

Department of the Interior Presentation to  
The Ninth INTECOL Conference



# Fifth Report to Congress on the Status and Trends of Wetlands of the United States 2004-2009

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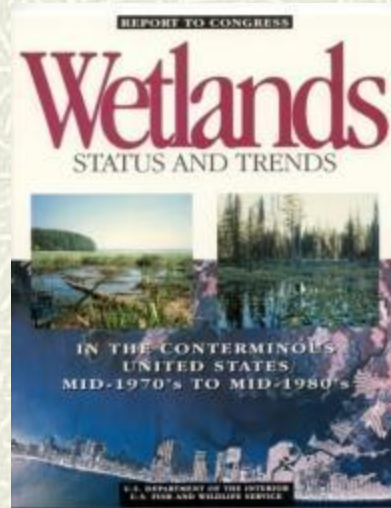
## *National Reports* *Wetlands Status and Trends*

1950s to 1970s



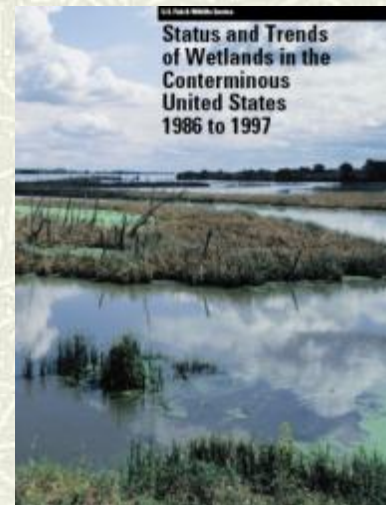
-458K

1970s to 1980s



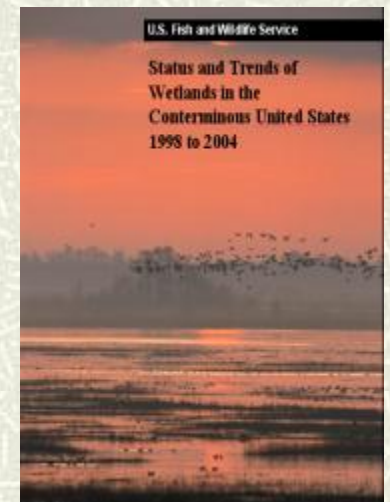
-290K

1986 to 1997



-58.5K

1998 to 2004



+32K

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## 2009 Report is the Fifth Report to Congress

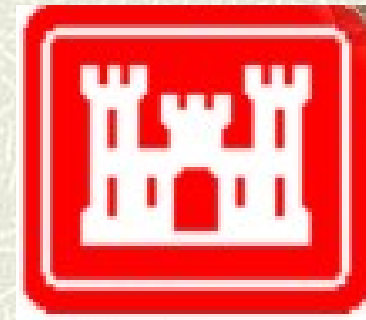
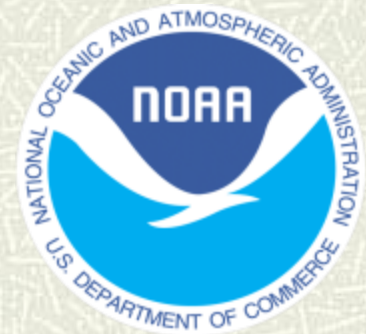
- The Emergency Wetlands Resources Act of 1986 requires the Secretary of the Interior through the FWS to report to Congress on the status and trends of wetlands every 10 years.
- This report culminates 50+ years of wetlands monitoring by FWS.
- Estimated 110.1 million acres of wetlands in the lower 48 States in 2009
  - ✓ - 5.8 million acres of marine/estuarine wetlands (5% of total)
  - ✓ - 104.3 million acres of freshwater wetlands (95%)



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## ***Federal Interagency Collaboration***



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## Key Study Elements

- **Scientific approach - biological**
- **not regulatory wetland definition**
- **Monitor all wetlands - gain and loss of wetland acreage by type**
- **Statistical estimates – with published standard error rates**
- **Process is transparent and peer reviewed**
- **Consistent measurable results to gauge policy decisions**





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## Sample Analysis:

