

A WILD SUCCESS

American Voices on the Endangered Species Act at 40



February 2014

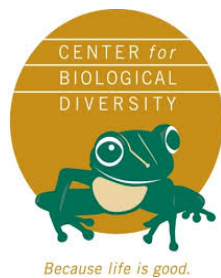
Overwhelming Support for the Endangered Species Act

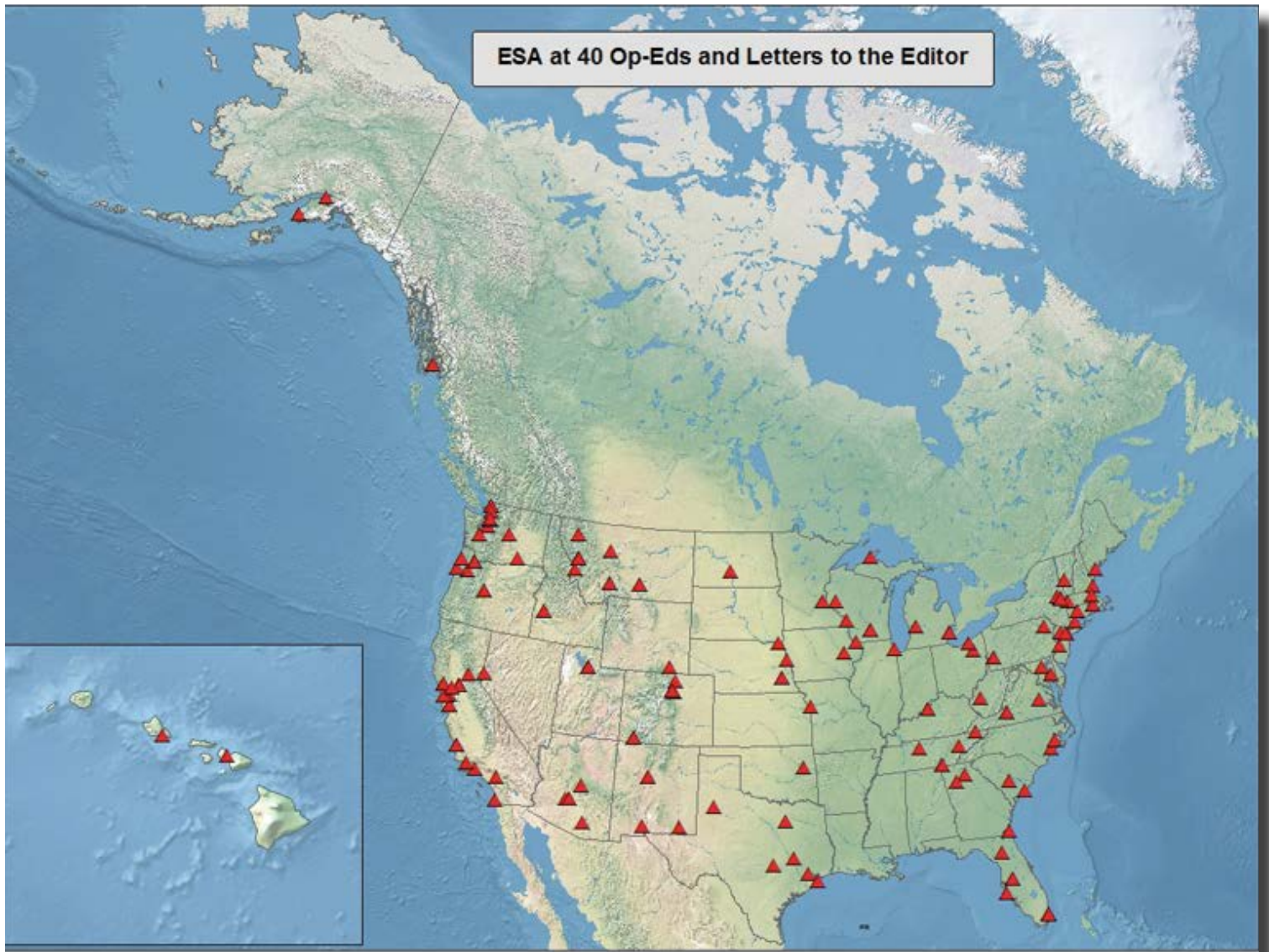
Over the past year, Americans from across the country spoke out in celebration of the 40th anniversary of the Endangered Species Act, once again demonstrating the nation's passionate support for the landmark law that has prevented the extinction of 99 percent of the plants and animals it protects.

Hundreds of Americans from every walk of life wrote to their local newspapers to praise the law that has saved bald eagles, pelicans, grizzlies and scores of other imperiled plants and animals and protected irreplaceable forests, streams and oceans we all share.

Of the hundreds submitted, at least 110 letters to the editor and op-eds were published in 42 states over the course of the year. More than 50 news articles and blogs also praised the Act. In combination with recent polling showing that a clear majority of Americans (67 percent) want to see the landmark law strengthened or left alone, the message from the American public is loud and clear: Protect endangered species and the Endangered Species Act.

Given this broad public support for the Endangered Species Act and the importance of preventing species extinction, Congress must do everything in its power to protect and strengthen the Act, which for four decades has helped us to balance the nation's short-term economic needs with the best long-term environmental and economic interests of generations of Americans to come.





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Op-Eds and Editorials

NATIONAL

http://takingnote.blogs.nytimes.com/2013/12/31/the-law-that-saved-the-bald-eagle/?_r=1

The New York Times

December 31, 2013

The Law That Saved the Bald Eagle

By [ROBERT B. SEMPLE JR.](#)

In this season of birthdays and holidays, on Saturday the environmental community rightly celebrated the 40th anniversary of the passage of one of the most ambitious of the Nixon era's landmark environmental statutes: the Endangered Species Act. The act is at once the noblest of those statutes — aimed, in President Nixon's words, at protecting "an irreplaceable part of our natural heritage — threatened wildlife"; and also the most controversial, detested by loggers, developers and other interests for elevating the needs of nature over the needs of commerce. Approved by huge margins in both chambers (the vote on the House was an astounding 355-4), the act would stand zero chance of passage in today's poisoned political climate.

Right-wing critics of the law like to point out that less than 2 per cent of the 1500 or so animal and plant species listed as endangered or threatened under the law have actually recovered to the point that they can be removed from list. But this is a nutty way of measuring success; most of those species, once headed for extinction, can hardly be expected to rebuild healthy, sustainable populations overnight. A much better measure is that only about 30 species have gone to their doom, 37 species have been or will soon be removed from the list, and well over half are deemed stable or on the road to recovery. The act is credited with saving the bald eagle, the peregrine falcon, the California condor, the American alligator, the Florida panther and the grey wolf.

Individual species aside, the act's provisions requiring the preservation of a threatened

animal's habitat has resulted in enormous gains for the environment as a whole. A succession of tiny birds listed as endangered or threatened — the spotted owl, the marbled murrelet, the coastal California gnatcatcher — have, over the past 20 years, saved millions of acres of old growth forest and open space along the Pacific coast from logging and commercial development. Efforts to save the wood stork and the Florida panther have helped nourish the Everglades. And given sufficient political will, the endangered salmon runs in the Pacific Northwest may yet lead to the removal of dams that impede fish passage and cause huge mortality rates on the Lower Snake River.

Presidents Clinton and Obama have improved the way the act is administered, encouraging governments, landowners and industry to collaborate on conservation plans *before* an animal is formally listed as endangered. The number of lawsuits from environmental groups has likewise declined. Since the act has widespread public support, it seems unthinkable that Congress would roll it back. But with this Congress you never know.

Some very tough and inevitably controversial decisions lie ahead for Sally Jewell, the Interior Secretary. The biggest of these will be whether to protect the Greater Sage Grouse, a pretty little creature whose habitat not only ranges over nearly a dozen western states but is also believed to contain considerable reserves of oil and natural gas. Thus the stage is set for either a knockdown fight between the forces of nature and commerce, or a negotiated solution that gives industry some access without threatening the bird. As long as a compromise achieves the latter, we're for it.

Detroit Free Press

U.S. Rep. John Dingell: Save the legislation that saves endangered animals

December 28, 2013

By John Dingell
Detroit Free Press guest writer

On Saturday, we celebrate the 40th anniversary of the Endangered Species Act of 1973.

This important law enacted some of the first comprehensive guidelines to protect animals from extinction, in an effort to protect the rich heritage found in creatures that roam our planet and the ecosystems they depend on to live. We know the Endangered Species Act (ESA) has been successful because of the species that have been delisted from protection, including the Columbian white-tailed deer, California condor, bull trout, gray whale and so many others.



This nation has a long and proud tradition of respect for our wildlife and natural resources. The strength and vitality of our environment, and thus our own health and well-being, is inextricably linked to the health and well-being of other species.

I was proud to be a lead author of this important legislation. Without it, there might not be a single bald eagle or peregrine falcon in our skies. No manatees or cutthroat trout in our waters and no gray wolves or grizzly bears in our forests. This monumental legislation has, quite literally, saved our natural heritage during its 40 years. The ESA has served as the foundation for the protection of thousands of America's most cherished and ecologically important species.

Our country was the first to say that only natural extinction is part of natural order; extinction caused by human neglect and interference is not. Science is at the core of the ESA, and should remain so. Congress determined at that time that when dealing with matters as important as our national environmental policy, nonpartisan action is what we should strive for.

