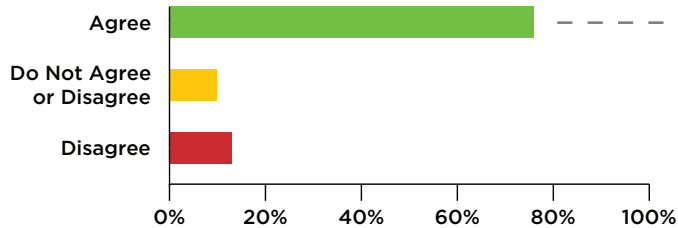
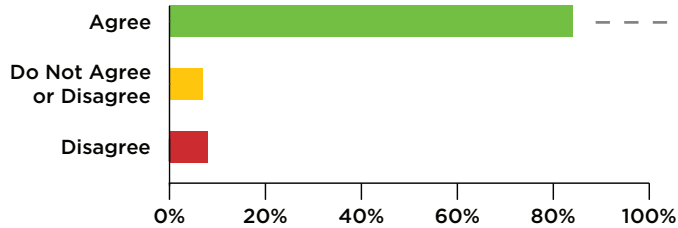


Surveying the US Fish and Wildlife Service

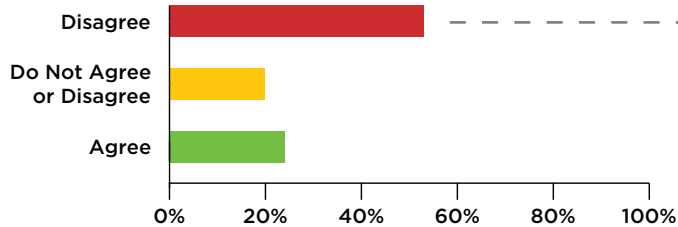
Scientist Voices under President Biden



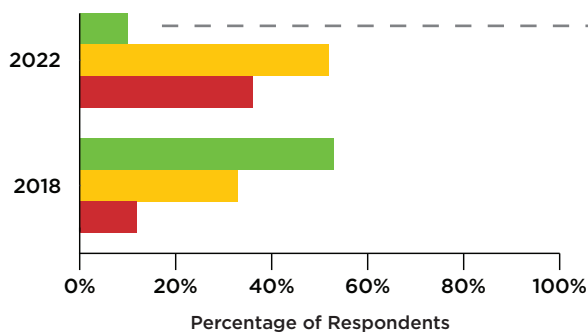
166 out of 219 FWS scientists felt their supervisors supported them even when putting forth positions that may be viewed as politically contentious.



176 out of 210 FWS scientists, over 80 percent, felt supported by the agency during the pandemic.



111 out of 210 FWS scientists did not feel that the agency's scientific workforce reflected the country's diversity.



21 out of 205 FWS scientists reported resources being funneled away from offices viewed as politically contentious, unlike during the Trump administration, when far more agreed that this was happening (190 out of 358).

See reverse for more information on this survey. For the purposes of this fact sheet, "Agree" includes both "Strongly Agree" and "Agree" response categories, and "Disagree" includes both "Disagree" and "Strongly Disagree." For detailed breakdowns of responses and exact survey questions, please visit www.ucsusa.org/resources/scientists-survey-2022.

Our nation relies on government science and scientists to protect public health, public safety, and the environment. To that end, scientific integrity safeguards are necessary for ensuring that political, ideological, and financial interests do not undermine the use of science in federal decisionmaking, harming the public good in the process.

FWS Scientists Speak Out

Anonymous FWS survey respondents cited positive views on scientific integrity, environmental justice efforts, and evidence-based decisionmaking.

“The Biden administration appears to have restored prior, generally bipartisan norms on scientific integrity and use of scientific information, even if science is only one component of decisionmaking. This is a positive change.”

“There are efforts to have a better representation of the diversity, however, it is still a struggle to attract underserved communities. A lot of our work locations are in rural areas, with a less diverse community, which I think contributes to the struggle to reflect the diversity the country has.”

“We are operating over capacity and under bandwidth at all times, and we cannot easily turn away statutorily and regulatory driven workload. This workload burden is high, and can prevent us from undertaking the more science-driven, proactive conservation work that also results in higher job satisfaction for many of us.”

In September and October of 2022, the Union of Concerned Scientists (UCS) and the University of New Hampshire Survey Center administered a survey to over 46,000 federal scientists across six government agencies, including at the US Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS). UCS received survey responses from 225 FWS scientists and experts, for a total response rate of 7.48 percent. The results shed light on how FWS scientists and experts perceive their current working environment and the agency’s ability for science to inform decisionmaking without political interference.

Codifying Scientific Integrity Principles

The work of FWS scientists feeds into decisions that protect various fish, wildlife, and plant species and their habitats, allowing all life to thrive. FWS scientists surveyed in 2022 had a positive perspective on scientific integrity and evidence-based decisionmaking. More than during the two prior administrations, scientists said they had been adequately trained on the contents of FWS scientific integrity policies, reported feeling comfortable expressing concerns about the agency’s mission-driven work, and felt supported by senior leadership. However, FWS scientists reported a lack of diversity in their scientific workforce.

Congress should pass the Scientific Integrity Act to strengthen its scientific integrity protections. Agency leadership should remind management and staff of the definition of political interference and continue to train staff on processes for bringing forward scientific integrity allegations. The agency should strengthen its scientific integrity policy in accordance with guidance from the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy and its Scientific Integrity Taskforce.

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