- **5,042 sample plots (4 sq. mi. each)**
- **Field verification for 18% of plots**
- **Verification sites in 42 states**

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## ***Saltwater Wetlands***

- Saltwater wetlands declined by an estimated 84,100 acres (1.4%)
- Most losses of salt marsh wetland → deepwater bay bottoms or open-ocean (83%)
- There is evidence of marsh migration inland into undeveloped uplands.
- Atlantic Coast and Gulf of Mexico
  - ✓ Losses of salt marsh and changes in non-vegetated wetlands resulted from coastal storms and relative sea level rise

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## ***Freshwater Wetlands***

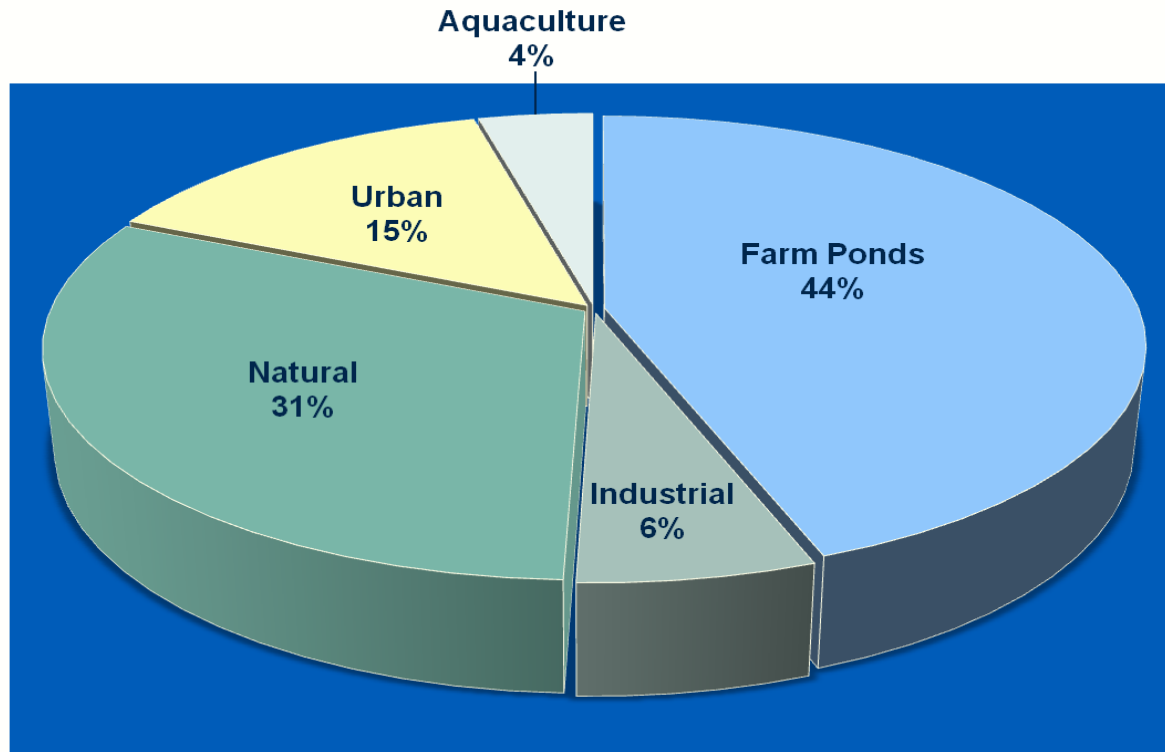
- Overall, freshwater wetlands increased slightly, but...
  - ✓ - *Forested wetlands sustained their largest losses since the 1974 to 1985 time period (633,100 acres)*
- Freshwater ponds have continued to increase but at a slower rate (3.2% increase in area)
- Freshwater vegetated wetlands continued to decline at a reduced rate (50+% fewer acres lost)