Sadly, partisan bickering and political agendas threaten to return us to the times when we were destroying our great natural treasures. I am saddened to report that this cornerstone

environmental law is in greater peril now than it has been in its 40-year history. From efforts to defund the agencies that oversee its implementation, to the forces that work to find and exploit loopholes in the law to put industry profits ahead of our planet, defending the ESA will require a diligence the likes of which we have not witnessed before. But we must fight against these challenges, and know these challenges threaten to roll back years of progress.

I believe that each one of us has the responsibility to stand up for environmental protection for our world's future, because this world — as much as we may take it for granted — is not ours. We do not inherit this Earth from previous generations, but rather we borrow it from future ones. Because of this, we must keep our nation's commitment to a healthy and secure environment.

The next time you take your family or friends on a trip to a national park, national forest or wildlife refuge, chances are that you'll see species that have benefited from the Endangered Species Act. Then ask yourself whether you want future generations to enjoy the same opportunities.

We cannot look at people on the other end of the boat and say, "Your end of the boat is sinking." All of us on this planet are all in this boat, and we must lead the world in maintaining a vibrant, thriving and healthy ecosystem.

John Dingell, a Democrat from Dearborn, represents Michigan's 12th District in the U.S. House.



Protect the Endangered Species Act

Sen. Ben Cardin and Rep. Jim Moran, Washington

December 27, 2013

Forty years ago this month, Congress passed the Endangered Species Act; astute, visionary legislation that's served as our nation's lifeline for plants, fish, and wildlife on the brink of extinction. The act has since become one of the strongest and most important laws we have for protecting and restoring the native species of our continent. Thanks to Endangered Species Act, Americans can delight in the sight of bald eagle soaring over the rivers of the Chesapeake Bay, hear the howls of wolves in Yellowstone National Park and witness the magnificent breaching of a humpback whale off the coast of California.

Wisely, the drafters of the Endangered Species Act in 1973 recognized that halting the extinction of wildlife and plants meant taking measures to protect the ecosystems — the habitats — where imperiled species live. As a result, the act's habitat provisions have resulted in the preservation of millions of acres of forests, plains and waterways, providing a sanctuary for the listed species and an oasis of nature for the people and wildlife who share those habitats.

More than 1,300 imperiled species of plants, fish and wildlife in the United States are currently protected, and only 10 have gone extinct, according to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. And although the enormous task of recovering a species from near-extinction is a decades-long endeavor, studies have shown that the majority of protected species are recovering within the timeframes projected.

Several imperiled species call Maryland and Virginia home, including the Atlantic Coast piping plover, the bog turtle (North America's smallest turtle!), the Delmarva Fox Squirrel, found exclusively in the lowland pine forests of the Chesapeake Bay, and the Shenandoah salamander, which is endemic to Shenandoah National Park. As senior leaders serving on the authorizing and appropriating subcommittees of jurisdiction, we are committed to fighting off attempts by some in Congress to weaken the Endangered Species Act. We are committed to securing the future of wildlife found in the Chesapeake and the Shenandoah, and all of America's flora and fauna for generations of Virginians and Marylanders to come.

Perhaps President Richard Nixon said it best, when he signed the Endangered Species Act into law on December 28, 1973, stating that, "Nothing is more priceless and more worthy of preservation than the rich array of animal life with which our country has been blessed. It is a many-faceted treasure, of value to scholars, scientists, and nature lovers alike, and it forms a vital part of the heritage we all share as Americans."

The 40th anniversary of the Endangered Species Act provides us with a great opportunity to reflect upon and strengthen our commitment as a nation to conserving and recovering wildlife on the brink of extinction. The previous generation of leaders gave us the tools. It is now up to us, particularly in a

time of austerity, to secure its future and ensure that our children and grandchildren will inherit the special places we call home.

Sen. Ben Cardin and Rep. Jim Moran, Washington

The writers, both Democrats, are chairman of the Senate Environment & Public Works Water and Wildlife Subcommittee and ranking member of the House Appropriations Interior, Environment and Related Agencies Subcommittee.



This website
fueled by the
generosity of
our readers

Celebrating 40 Years of the Endangered Species Act

By Sen. SHELDON WHITEHOUSE

Saturday, December 21, 2013

In Rhode Island, our way of life has always been tied to the sea. The ocean provides food for our table, attracts tourists to our shores and gives us an appreciation for the wonders of our planet. Narragansett Bay and Rhode Island Sound support jobs in trade, fishing, boat and ship building, and soon, we hope, offshore wind energy.

New England's coasts are home to North Atlantic right whales, which migrate along our coastline, as do humpback and fin whales. Hawksbill, Kemp's ridley and leatherback sea turtles can be spotted in the summer. Piping plovers seek refuge on our shores. These iconic creatures of our region are afforded special protections under the Endangered Species Act, which celebrates its 40th anniversary this month.

Unfortunately, what Pope Francis has described as our "ocean wonderworld" is put at risk by polluted runoff, chemical dumping, overfishing, marine debris, invasive species, warming waters and, perhaps most alarming, rising acidity of ocean water. Individually, each of these problems would be cause for concern. In combination, they are driving us toward the brink of ecosystem collapse.

Ocean warming and acidification are the direct results of carbon pollution, mainly from the burning of fossil fuels. Over the past 250 years, the global annual average concentration of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere has increased by 30 percent. Most of that has been in the past few decades. The carbon concentration has gone up by 15 percent just since 1980. We have now far exceeded measurements of atmospheric carbon going back at least 800,000 years.

Excess carbon dioxide in the atmosphere traps energy from the sun, raising the temperature of the Earth. Oceans have absorbed more than 90 percent of the excess heat caused by greenhouse gases during the past 50 years.

Oceans also have absorbed about 30 percent of our carbon emissions, changing the pH of the uppermost layer of ocean water. As a result, the acidity of the ocean has increased by nearly 30 percent. By the end of this century, it's projected to be 160 percent more acidic.

These are unprecedented ecological shifts, which are happening too quickly for life all over the planet to adapt. In the history of geologic time, there has never been recorded such a rapid worldwide increase in atmospheric carbon and ocean acidity.

That's why the Endangered Species Act is so important. For four decades, the Endangered Species Act has helped scientists and conservation agencies protect species and habitat. The passage of the law made the difference between extinction and recovery for some of our most

iconic species, such as the bald eagle, the gray wolf and the North Atlantic right whale. Today, those protections are more vital than ever.

We must ensure that the Endangered Species Act remains effective in the face of a changing climate. Federal agencies are beginning to adapt their scientific and management practices to protect endangered species against the array of threats they face today. In some cases, this means incorporating what climate change will cause into decisions regarding threatened and endangered species.

Conserving our nation's wildlife and its natural habitat has long been an honorable and worthy goal on both sides of the aisle. This is a legacy that should be celebrated, not attacked or weakened for short-term economic or political gains. Rhode Island Sen. John Chafee called the law "the pit bull of environmental statutes," and fought to maintain its protections in the 1990s. I am proud to carry on that commitment today.

Forty years ago, we made a promise to do what we could to shield the animals and plants of the Earth from extinction. Today, the threats are worse than then. So it's up to all of us to live up to the promise of the Endangered Species Act.



A Northwest success story for the Endangered Species Act

BY NORM DICKS

December 24, 2013

Like many Washingtonians, I grew up fishing. Starting at the age of six or seven my father would take me out for a two-week fishing trip each year at Neah Bay. We'd chase after cod, king salmon and halibut in our fishing boat, but the real joy was just being out on the water with my dad and brother Les, sharing nature's wonders and, with a little luck, its bounty.

When I was elected to Congress 30 years later, the health of our fisheries had already taken a dramatic turn for the worse. Many of the classic salmon runs my dad, Les and I fished had been severely depleted. There was no shortage of contributing factors that had taken their toll and salmon numbers had plummeted.



Fortunately, all was not lost. I was elected to the U.S. House of Representatives in 1976 at a very heady time, on the heels of the enactment of our nation's great conservation laws. The Clean Air Act and Clean Water Act had both passed Congress only a few years earlier, which reduced smog and helped cleanse our rivers.

But one law in particular stood out because of its boldness and vision: the Endangered Species Act. Passed by wide bipartisan margins in Congress in 1973 and signed into law by a Republican president, the goal of the ESA was simple: conserve imperiled plants and animals and the intricate natural web that sustains us all. It truly was a common-sense law built on a foundation of foresight and concern for future generations.

It's also the law that helped save salmon in the Northwest. For centuries abundant salmon runs provided sustenance for the people in our region. As the country industrialized, recreational and commercial salmon fishing became a major contributor to our regional economy, providing a livelihood for thousands of families and feeding millions. But without adequate protections, salmon suffered and so did other animals in the food chain.

For example, orcas rely on salmon as one of their primary food sources and our orcas nearly disappeared as salmon declined. Bears and other predators that feast on salmon making their way upstream also witnessed declines. The people of the Northwest suffered as well. As the salmon population plunged, jobs were lost; processing plants closed and salmon became an unaffordable luxury for the average family.

But it is no small coincidence that this year, on the 40th anniversary of the Endangered Species Act, many of our salmon populations have returned in record-breaking numbers. More than a million king salmon have made their way past the mouth of the Columbia and a number of depleted salmon runs have turned the corner and are making the slow and steady climb back.

Why are the salmon doing so well? Because the Endangered Species Act works and decades of conservation efforts implemented under the law are paying off. As a result of the ESA, everything was put on the table for review and all of the major factors contributing to the decline of salmon over the decades, from habitat to hatcheries to dams to harvest levels were scrutinized and improved because of the requirements of the ESA.

There still is work to do, but the ESA is working for the Northwest's salmon populations. But that's just one of many great wildlife success stories of the Endangered Species Act.

