federal or State agency to the extent he deems it necessary and appropriate for effective enforcement of any Federal or State laws on lands, waters, or interests therein under his jurisdiction which are administered or managed for fish and wildlife purposes and for enforcement of any laws administered by him relating to fish and wildlife. Persons so designated by either Secretary, who are not employees of another Federal agency--

(1) shall not be deemed a Federal employee and shall not be subject to the provisions of law relating to Federal employment, including those relating to hours of work, competitive examination, rates of compensation, and Federal employee benefits, but may be considered eligible for compensation for work injuries under subchapter III of chapter 81 of Title 5;

(2) shall be considered to be investigative or law enforcement officers of the United States for the purposes of the tort claim provisions of Title 28;

(3) may, to the extent specified by either Secretary, search, seize, arrest, and exercise any other law enforcement functions or authorities under Federal laws relating to fish and wildlife, where such authorities are made applicable by this or any other law to employees, officers, or other persons designated or employed by either Secretary; and

(4) shall be considered to be officers or employees of the Department of the Interior or the Department of Commerce, as the case may be, within the meaning of sections 111 and 1114 of Title 18.

(c) Disposal of abandoned or forfeited property

(1) In general

Subject to paragraph (2), notwithstanding any other provision of law, all fish, wildlife, plants, or any other items abandoned or forfeited to the United States under any laws administered by the Secretary of the Interior or the Secretary of Commerce relating to fish, wildlife, or plants, shall be disposed of by either Secretary in such a manner as he deems appropriate (including, but not limited to, loan, gift, sale, or destruction).

(2) Prohibition on sale of certain items

In carrying out paragraph (1), the Secretary of the Interior and the Secretary of Commerce may not sell any species of fish, wildlife, or plant, or derivative thereof, for which the sale is prohibited by another Federal law.

(3) Use of revenues

The Secretary of the Interior and the Secretary of Commerce may each expend any revenues received from the disposal of items under paragraph (1), and all sums referred to in the first sentence of section 11(d) of the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (16 U.S.C. 1540(d)) and the first sentence of section 6(d) of the Lacey Act Amendments of 1981 (16 U.S.C. 3375(d))--

(A) to make payments in accordance with those sections; and

(B) to pay costs associated with--

(i) shipping items referred to in paragraph (1) to and from the place of storage, sale, or temporary or final disposal, including temporary or permanent loan;

(ii) storage of the items, including inventory of, and security for, the items;

(iii) appraisal of the items;

(iv) sale or other disposal of the items in accordance with applicable law, including auctioneer commissions and

related expenses;

(v) payment of any valid liens or other encumbrances on the items and payment for other measures required to clear title to the items; and

(vi) in the case of the Secretary of the Interior only, processing and shipping of eagles and other migratory birds, and parts of migratory birds, for Native American religious purposes.

(d) Disclaimer

Nothing in this section shall be construed to invalidate any law enforcement agreement or delegation made by the Secretary of the Interior or the Secretary of Commerce with respect to fish and wildlife matters prior to November 8, 1978.

(e) to (j) Omitted

(k) Law enforcement operations

With respect to any undercover or other enforcement operation which is necessary for the detection and prosecution of violations of any laws administered by the United States Fish and Wildlife Service or the National Marine Fisheries Service relating to fish, wildlife, or plants, the Secretary of the Interior or the Secretary of Commerce may, notwithstanding any other provision of law--

(1) direct the advance of funds which may be deposited in commercial banks or other financial institutions;

(2) use appropriations for payment for information, rewards, or evidence concerning violations, without reference to any rewards to which such persons may otherwise be entitled by law, and any moneys subsequently recovered shall be reimbursed to the current appropriation; and

(3) use appropriations to establish or acquire proprietary corporations or business entities as part of an undercover operation, operate such corporations or business entities on a commercial basis, lease space and make other necessary expenditures, and use the proceeds from such undercover operations to offset necessary and reasonable expenses incurred in such operations: Provided, That at the conclusion of each such operation the proceeds shall be deposited in the Treasury of the United States as miscellaneous receipts.

CREDIT(S)

(Pub.L. 95-616, § 3(a) to (d), (k), Nov. 8, 1978, 92 Stat. 3110; Pub.L. 97-396, § 7, Dec. 31, 1982, 96 Stat. 2006; Pub.L. 105-328, § 3, Oct. 30, 1998, 112 Stat. 3058.)

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