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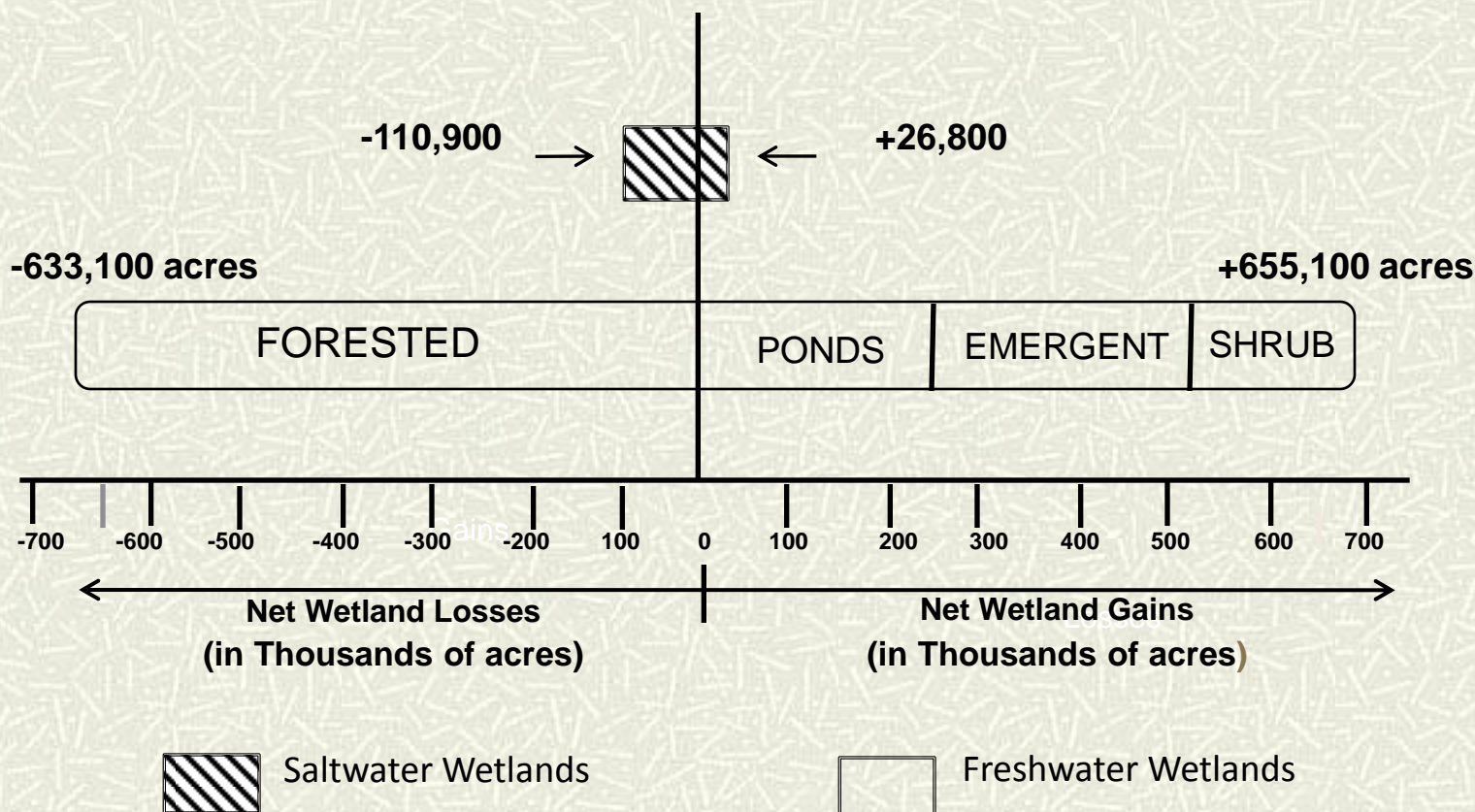
***Freshwater Pond Types (2009)  
represent 6% of all wetlands***