Thanks to the law, we now have bald eagles flying from coast to coast, gray wolves and grizzly bears are starting to return to the North Cascades and much of our remaining old-growth forests still stand tall with the roster of old-growth dependent species that make them so unique.

Let's not kid ourselves. There are many serious threats still looming large on the horizon. Air and water pollution still threaten to make a comeback as Congress considers weakening our environmental laws. Development pressure is as strong as ever. Some of our most iconic animals are still threatened with extinction. And climate change threatens to overwhelm even our best laid plans.

But with the ESA, at least we know we have an effective tool for preventing the needless loss of imperiled plants and animals.

I'm retired from Congress now and I have more time to go fishing with my family. And whenever I do, I'm reminded of what's at stake. Salmon, orcas, grizzlies and others animals still need our help in order to survive.

But on the 40th anniversary of the ESA, I am hopeful. Efforts to restore our salmon fisheries and recover the health of our rivers are heading in the right direction. And I see tremendous passion and dedication in the next generation of wildlife conservationists.

But we all need to recommit ourselves to the next 40 years of endangered species conservation so we don't fall back into the traps of old. We need to stand strong against those who would weaken the ESA and undo all the progress we have made.

And we need to embrace the same optimistic foresight our leaders showed in passing the ESA 40 years ago so our children's children will be able to cherish memories of salmon fishing with their dads as well.

Norm Dicks was the U.S. representative for Washington's 6th Congressional District from 1977 to 2013. He retired at the end of the 112th Congress.



CQ Roll Call

April 29, 2013

Grijalva: My Colleagues Want to Gut Endangered Species Act

By Rep. Raul M. Grijalva

The Endangered Species Act turns 40 this year. It's provided our country and its wild places with a lot of benefits. It's also been the target of attacks from committed opponents, including some of my House colleagues.

Although the act is best known for saving bald eagles and grizzly bears, it's put hundreds of species on the road to recovery over the past four decades, including many in my home state of Arizona.

The law has meant full recovery for condors and many other species that were on the verge of extinction.

This landmark law — signed by President Richard Nixon when protecting the environment was less controversial in Washington — has prevented the extinction of 99 percent of the plants and animals under its protection because it takes a big-picture approach. When we protect species, we also protect the wild forests, deserts, rivers and streams where they live. This means more biological diversity, cleaner air and water, a healthier climate and more sustainable natural resources for which future generations will thank us.

Sustaining rivers, forests and deserts is good for our economy. We can't survive as a purely mechanized society or a nationwide chemical plant. We need green spaces and ecological balance.

Keeping lethal pesticides out of rivers populated by endangered species isn't just good for those species — it's good for everyone. There are benefits to protecting species that go well beyond those species' survival.

Many years ago, as chairman of the Pima County Board of Supervisors, I helped initiate the process — guided all the way by the Endangered Species Act — that led to the Sonoran Desert Conservation Plan. This successful effort sets aside many of our region's critical conservation areas while identifying sites best suited for building homes, businesses and industries. The plan goes a long way toward protecting the Sonoran Desert.

One of the keys to our success has been a peer-reviewed study of the region's most imperiled species, including 16 protected under the Endangered Species Act. Science really can show the way to better public policy, despite what some people want to tell you. The Endangered Species Act established the science-based habitat management rules that showed us how to write our conservation plan. It can provide the same guidelines elsewhere.

Without the protections set forth in the Endangered Species Act, it would have been impossible to get the region's diverse conservation, political and business interests to sit down and negotiate a long-term sustainable solution to the future of growth in our region. It's a useful framework for deciding what will fit where and how different interests can coexist. Rather than running roughshod or taking a my-way-or-else approach, everyone sat down and had to examine the effects of their decisions carefully. We could use more of that in Washington, but that's another story.

Unfortunately, some people want to do away with the law even now. Rick Santorum, the former Republican senator and presidential candidate, sounded a common theme when he complained last year that the law prioritizes "critters above people" and was part of "a truly radical environmental agenda." Rep. [Paul Broun](#), R-Ga., who chairs the House Science, Space and Technology Subcommittee on Oversight, has complained, "As a tool for advancing other special interest policy goals, it has certainly been very influential, but I'm not sure that was the act's original intent." With all due respect, I think he's misunderstood the law.

The Endangered Species Act is too valuable to shred for the sake of a pesticide company's bottom line, a sweetheart mining deal or any other grab for money at the environment's expense. Let's keep up the good work rather than turning back the clock.

Rep. Raúl M. Grijalva is a Democrat from Arizona.



Vern Buchanan: Protecting the Endangered Species Act



By VERN BUCHANAN, Guest Columnist

Published: Sunday, December 8, 2013 at 1:00 a.m.

What do the bald eagle, the gray wolf and the American alligator have in common? They were all saved from extinction by the Endangered Species Act.

This month marks the 40th anniversary of the Act, which has done a remarkable job protecting animals and plant life across the country.

The program has been so successful since its enactment in 1973 that 99 percent of the threatened species placed under its protection have been saved from extinction.

One of America's greatest symbols -- the bald eagle -- was once on the verge of being wiped off the face of the planet, only to be saved by the Endangered Species Act. After nearly disappearing from the national landscape decades ago, this majestic creature is now flourishing across the country, no longer in need of special protection under the ESA.

The program was also essential in restoring the American crocodile. On the verge of extinction with a population of 200, the American crocodile has made an amazing recovery and has recently been downlisted from endangered to threatened status with a population now exceeding 2,000.

Currently, the ESA protects over 1,400 American species of plants and animals (the complete list is at http://ecos.fws.gov/tess_public/pub/listedAnimals.jsp).

The list includes more than 120 species native to Florida. From scrub jays to manatees, this program has been essential to ensuring the protection of Florida's native species and natural habitats.

Over the years, I have stood firmly against attempts to weaken this important law. I opposed an effort to prevent the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service from adding new species to the list.

And earlier this year, I introduced legislation condemning the cruel and grisly practice of stripping sharks of their fins and tossing them back in the ocean to die. Shark fins are delicacies in Asia. My legislation was endorsed by the Sierra Club and the Humane Society.

I will continue to be a strong advocate for the Endangered Species Act and fight to preserve our wildlife and ecosystems now and in the future. There are too many species still at risk -- including the grizzly bear, the red wolf and the Florida panther -- to give up our fight.

U.S. Rep. Vern Buchanan, R-Longboat Key, represents the 16th District, which includes Manatee and Sarasota counties.



Let science inform our decisions

By [Bill Richardson / Former Governor of New Mexico](#) on Thu, May 23, 2013

During my two terms as governor of New Mexico, I often found myself in the middle of challenging discussions involving a wide range of my constituents about what was necessary to protect the state's most imperiled plants and animals.

For me, those discussions always began with one question: What does the best available science suggest we should do?

What I found is that when we let the science lead, we end up in a good place. And that's exactly how Congress envisioned it when it passed the Endangered Species Act 40 years ago this year.

Now, during the month Americans all over the country are celebrating Endangered Species Day, which falls each year on May 17, is a good time to stop and acknowledge what the Act has accomplished in its first four decades.

And when it comes to protecting wildlife from extinction, we don't have to look far to see its power right here in New Mexico.

The population of Gila trout grew from about 7,600 fish in 1975 to 37,000 in 2008 and has been downlisted to "threatened" status.

Aplomado falcons, once completely extirpated from the United States, now have populations in New Mexico and Texas.

And Mexican gray wolves, once completely eliminated from the Southwest, now total 75 in New Mexico and Arizona.

To date, the Act has prevented the extinction of 99 percent of the more than 1,400 species placed under its care. Many of those species are now meeting or exceeding goals for recovery – a record all Americans should be proud of.

When you look back across the many successes of the Act's first four decades – from bald eagles and grizzlies to California condors and gray wolves – it's easy to forget that recovering plants and animals from the brink of extinction has never been easy – but it's always been worth the effort.

That conviction continues to be at the heart of my current work as a board member for the National Council for Science and the Environment, a prestigious group of scientists and environmental leaders working to more closely align the decisions of top policymakers with the conclusions of science.

And nowhere are the impacts of that bond more important than in how we administer the Endangered Species Act.

Here in the 21st century, if we're going to embrace the challenge of slowing extinctions and habitat destruction, we have no choice but to let science inform our most critical political decisions regarding the protection of our wildlife.

If we do that, the Endangered Species Act can be even more successful over the next 40 years in helping us to save our most imperiled plants and animals and the planet we all share with them.



Talbot: Four decades of conservation in jeopardy?

Posted: Saturday, December 28, 2013 12:00 am | Updated: 12:48 am, Sun Dec 29, 2013.

Lee Talbot



Unknown

Forty-two years ago, President Richard Nixon said, “I have asked for a new and more effective federal law to protect endangered species of wildlife — by covering species likely to become endangered as well as those more immediately threatened, and by imposing federal penalties for taking of such species.”

With this statement, the Endangered Species Act was born. Today, it is hard to imagine the president making such a profound and far-reaching statement on wildlife. And it would be even harder to believe Congress listening, agreeing and passing such legislation. But that was what happened and on Dec. 28, 1973,

Nixon got his wish, and signed the Endangered Species Act into law.

What a unique time that was. The 1970s were a time of awakening; and with the first Earth Day, the birth of the modern-day environmental movement. We realized that our country was headed in the wrong direction: the bald eagle was nearly extinct, peregrine falcons had disappeared east of the Mississippi and wolves were a distant memory in most parts of our country. We started to realize that our resources had limits, and that what we did to those resources had repercussions, both to us and the wildlife that make our country so unique. Nixon saw that protecting our water, our air and our wildlife was not just the right thing to do; it was politically expedient to do it!

