

Office of Applied Science

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

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What is the mission of the Office of Applied Science (OAS)?

The OAS provides research and consultation services on statewide fish and wildlife priority issues. The OAS Management Team's primary responsibilities are to ensure that the highest priority research needs within the Fish, Wildlife and Parks Division are met; biennial and annual budgets and reports are developed; and scientific advisement and consultation is provided to the Division Administrator.

Where is the OAS positioned within the DNR?

In 2017, as part of the agency re-alignment process, the OAS was created to better align the fish and wildlife research and consultation functions with the programs we serve (e.g. Fisheries Management Bureau and Wildlife Management Bureau). OAS consists of an Office Director, a fish research team and a wildlife research team. Both teams have statewide responsibility for research activities. OAS staff are housed in offices across the state, including Madison (Science Operations Center), Boulder Junction (Escanaba Lake Research Station and Northern Highland Fishery Research Area), Rhinelander, Dodgeville, Baldwin and Spooner.

The OAS has a total of 14 permanent positions: Ten NR Research Scientists (one project position), One NR Research Technician, Two NR Program Supervisors (Team Leaders) and one Section Chief (Office Director).

How is OAS research conducted and used?

Research projects address high-priority management and conservation needs and questions specific to the Bureaus within the Fish, Wildlife, and Parks Division. Information may be used by the Division to inform decision making and manage fish and wildlife populations, including determining harvest-related policy needs.

Projects are undertaken in-house or in collaboration with experts at state universities and federal agencies, depending on financial or expertise needs.

How is the OAS funded?

OAS is primarily federally funded through the Federal Aid in Sport-Fish Restoration Act (SFR) and the Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration Act (PR), with additional support provided by State Conservation Segregated Fund dollars. OAS team leaders and scientists also secure external funding to conduct high-priority fisheries and wildlife research for the agency where appropriate.

What consultation services does the OAS provide?

Requests for consultations are typically questions, issues or analyses that require scientific expertise, but can be answered through compiling and evaluating previous research. Services vary from short-term requests (4-40 hours) to those lasting several months. They include:

- Analyses of fish and wildlife population trends and species harvest data
- Potential responses of fish/wildlife population to changes in harvest management
- Policies and assessments of the current literature on a specific management topic

OAS staff collectively spend nearly 50 percent of their time on consultation services and requests.

How are the research teams divided in the OAS?

Fish Research Team – This team is comprised of staff located in Boulder Junction, Madison and Spooner. Maintaining Fisheries Research staff at the Northern Highland Fishery Research Area in Boulder Junction, the Science Operations Center in Madison and the Spooner Service Center is critical because our fisheries research program and projects are statewide in scope and it better aligns staff with regional fisheries managers' needs.

Our collective expertise is diverse and includes staff who specialize in coldwater sportfishes (e.g., trout), general fisheries ecology and management and quantitative fisheries stock assessment. Fisheries Research staff are engaged in high-priority research projects related to the sportfishes of Wisconsin (e.g., walleye, muskellunge, bass, panfish, trout, sturgeon), fish habitat and Fisheries Management's propagation program.

Wildlife Research Team – The work of wildlife research staff aligns with the information needs of partner bureaus, with Wildlife Management being our primary customer bureau. Staff expertise includes wildlife population monitoring, harvest projection, disease ecology and population dynamics. Our work is conducted statewide and is diverse in scope, with a primary focus on the management of game species.

The Wildlife Research Team works collaboratively with citizens of the state through volunteer opportunities for hunters, trappers and landowners. We also foster collaborations with universities and partner federal agencies across the state and country to help meet high-priority research needs for the agency.