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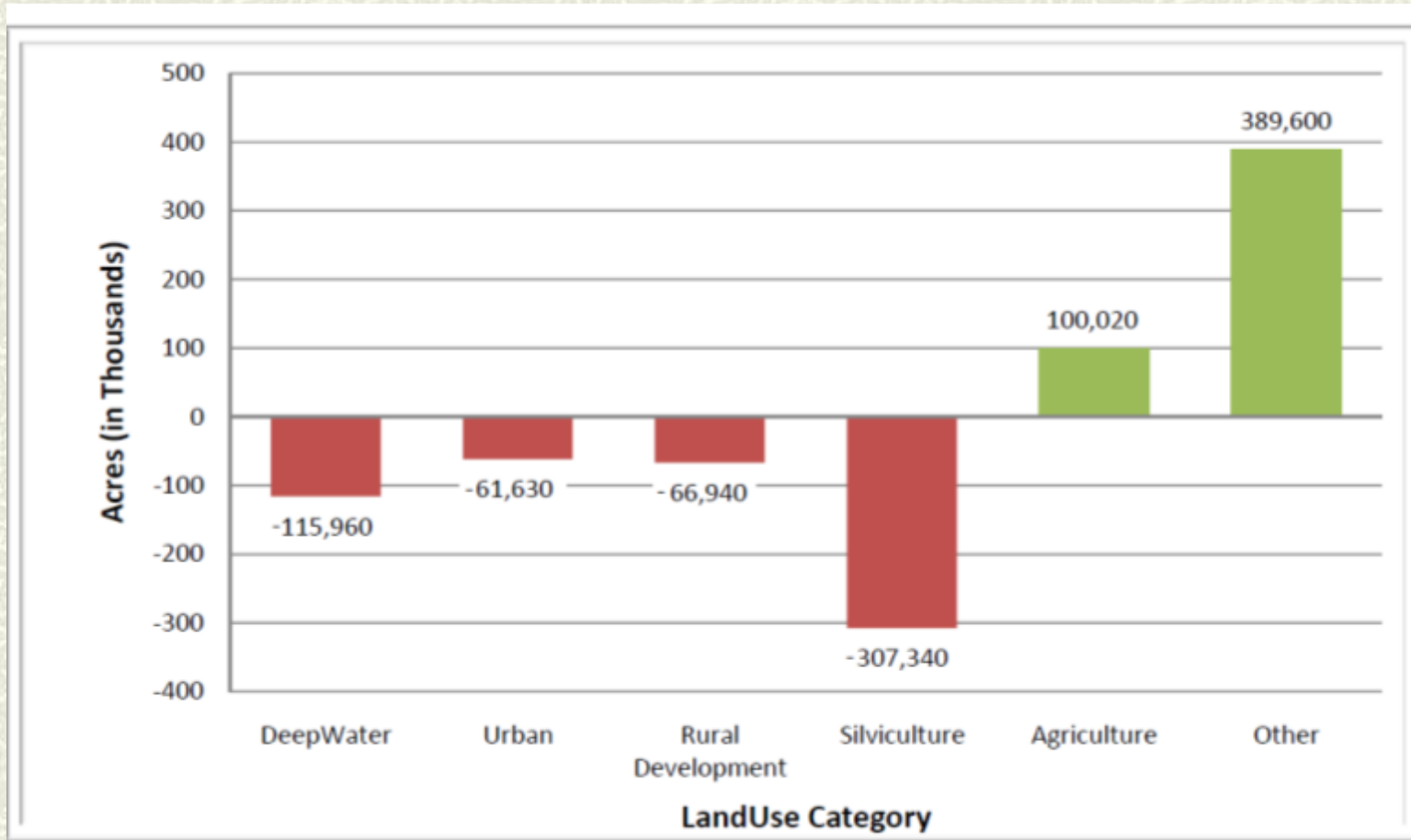
## *Gains and Losses of Saltwater and Freshwater Wetlands*



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## ***Net gains and losses of wetland (salt and freshwater)***





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## *Summary*

- 50+ years of monitoring wetland trends
- Over this period, total losses exceeded gains
- Freshwater wetland losses *and* gains are large
- Wetlands face multiple stressors, notably
  - ✓ human development
  - ✓ changes associated with changing climate
- USEPA National Wetland Condition Assessment to follow
- Can losses be reduced?

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# Working with our Partners to Conserve Wetlands



## Everglades Headwaters Conservation Partnership

June 6, 2012 Orlando, FL





June 6, 2012 Orlando, FL