As a young ecologist working for the administration, I found it a thrilling time. Already, I had spent years traveling different countries conducting surveys of conservation conditions and endangered species throughout parts of Africa, the Middle East, South and Southeast Asia. I organized expeditions into many of the wildest areas of the planet to determine firsthand the status of species such as the Arabian oryx, the great Indian rhino and the Asian lion. Now that I was back in the states, I was going to be able to put that far-reaching knowledge to work in helping to craft the most comprehensive protections ever developed for endangered species.

Nixon asked me to help launch the President's Council on Environmental Quality, a council that still survives today to advise presidents on environmental issues. In such a key role, I was able to work directly with the administration, the federal agencies and members of Congress such as the esteemed Rep. John Dingell, who still carries the water on conservation in Congress today. The result was one of the strongest pieces of legislation ever submitted to Congress.

What a thrill and honor it was to be part of such an historic undertaking. There was nothing else like it in the world and the law embodied most of what I felt was truly needed to conserve and recover our nation's treasured wildlife. Over the years, the successes of the law have been extraordinary: miracles such as the recovery of the bald eagle, the peregrine falcon, the American alligator and so many other species never would have been possible without the ESA. By passing this law, we brought the issue of endangered species and the need to protect habitat to the attention of the American people and our government. It forced the government to take endangered species seriously and it has been a model for national action world-wide.

One would think that with such success, the 40th anniversary of the ESA would be celebrated from coast to coast. But instead, the ESA is in grave danger. There is a segment of our elected officials that is willing to kill off any sort of regulation, no matter how beneficial it is to the public.

It seems like every day, someone in Congress is introducing another bill or rider that would undermine virtually every major environmental law on the books. Bills that would be unheard of a few decades ago now seem commonplace; extremes such as legislation to sell off our federal lands, waive environmental safeguards, undermine endangered species protections and allow for dangerous and unsustainable development on our public lands don't even appear to rank high enough on the radar to be covered by the press today.

This anti-regulatory, anti-conservation movement on Capitol Hill is unprecedented. It is too willing to sell our health, wildlife and natural treasures off for short-term corporate gains for the few, resulting in long-term losses for our country and our people.

For someone like myself who has seen the terrible destruction of wildlife and habitats across the globe and the amazing recovery of wildlife on the brink of extinction, this is soul-crushing. Other countries look up to our nation as the model of wildlife conservation. They model their parks, refuges and wildlife laws after our own. It is our moral duty to future generations in our country and throughout the world to not lose sight of our successes and responsibilities to our natural heritage.

As Nixon said when he signed the ESA into law: "Nothing is more priceless and more worthy of preservation than the rich array of animal life with which our country has been blessed. It is a many-faceted treasure, of value to scholars, scientists, and nature lovers alike, and it forms a vital part of the heritage we all share as Americans."

It's time we took his words to heart and recommit to the conservation promises embedded in the Endangered Species Act on this anniversary and always.

Lee Talbot, one of the original authors of the 1973 Endangered Species Act, is a professor of environmental sciences and policy at George Mason University. Contact him at ltalbot@gmu.edu.

Earth Island Journal

Happy Birthday, Dear Endangered Species Act

BY [KIMBERLEY DELFINO](#) – DECEMBER 27, 2013

California is a great example for how to protect threatened species

Forty years ago tomorrow — on December 28, 1973 — President Richard Nixon signed the Endangered Species Act (ESA) into law. This landmark legislation has defined America's commitment to wildlife conservation ever since. The ESA and other bedrock environmental laws such as the Clean Air and Clean Water Acts affirm for all Americans that we are a nation dedicated to conserving our natural heritage for future generations — through our national parks and refuges, through clean air and water, and by protecting our wildlife.

In the four decades since the ESA's passage, more than 1,200 plants and animals in the United States have put been under the law's protection. The act has been essential to a range of conservation success stories. The brown pelican, the American alligator, and the grizzly bear — along with our national symbol, the bald eagle — have all experienced amazing comebacks thanks to the ESA.

My home state, California, offers an inspiring example of the ESA in action. The Golden State may be the most populous in the nation — a place more often associated with freeways and traffic jams than with wildlife roaming the forests and deserts — but California is also the location of some of the ESA's [greatest successes](#). Some of the species that have been protected by the ESA call California home, including the El Segundo blue butterfly and the southern sea otter which are found only in California's Central Coast and Southern regions, while the humpback whale, green sea turtle, peregrine falcon and bald eagle have ranges across California and its coastline.

Such success stories prove that we can protect imperiled species and improve California's economy and infrastructure at the same time. And they also demonstrate that when we work together to protect our nation's wildlife and public lands, we reap numerous benefits — tangible and intangible — in the process.

People travel from all across the United States and from around the world to visit California's majestic parks and wildlife refuges — Yosemite, Death Valley, Joshua Tree, and San Joaquin River National Wildlife Refuge. Our state's iconic plants and animals are legendary — towering redwoods, spawning salmon, California condors and desert tortoises.

In California, we've proven that we can safeguard endangered plants and animals while simultaneously offering benefits to landowners. For example, in eastern Contra Costa County,

we've developed a [conservation plan](#) that benefits the [endangered kit fox](#), red-legged frog, and tiger salamander while accommodating increasing urban and suburban populations. The Lower Mokelumne River is another example of [a collaborative agreement](#), where wine grape growers agreed to a voluntary partnership to enhance habitat for the endangered valley elderberry longhorn beetle and other species along more than 20 miles of the lower Mokelumne River in San Joaquin County. At the same time, [this agreement](#) provides regulatory assurances to enrolled landowners so they can continue normal farming activities. These innovative agreements demonstrate the array of tools available to landowners and state and local officials when we work together to protect imperiled wildlife.

But in spite of the demonstrated success of the ESA in California and across the U.S., we are witnessing an unprecedented [anti-conservation movement in Congress](#). Increasingly, the ESA seems to fall victim to the deep pockets of special interest groups who are more worried about today's bottom line than tomorrow's legacy. In addition, escalating environmental changes, including habitat loss and climate change, are creating new threats for our wildlife. These contentious political times, coupled with rapid environmental change, seem to leave the ESA itself imperiled, just like the species it is designed to protect.

Today's diminished political support for endangered species is especially discouraging given the historic bipartisan enthusiasm for protecting wildlife. Here, for example, is Republican President Nixon's statement upon signing the act: "Nothing is more priceless and more worthy of preservation than the rich array of animal life with which our country has been blessed. It is a many-faceted treasure, of value to scholars, scientists and nature lovers alike, and it forms a vital part of the heritage we all share as Americans."

We need that same kind of commitment today, and we need our politicians to embrace the same values our leaders showed when they passed the ESA forty years ago. We need to renew our commitment to conservation and to a natural world that evokes wonder, awe and reverence for America's wildlife and landscape treasures. After all, protecting America's natural heritage is as important now as it was four decades ago.



Keep the ESA Strong for the Next 40 Years

By [George Fenwick](#) | January 9, 2014

Forty years ago, the most important wildlife protection measure in U.S. history was signed into law by President Richard Nixon, who marked the occasion by issuing the following statement: “Nothing is more priceless and more worthy of preservation than the rich array of animal life with which our country has been blessed.”

That’s the point of view that helped give rise to the Endangered Species Act (ESA). The long list of species it has helped save from extinction includes birds such as the peregrine falcon, wood stork, Kirtland’s warbler, California condor, and Nēnē (Hawaiian goose).

Other well-known beneficiaries of the ESA include Louisiana black bear and black-footed ferret. The need for the ESA is proven by the fact that in the United States and its coastal waters, scientific studies have resulted in nearly 1,500 plants and animals being added to the federal list of threatened or endangered species. That should come as no surprise given the global extinction crisis.

The ESA protects these plants and animals by protecting their natural habitats. Sometimes, but not always, that is a process that puts limits on proposals to develop certain portions of those landscapes. It’s also a process that has helped prevent the extinction of 99 percent of the plants and animals it has been used to protect, including irreplaceable but less charismatic species ranging from Okaloosa darter to Maguire daisy and Lake Erie water snake.

In other words, when this law is allowed to work as it was designed to, it has been remarkably effective. Unfortunately, the ESA has been undercut for years by high-profile critics. Some of these critics blame the ESA (falsely) for larger economic problems. Some would gladly sacrifice rare species and their habitats in order to boost short-term profits.

Allies of these critics in the U.S. Congress have repeatedly slashed funding for the ESA listing and enforcement process, which has been admirably carried out by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and National Marine Fisheries Service. Under the Obama administration, problems linked to funding cuts have been compounded by a series of controversial ESA listing proposals. For various reasons, those proposals fail to protect species in desperate need of conservation measures, such as the lesser prairie chicken, streaked horned lark, western yellow-billed cuckoo, a distinct bi-state population of the greater sage-grouse, and northern spotted owl.

In Congress, bills that would destroy the ESA’s effectiveness have been unveiled repeatedly in recent years. The latest example is the Endangered Species Management Self-Determination Act, which was recently reintroduced in both the House (H.R. 3533) and Senate (S. 31731). This bill would require governors and Congress to sign off on all new endangered species listings, and it would allow governors to take over management of species that reside solely inside their states’ borders. On top of that, this bill would automatically remove protected plants and animals from the Endangered Species

List after five years. The bill has little chance of passing this Congress and effectively turns biological and ecological decision making into politically motivated decision making.

Changes such as these could undo much of the good work done since 1973. If that happens, we will lose the wildlife that Richard Nixon called “a many-faceted treasure, of value to scholars, scientists, and nature lovers alike, and it forms a vital part of the heritage we all share as Americans.”

Dr. George Fenwick is president of the American Bird Conservancy, a nonprofit membership organization whose mission is to conserve native birds and their habitats throughout the Americas.

The Orion Blog

A Wild Success

December 31, 2013, by Terry Tempest Williams

2013 is drawing to a close, and I doubt if one of the most significant events in my home state of Utah finds itself on anyone's year-end list of consequence. A small wildflower that grows in the Kaibab Formation in Washington County known as a Gierisch mallow (*Sphaeralcea gierischii*) has finally been granted protection under the federal Endangered Species Act. Only eighteen populations or communities of these plants remain on Earth, approximately 5,000 to 8,000 individuals. This vibrant orange crepe-petaled flower with yellow stamens can be seen squeezed between Interstate 15 and the Virgin River.

Some may say, "So what?" But if we look at the success story behind the fortieth anniversary of the 1973 Endangered Species Act, we may be impressed by what a single law with vision can do. Birds like the bald eagle and California condor were on the path to extinction in the 1960s due to pesticides such as DDT. Today, the bald eagle population is vulnerable but stable, and the California condor has been introduced to the Grand Canyon through a captive breeding program, where their immense shadows cannot only be seen but felt soaring across the South Rim. These are regal birds of prey that underscore the American landscape.

The gray wolf was listed as an endangered species in 1967, having been shot, poisoned, and trapped to near extinction. In 1995, wolves were reintroduced to Yellowstone National Park. Sixteen years later, given their ability to repopulate, the gray wolf was delisted in 2011. Of course, controversy follows the wolf and many of us are working hard to have that decision overturned. Old myths die hard, but for now, the wolf returning to the American West remains a success story of a threatened species' recovery through human vigilance and care.

And then, there is the Utah prairie dog. Call them America's meerkats. These communal creatures declined to perilous numbers due to the politics of livestock and an aggressive poison campaign, alongside plague and drought. In 1972, only 3,300 Utah prairie dogs remained. Names like "pop-guts" and "varmints" still follow them. But today, the Utah prairie dog population is close to 12,000. In some instances, their habitat is being restored by the very ranchers who opposed them decades earlier. Financial incentives have helped. The law motivates and educates. Utah prairie dogs stand outside their burrows as a small beacon of hope.

The 1973 Endangered Species Act has been more than 99 percent successful at preventing extinction of species under its watch.

May we honor and celebrate the fortieth anniversary of this noble decree and remember that on December 28, 1973, Congress passed the Endangered Species Act into law. It was truly a bipartisan bill. The vote in the Senate was 92 in favor, 0 opposed; in the House, it

was 355 to 4. This seems like an astonishment, bordering on the impossible, given the rancor in Congress today.

President Richard M. Nixon spoke these words when he signed the bill into law:

Nothing is more priceless and more worthy of preservation than the rich array of animal life with which our country has been blessed. It is a many-faceted treasure, of value to scholars, scientists, and nature lovers alike, and it forms a vital part of the heritage we all share as Americans.

A journalist from Washington, D.C., recently asked me, “Who is the most powerful individual in the American West right now?”

“Sage grouse,” I answered.

“I’m serious,” he said.

“So am I,” I replied.

In the Interior West, where sagebrush covers the landscape like a sea-blue haze, sage grouse are driving the conversation around oil and gas development. The Bureau of Land Management projections show that nearly 96,000 new oil and gas wells will be drilled over the next twenty years in six states: Colorado, Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, Utah, and Wyoming. Oil wells could fragment 11.8 million acres of sagebrush and grassland habitat, an area larger than the state of New Hampshire. Development, as planned, could affect the greater sage grouse populations by 19 percent.

Historic populations of sage grouse once numbered 16 million. Today, the population may be half a million, and many local populations in the vicinity of oil fields are being drawn down to extinction.

One male sage grouse standing his ground on his ancestral lek against Shell Oil is a kin to the lone man facing down a tank in Tiananmen Square.

Sage grouse are the latest bellwether species sounding the call for restraint on America’s public lands. A “candidate” for listing in 2015, amendments are being madly written by every western state, including Utah, which recognizes the economic stranglehold this bird could render on the future of fossil fuel development.

Slowly but surely, the sage grouse is finding its way toward protection.

This is the totemic power of the sage grouse, who joins the ranks of other species who have changed the chemistry and power structure of communities—both human and wild. Consider the spotted owl and salmon in the Pacific Northwest, who saved millions of acres

of ancient forests from being felled. Add the timber wolf and the grizzly as species now defining the Greater Yellowstone; the peregrine falcon who showed us the cascading effects of DDT; the black-footed ferret and its role in vibrant grasslands in relationship to prairie dogs; and the willow flycatcher and woundfin minnow who are measures of the health of the Colorado River—and so many more—from the Everglade kite to the monarch butterfly to the Preble's meadow jumping mouse, hundreds of plants and animals who are having an impact on how we understand the interconnectedness and integrity of fragile ecosystems.

The beauty of the Endangered Species Act is that it is a federal act of empathy, put into writing and upheld by law. It is an elegant act of mind and heart that is both visionary and inclusive. It proceeds from our Declaration of Independence and portends a Declaration of Interdependence. It gives us an opportunity to exercise our conscience and consciousness on behalf of all species.

The great consequence of the Endangered Species Act, over time, is that it ensures that we, as a species, will not be alone. We will remain part of a living, breathing, thriving community of vibrant beings with feathers, fins, and fur; roots, petals, and spines; trunks, branches, and leaves. It promises that creatures that walk with four legs or scurry on six or crawl with eight will move alongside *Homo sapiens*—our humanity, walking side by side, with our humility. Wild beauty sustains us. A wolverine becomes more than a thought, it is an heir to wonder.

What the plants and animals are asking of us is respect and restraint. What the Endangered Species Act designed forty years ago promises them is that we will try.

When my friend from Washington, D.C. asks me another question about where power resides in the American West, I will ask him to accompany me in the spring to smell the sweet fragrance of sage after rain. And in that moment of reverie, just maybe we will hear the drumbeats of sage grouse rising above the oil rigs on the horizon.

The Endangered Species Act has never been more relevant and never been more at risk. As a conscious and conscientious citizenry may we rededicate ourselves to its survival, especially as we face the future with climate change. Congress will need our support.

We must be creative. We must be collaborative. And we must exercise our compassion. Awareness is our action.

When I was writing the book *Finding Beauty in a Broken World*, I made the decision to link the plight of Utah prairie dogs with the Rwandan genocide. It was met with harsh criticism from human rights activists and literary critics. "You cannot compare a rodent to a human being," one individual said. But I would argue, they missed the point. The loss of a species and the loss of a people are both predicated on the same qualities of prejudice, cruelty, arrogance, and ignorance, ultimately, creating the seed bed of war. We need a new conscience and consciousness in our relationship with Other. And this has everything to do with cultivating peace.

The Endangered Species is both a policy and a prayer for what Albert Schweitzer called the three most important words we can embrace, "Reverence for life."

Last month, I was invited to meet a lynx held in captivity while it was healing from a broken leg at a wildlife rehabilitation center in Idaho. I have never seen a lynx in the wild, but on that day, our eyes locked and I could not walk away. Finally, my name was being called. The people I came with were leaving. I left the lynx and then, at the last minute I told my friends I had forgotten something. In truth, I needed more time with the lynx. I returned. Our eyes met again with full intensity—and then, the lynx began to nod her head.

I will never know what this gesture implied, nor what the lynx was actually thinking. But for the rest of my life, I will remember her—believing that the animals among us are nodding their heads waiting for us to respond to this moment in time—we are all endangered species on an endangered planet.

What is required of us is love.

The Endangered Species Act is an act of love.

Terry Tempest Williams's newest book, When Women Were Birds, was published in 2012 by Farrar, Straus and Giroux. She lives in Utah.



Conservation: The Endangered Species Act at 40

[Noah Greenwald](#),

18 December 2013

On the anniversary of a landmark piece of US legislation, four experts weigh in on what has worked and what needs to change.

Noah Greenwald: Cherish the act's proven power

Endangered species programme director, Center for Biological Diversity

The US Endangered Species Act (ESA) is the reason that there are bald eagles from coast to coast, grizzly bears in the Yellowstone ecosystem and American alligators in the southeastern United States. The act remains our best tool for saving species and their habitats and practically our only way of helping declining populations to recover.

Since it came into effect in 1973, the ESA has had unqualified success at saving species from extinction. So far, only ten of the more than 1,500 species protected under the ESA (see '[On the list](#)') have gone extinct, and eight of these were probably extinct before they received protection. A 2006 analysis¹ found that, were it not for the ESA, as many as 227 US species would have disappeared.

This landmark law is also putting animals and plants on the path to recovery. An analysis² of all federally protected species in the northeast found that more than 90% were stabilized or improving since being put on the list; more than 80% were on track to meet recovery goals set by scientists.

The ESA has been criticized for mandating protection of individual species rather than of ecosystems. Yet it has driven some of the most successful efforts in ecosystem management, most notably the Northwest Forest Plan adopted in 1994. These land-use policies have protected forested and aquatic habitats for northern spotted owls, marbled murrelets and Pacific salmonids.

Too often, those who advocate moving away from the firm protections of the act argue for flexible ecosystem management not to advance conservation, but to avoid economic conflicts. In practice, saving a species can mean saving an entire ecosystem. That helps wildlife and people who depend on clean water, clean air and the other benefits that functioning ecosystems provide.

Nature

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PACIFIC NORTHWEST

http://www.oregonlive.com/opinion/index.ssf/2013/04/a_21st-century_blueprint_for_s.html



A 21st-century blueprint for saving Oregon species from climate change: Guest opinion

April 20, 2013

By Bill Bradbury

You don't have to leave western Oregon to witness the escalating impacts of [climate change](#).

On Mount Hood, river-feeding glaciers thousands of years old have shrunk by as much as 60 percent in the past 100 years.

In the often water-starved Klamath Basin, average summer temperatures are projected to increase by more than 10 degrees by 2075, with surrounding snowpack levels expected to decrease by as much as 90 percent.

In the Columbia River, average August and September water temperatures are already pushing levels that disrupt salmon migration, and they're projected to rise another 4 degrees by midcentury.

Given those pressing realities, I read with great interest the plan just released by the Obama administration to help America's wildlife adapt to the rapid habitat changes caused by global warming. Much of the plan's focus is on plants and animals protected under the [Endangered Species Act](#). The act, which turns 40 this year, is not without its critics, and I can be frustrated by how long it can take to get protection for critically imperiled species and, once they're listed, how long it can take to get a recovery plan in place.

Yet, when we use it as intended, the law can have a tremendous impact. More than 90 percent of the species it protects have been saved from extinction, and hundreds are on the road to recovery. Here in Oregon, some of our most cherished species -- from coho salmon to gray whales and bald eagles -- owe their existence to the Endangered Species Act.

But as we move through the climate-fueled challenges of the 21st century, we're entering uncharted waters in the battle to preserve the broad diversity of life critical to our planet's future.

The Obama administration's new plan includes a series of mitigation measures for wildlife, including protecting corridors that allow animals to move to more suitable habitat as climate change alters ecosystems. It's an intriguing idea, but will it be enough? Or is it simply an incremental step in a much longer journey we've yet to commit to?

What "corridor," for example, can help coho salmon escape the ever more heated Columbia River? And consider the plight of Oregon's fast-disappearing wolverines. Scientists have known for some time now that wolverines require at least 5 feet of spring snowpack in the high-mountain terrain where they dig protective dens.

So it was hardly surprising that when proposing Endangered Species Act protections for wolverines earlier this year, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service scientists cited climate change as the greatest threat to the 300 or so of the solitary predators that remain from Oregon and Washington to the northern Rockies. Unchecked, temperature increases could very likely wipe out wolverines in the Lower 48 before the end of this century.

Yet, just as was the case when polar bears were listed as "threatened" in 2008, federal wildlife managers declared that any protections extended to the wolverine would not include regulation of greenhouse gas pollution -- the leading driver of rising global temperatures that are threatening wolverines and degrading the planet we all share. That troubling dichotomy reflects the need for a dramatic change in our current political climate, one in which elected officials can be far too quick to trade critically important long-term conservation and economic benefits for the exaggerated benefits of short-term economic gain.

Whenever we're ready, even the most challenging policy solutions are within reach. We need only glance back at the confident steps taken to preserve the national bird we now routinely see soaring above the Willamette River for a model of how to move forward. We not only used the Endangered Species Act to protect bald eagles from being killed and captured -- much as we're proposing to do with the wolverine -- but we also banned pesticides such as DDT. In the process of protecting the eagle's habitat, as required by the Endangered Species Act, we cleaned up the waterways critical to our own health and economic stability.

The sooner we realize that protecting our environment and our economy is not an "either-or" proposition, the more quickly we can get down to the work of building a sustainable bridge to the future that's anchored in the reality of our times.

Only then will we have a real shot at protecting Oregon's irreplaceable ecosystems, from the high-mountain home of wolverines and our winter sports industries to the rivers critical to the future of our salmon runs, as well as our commercial and recreational fishing interests.

Bill Bradbury, former Oregon secretary of state, is a member of the Northwest Power and Conservation Council and is on the board of the Oregon Environmental Council.



Save the law that protects America's natural capital: Guest opinion



By [Guest Columnist](#)

July 13, 2013

By Glen H. Spain

In this day and age, it's easy to fool oneself into thinking we humans somehow create wealth in factories or from computers.

But in the end, we are all economically dependent on the same Earth, breathing the same air and drinking the same water. The natural world is the ultimate source of all human wealth -- and our own existence. This is our "natural capital." When we squander that, we are bankrupting future generations and potentially threatening our own survival.

The Northwest's valuable salmon runs are a prime example. For some, salmon are a colorful icon -- a symbol of the Pacific Northwest.

But for commercial fishing families, the value of [Northwest salmon](#) is no abstract symbol. Salmon mean business. It's about hardworking family fishing businesses, struggling to survive generation after generation.

So commercial fishermen have a special relationship with the [Endangered Species Act](#). On one hand, we are heavily regulated under the ESA, as we harvest the wealth of the oceans. Indeed, our industry probably has more day-to-day exposure to the ESA than does agriculture, timber or nearly any other industry.

At the same time, the ESA safety net has proved to be the only thing standing against the extinction of these valuable fish species -- and the extinction of our way of life.

Many once-abundant salmon runs are already extinct because of decades of pollution, habitat destruction, and blocked or dewatered rivers. It is, unfortunately, only the ESA that has halted declines of most of the rest of these valuable runs.

Sometimes it's easy to despair over the future of wild salmon, but there are still bright spots. We are restoring the watersheds of the [Klamath Basin](#) and the Elwha River. The collapsed salmon runs in California's Central Valley and the Columbia River are slowly improving. Salmon in those rivers would be in far worse shape without the ESA driving much-needed reforms.

Frankly, it's regrettable that we even have to resort to the ESA. We are a well-educated and technologically advanced nation. We should be more proactive. But the sad fact is, sometimes we avoid solving problems until the eleventh hour.

Then the Endangered Species Act is a necessary tool -- all too often, the only tool -- for repairing 150 years of damage done to salmon-producing watersheds. The ESA looks after not only the top-of-the-food-chain species such as chinook salmon, but also the smaller, less charismatic species at the bottom of the food chain, like the Delta smelt. We are all part of the same web of life.

The Endangered Species Act has bought some time for people to solve problems facing America's fisheries and waterways. Today, as it celebrates its 40th birthday, the ESA remains one of the most popular federal laws on the books.

Yes, saving an endangered species can force some people to change the way they do things. And for that, the ESA has earned some enemies. A small cadre of politicians would like to quietly gut the ESA. They don't say it outright, but that is the end result of their piecemeal legislative endeavors.

The American people should reject the false tradeoff between conservation and jobs. In the end, we are all in the same boat. We dare not let it sink. And I, for one, want salmon to still exist for our grandchildren.

Glen H. Spain is Northwest regional director of the [Pacific Coast Federation of Fishermen's Associations](#), which fights for the long-term survival of commercial fishing as a way of life.



Endangered Species Act still needed 40 years later: Guest opinion



January 05, 2014

By Noah Greenwald

From 200-year-old Douglas firs more than six feet in diameter to the annual salmon runs that have drawn generations of fishermen to the banks of our rivers, the Pacific Northwest has long been defined by its remarkably diverse collection of native plants and animals.

Nowhere is that more apparent than Oregon, where thanks to the protections of the Endangered Species Act, thousands of Chinook salmon still make their way each year from the Pacific Ocean up the Columbia and Willamette rivers, through downtown Portland and on to the shallow gravel spawning beds in the far reaches of the Cascades.

We can also thank the Endangered Species Act for the Northwest Forest Plan, without which we wouldn't have towering old-growth forests that are a source of awe for people from around the world, that clean our streams for salmon and people, and that support thousands of wildlife species from northern spotted owls to elk.

As to be expected of any conservation efforts, the act and the Northwest Forest Plan face relentless attacks from those determined to return to the unsustainable logging practices of past generations. But as we mark the 40th anniversary of the act, which occurred on Dec. 28, Oregonians should pause to celebrate our success at preventing the extinction of species and, in the process, helping to protect some of Oregon's last-remaining stands of old-growth forests.

Since being passed almost unanimously by Congress, the act has prevented extinction of 99 percent of the more than 1,500 plants and animals it protects. And in the process it has put many of those species on the road to recovery, including Steller sea lions, which just this fall were declared recovered.

As we've seen in Oregon, the act has also provided us with the tools to protect entire ecosystems.

Oregonians witnessed the power of those tools in 2013, when conservation groups, including the one I work for, filed a lawsuit under the Endangered Species Act to protect the marbled murrelet from logging by the state of Oregon on the Tillamook, Clatsop and Elliott state forests, forcing the state to drop multiple timber sales in the murrelet's old forest habitat.

This lawsuit also highlights the judiciousness of the Endangered Species Act. Our lawsuit was only necessary because the state had broken a promise to protect habitat for the spotted owl and murrelet. In 1995, the state had developed a "habitat conservation plan," under which it was allowed to log old forest habitats for the two birds, provided other habitat was protected over the long term. After the habitat was logged, however, the state reneged on its promise and moved to log protected areas.

This reminds us of exactly why we need the Endangered Species Act moving forward – because it provides the kind of balance that 40 years our congressmen determined was necessary to overcome the temporal lure of politics and short-sighted economic development.

That challenge was laid out on the first page of the landmark law:

"The Congress finds and declares that — various species of fish, wildlife, and plants in the United States have been rendered extinct as a consequence of economic growth and development untempered by adequate concern and conservation;"

The challenge today and moving forward into 2014 and beyond is unchanged.

And what we've learned with scientific certainty over the past four decades is that with the tools provided by the Act, we can not only save species but balance our short-term economic needs with the long-term needs of our environment and economy. Indeed, despite the constraints of logging the last old-growth forests on federal lands, our economy is stronger than ever.

Without the act there would be no balance at all.

Noah Greenwald is a Portland-based biologist who directs the endangered species program at the Center for Biological Diversity.



Published: Tuesday, December 31, 2013

As the ESA hits middle age

The Endangered Species Act, which marked its 40th anniversary Saturday, is as controversial as it is essential. It also is ironic: The ESA was signed into law by President Richard Nixon, a cynic who understood the political currency of environmentalism. The backdrop of endangered bald eagles, America's natural symbol, along with Earth Day in 1970 and the fire that engulfed Ohio's Cuyahoga River in 1969 set the stage for muscular conservation. How muscular? No one had a clue.

When Nixon signed the National Environmental Policy Act in 1970, it was ho-hum, page 2 news. NEPA's environmental impact statements reshaped the responsibility of government, documenting how we affect the natural world and reining in (some) of the damage. It created a Council on Environmental Quality headquartered in the White House and incorporated language promising "productive and enjoyable harmony between man and his environment."

The ESA was similarly elastic and ambitious. All federal departments would need to work in common cause to conserve the habitats of threatened and endangered species. It was a watershed law that has made a tangible difference not only for threatened critters but for entire ecosystems.

As [The Herald's Bill Sheets reports](#), 99 percent of the listed species have avoided extinction. And many of the success stories had a positive effect on mammals of the bipedal variety (read: you and me.)

"It has pulled people together to talk about what to do," said Daryl Williams, environmental liaison for the Tulalip Tribes.

It's also been a point of division, even used as a brickbat. After U.S District Judge William Dwyer knocked down a toothless forest management plan to protect the northern spotted owl in 1991, feathers flew. The spotted owl was scapegoated for the rapid decline in the Northwest timber industry (the subsequent 1994 plan that put approximately 70 percent of old-growth forests on federal lands off limits was OK'd.) Politicians demagogued, pointing to the ESA rather than overharvesting and automation as cause for the timber slump.

Threatened Puget Sound chinook salmon, Puget Sound steelhead and bull trout have been a unifier, as Williams noted. How often do sports fishers, tribes, farmers, the feds and conservationists come together to problem solve? The ESA isn't perfect, with Williams observing that habitat restoration often involves bureaucratic roadblocks. But the perfect can't be the enemy of the good. Without an ESA, we would have a less ecologically rich planet. And just like NEPA, the Endangered Species Act has served as a template, which dozens of countries have duplicated.

"I think it's been very positive overall," said the EPA's first administrator, Republican William Ruckelshaus. Indeed it has.



Endangered Species Act Turns 40

Dec 31, 2013

This Dec. 28th, the Endangered Species Act turned 40 years old. When it passed in 1973, 99 Senators voted for it, 0 opposed, and President Nixon signed it without controversy.

Since then, the Endangered Species Act (ESA) has influenced much of Portland's local planning, development and infrastructure.

It has also spurred City projects and activities by countless Portlanders to help protect and restore the rivers, streams and forests that are home to threatened and endangered species.

Portland has the most ESA-listed species of any major city in the US. That may seem like bad news, but it actually means **we have a lot of our native fish and wildlife left to save right here in the city**, thanks to our region's long-standing commitment to protect nature. For other cities, the ESA didn't arrive fast enough to protect dwindling native species. Chicago barely knew its passenger pigeon, Atlantic salmon in New York City are forever gone and Bostonians will never again hear the howl of the eastern timber wolf.

Since the first Chinook salmon listing in 1999, there has been an average of about one new ESA listing a year for species found in Portland.

Portland's City Council started our local Endangered Species Act program in 1998, to coordinate the City's response to the new regulations and to step up to the challenge of reversing the decline of our native species because we know it is the right thing to do. The program is now housed in the Bureau of Environmental Services' [Science Fish and Wildlife Program](#).

As 2013 comes to an end, it's a great time to celebrate the national accomplishments of the ESA, like the return of bald eagles.

It's also time to celebrate our local accomplishments of the past year. Projects and programs like these help keep our water clean, our forests and floodplains resilient, and our community healthy and prosperous:

- Crystal Springs Culvert Removal and Restoration: [Two more culverts removed in 2013](#) means seven down, only two more to go!
- Invasive species management: Removing invasive plants on more than 550 acres of land in the city over the last year helps our native plants, fish and wildlife thrive. Help from homeowners and

volunteers to remove nasty new invaders, like [Spurge laurel](#) and [pokeweed](#) helps us get ahead of the next threats to clean water.

- [Tree planting](#): 6,755 new street and yard trees planted over the last year, with a special focus on increasing street tree canopy in East Portland with our community partners (stay tuned for more on that soon).
 - [Completion of the Foster Floodplain Project](#): More fish, less flooding in Lents!
 - The [biggest year ever for ecoroofts](#) in Portland.
 - And many other great projects, from the [new culvert at Stephens Creek](#) to the Community Watershed Stewardship project at [St. Mary's Ethiopian Church](#) , and [green streets on Division Street](#) and in [Multnomah Village](#).
-

It's been a busy year!

With everyone's help, in another 40 years hopefully we will be celebrating Portland's new reputation as the city with the cleanest rivers and the most *recovered* ESA species.

For more on the ESA, check out this CBS news editorial: <http://www.cbsnews.com/news/the-endangered-species-act-turns-40/>

And the NOAA Fisheries website's [special features for the 40 year anniversary](#).

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<http://triblive.com/usworld/nation/5326291-74/species-bears-protections#axzz2pENYRzyz>

Protection of grizzlies pondered

By USA Today

Published: Saturday, Dec. 28, 2013

Forty years ago Saturday, President Nixon signed the Endangered Species Act, credited with saving hundreds of species from extinction, including the bald eagle, the American alligator, Florida panthers, sea otters, pumas and manatees.

The anniversary falls as wildlife officials in the northern Rockies are considering lifting protections for hundreds of grizzly bears in and around Yellowstone National Park, a move environmental groups decry as short-sighted. The grizzlies were granted federal protections in 1975 after they had been wiped out across much of their historical range.

They have since made a slow comeback, prompting the Fish and Wildlife Service to advance plans on whether to take more than 700 bears across the Yellowstone region of Montana, Idaho and Wyoming off the threatened-species list.

A decision is expected in January. It would open the door for limited sport hunting of the bears in the area, though protections for their habitat would remain in place.

As that battle heats up, the Fish and Wildlife Service and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration celebrated the full recovery of 31 species that had hovered on the brink of extinction. The first species that was pronounced fully recovered and delisted was the brown pelican.

Today, they are working to protect 1,436 U.S. species.

NORTHEAST

<http://thetimes-tribune.com/opinion/esa-itself-must-survive-1.1607779>



ESA itself must survive

Published: December 28, 2013

Since President Richard Nixon signed the Endangered Species Act, 40 years ago today, it has helped about 99 percent of the species that have been listed as endangered to survive - a remarkable record.

Some of those species are well-known - bald eagles, California condors, grizzly bears, peregrine falcons, several types of whales and some others. But they are just the marquee species. Others that are just as important to their ecosystems, like the Louisiana black-footed ferret and the Lake Erie water snake, also have survived because of the scientific analysis and response that are inherent in the listing process.

Most listings are not controversial but, inevitably, some endangerment classifications clash with development interests because preserving a species most often means protecting its habitat.

Companion bills now in Congress, for example, would eviscerate the ESA by removing listing from the realm of science and placing it purely within the realm of politics. The bills would require governors in states affected by a listing to sign off on endangerment listings and extensions. And they would require the de-listing of every species every five years and re-listing, species by species, only with the specific approval of Congress.

Listing now is handled by the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service and the National Marine Fisheries Service, which employ professional biologists for that purpose.

The ESA is a successful law that Congress should leave intact to continue its 40-year record of protecting the country's blessing of a rich biological diversity.

Rutland Herald & Times Argus

Saving the Bicknell's thrush

By Mollie Matteson

September 16, 2012

The Bicknell's thrush breeds in the tree-line forests of some of the most rugged mountains in New England and New York. But even the thrush's remote mountain home can't save it from the forces of human-caused climate change and habitat loss that now have plants and animals across the globe dying out at a thousand times the historic extinction rate.

With some populations of the bird already wiped out, and others dropping by close to 20 percent a year, the dimming long-term prognosis for the Bicknell's thrush offers a stark picture of the rapidly declining health of our planet.

From escalating temperatures that are rapidly undercutting the health of sub-alpine forests, to increasing levels of acid deposition and ground-level ozone, the thrush's habitat is disappearing faster than we can preserve it.

So it was great to hear in August that the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service will initiate a year-long review to determine whether the thrush warrants federal protection. As the biologist who filed the petition seeking the Endangered Species Act protection, I was thrilled.

But it's too early to celebrate. I've been around long enough to know the fact that the bird is in need of federal protection might have little to do with whether it gets it.

My education about the natural world began when I was a kid running around Vermont's hardwood forests and grew into deep convictions on conserving all things wild when I worked as a wilderness ranger in Washington's Olympic National Park and Wyoming's Wind River Range, then as a wolf researcher in Montana's Glacier National Park, places where I was lucky enough to spot mountain goats, bears and wolves.

It wasn't until the early stages of wolf reintroductions in the West that I got my political education, witnessing first-hand the startling degree to which politics, rather than science, can determine which species survive.

Nearly 20 years later, the political rhetoric still often outweighs the scientific realities. In the most recent example, on Aug. 31 Interior Secretary Ken Salazar announced the removal of federal protections for wolves in Wyoming, giving his approval to a state wolf management plan that will allow wolves to be shot on sight across 80 percent of the state.

Federal protection for gray wolves in Montana, Idaho, northern Utah and eastern Oregon and Washington was eliminated last year by a Republican rider on a budget bill. As a result, Idaho and Montana now allow hunting and trapping that last year resulted in hunters killing 545 of the approximately 1,900 wolves there.

This summer, congressional Republicans held hearings on ways to "update" the Endangered Species Act. But the political end-around of the Endangered Species Act last year to end wolf protections in the northern Rockies made it clear Republicans are only looking for ways to cripple the world's most effective conservation law.

The fact is, the Endangered Species Act has prevented the extinction of 99 percent of the more than 1,400 species under its protection. And research suggests most protected species are headed toward recovery. At the Center for Biological Diversity where I work, we recently completed a study comparing the actual recovery rates of more than 100 protected species to their projected recovery rates, and found 90 percent are on target to recover.

A study we conducted a few years ago of all federally protected species in the Northeast reached a similar conclusion: 93 percent were stabilized or improving and 82 percent were meeting recovery goals.

Yet, despite all the evidence, the same conservatives in Congress who claim they want to improve the Endangered Species Act are now pushing to cut funding for protecting endangered species and their habitats.

To be sure, in this political climate the future of the high-mountain Bicknell's thrush, and many other imperiled species, remains uncertain.

But we can be almost certain of this: If, a year from now, the thrush is granted federal protection, there's every reason to believe it will still be singing its sweet song when our great-grandchildren reach the tree-line.

*Mollie **Matteson** is conservation advocate at the Center for Biological Diversity's northeast field office in Richmond.*

CALIFORNIA

<http://www.sacbee.com/2013/03/23/5286232/reflecting-on-benefits-after-40.html>

Viewpoints: Reflecting on benefits after 40 years of Endangered Species Act

By [Mark Rockwell](#)
Special to The Bee

Published: Saturday, Mar. 23, 2013 - Page 11A

At the discovery of our nation it was important to immigrants and native people to have an abundant fish and wildlife population upon which everyone depended for survival. Wild turkey, fish and many other types of wildlife allowed immigrants to get a foothold on the new continent. Lewis and Clark were dispatched by [President Thomas Jefferson](#) to explore the new Louisiana Territory and reported back the great diversity and abundance of wildlife in America's heartland and West. Our history rests on the great diversity of fish, wildlife and birds this great land provided, and it continues to be a point of pride for most Americans.

As America became a more industrialized nation, our dependence on wildlife diminished, and we moved to farm and domesticated animals. As we grew in population and industry, our impact on wildlife became one of encroachment rather than dependence. Our actions began to drive many of America's beloved and iconic wildlife toward extinction. Examples are the passenger pigeon, the American buffalo and bald eagle.

In 1973 two congressmen, [Pete McCloskey](#), R-Calif., and [John Dingell](#), D-Mich., introduced legislation that for the first time said we would do all we must to keep American wildlife from going extinct. Additionally, we must act to restore endangered animals to self-sustaining levels. A part of the law designates land needed for survival or critical habitat – a place such animals can call home. This was the first time that a conscious decision to protect wildlife would be backed by a federal law. After near-unanimous support in Congress, [President Richard Nixon](#) signed the [Endangered Species Act](#) into law.

2013 is the 40th anniversary of the Endangered Species Act. Here in California we have the second-longest list of threatened and endangered species in the United States. Our state has many success stories since 1973 – the California gray whale, southern sea otter, bald eagle, California condor, least tern, peninsula desert bighorn sheep and many others. At times protecting our wildlife heritage can be costly and inconvenient, but the Endangered Species Act makes us think before we act. Will the impacts of our actions result in extinction? If the answer is yes, we have to find other ways of acting.

It is an American value to respect and protect our outdoor heritage and its inhabitants. Most citizens are willing to go the extra mile to make sure all of God's creatures have a place to live. Beautiful art, lifesaving medicines, vibrant color schemes, new visions in architecture and hundreds of new creations are traceable to nature and its creatures. The vibrant color in the hummingbird, the colorful spots in the California tiger salamander, the majestic flight of the bald eagle: all are part of California and America.

As Nixon acknowledged when signing the Endangered Species Act into law, "Nothing is more priceless and more worthy of preservation than the rich array of animal life with which our country has been blessed. It is a many-faceted treasure, of value to scholars, scientists and nature lovers alike, and it forms a vital part of the heritage we all share as Americans. I congratulate the 93rd Congress for taking this important step toward protecting a heritage which we hold in trust to countless future generations of our fellow citizens. Their lives will be richer, and America will be more beautiful in the years ahead, thanks to the measure that I have the pleasure of signing into law today."

It is time to reflect on how we all love our state with its vibrant and diverse wildlife and open spaces. We should be proud of the Endangered Species Act and the protections it provides so we can pass this wildlife heritage on to our children and grandchildren. Let's celebrate our collective wisdom for having a law that protects all God's creatures, and helps to preserve a [living environment](#) that sustains us all.

Dr. Mark Rockwell is a retired chiropractor, former California fly-fishing guide and outdoor enthusiast. He has worked for the Endangered Species Coalition since 2005 as the California organizer and coordinator.



The San Diego Union-Tribune, LLC

APRIL 19TH 2013

Endangered Species Act deserves protection

By Michael Lehnert APRIL 18, 2013

The Endangered Species Act turns 40 this year. Created in response to growing recognition that unbridled development was forcing many North American plant and animal species into extinction, Michigan Democrat John Dingle and California Republican (and former Marine) Pete McCloskey co-sponsored one of the most sweeping bills in our nation's history. In 1973, President Nixon signed legislation that placed over 2,000 species under formal government protection.

With the passage of time it is easy to forget the condition of the environment when Nixon made the ESA the law of the land. DDT had brought many bird species to the brink of extinction. Water quality in much of the country was hazardous to those who came in contact with it. Ubiquitous smog hung over Los Angeles and other cities like a pall. In order to restore the environment that Americans had enjoyed for generations but had taken for granted and degraded, the Endangered Species Act was passed and the Fish and Wildlife Service and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration were tasked with its implementation.

Critics of the Endangered Species Act complain that it restricts growth and development, that it is too expensive, that public interest is better served by more suburbs and shopping malls than saving little known or noticed plants and animals. My views on the environment developed gradually and generally after traveling to other countries that ignored their environment. When Marines deploy they generally don't visit popular tourist destinations. Marines see firsthand the consequences when a nation takes its laws, its citizens and its natural resources for granted.

Those who live in Southern California enjoy a special existence: the natural beauty of the geography, a climate that doesn't deserve to be called "weather" and the opportunity to be part of a unique ecosystem. But it won't last if we don't take care of it. The habitat that allows plants and wildlife to thrive is the same habitat that contributes so greatly to making Southern California a special place on the planet. Once that habitat is gone, it is gone forever, taking not just the species protected under the Endangered Species Act but Southern California's way of life as well.

The Marine Corps has always felt a special responsibility toward the citizens it serves and the country that contributes so successfully to the greatness of its people. Its environmental stewardship is second to none and Marines like to say that a country worth defending is a country worth preserving. In Southern California the Marine Corps has preserved (from development) the last significant acreages of contiguous natural landscapes. The last undeveloped California coastal geography are found only at Camp Pendleton and MCAS Miramar. These lands host numerous federally listed threatened and

endangered species that have been extirpated from most of the remainder of Southern California due to habitat loss. The Marine Corps carries out its stewardship responsibilities while simultaneously ensuring that its fighting force remains trained and ready, often on the same habitat it protects under the Endangered Species Act. They promote natural habitats by removing invasive exotic plants; partner to support successful breeding programs to enhance the recovery of critically endangered species like the desert tortoise at Twentynine Palms, the Sonoran pronghorn antelope and the Pacific pocket mouse. Partners include UCLA, Arizona Game and Fish and the San Diego Zoo. The Marine Corps conservation efforts have enabled the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to recommend downlisting of the California least tern and least Bell's vireo. If a military service designed as the nation's 911 force can support the responsibilities of following the Endangered Species Act, so, too, can the private sector, particularly if through our combined efforts, we save our quality of life and endangered species for future generations of Americans.

So on your drive to work tomorrow as you look at the tremendous vistas of Southern California and this great land, know that it was the Endangered Species Act and other environmental legislation that made your day a better one plus a little help from the United States Marines.

Lehnert, a retired major general, served as commanding general of Marine Corps Installations West from June 2005 until September 2009. He was responsible for the environmental programs at all but one of the Marine Corps bases in Southern California and charged with compliance with the Endangered Species Act. In retirement, he serves on the board of the Endangered Species Coalition.

THE SACRAMENTO BEE [sacbee.com](http://www.sacbee.com) Viewpoints

Viewpoints: 40-year-old Endangered Species Act sets a high standard in forbidding extinction

By [Peter Moyle](#)

Published: Sunday, Dec. 29, 2013

More than 40 years ago I began studying California's amazing freshwater fish fauna, made up mostly of species that lived nowhere else. Back then few people cared about these species. Only a handful of biologists had studied the native fishes, aside from trout and salmon.

That all changed with the birth of the federal Endangered Species Act, 40 years ago Saturday.



The law says unequivocally that it is the official policy of the United States not to let any species go extinct, no matter what. That simple but powerful declaration resulted in my many years of recording the biology and decline of our native fishes.

The Endangered Species Act was used timidly at first, mainly for protection of spectacular species such as the bald eagle and the gray wolf. But it did catch the attention of fisheries agencies. They funded my exploration of northeastern California, where few fish biologists had sampled since the early 20th century.

My graduate students and I searched in particular for three species we suspected were in trouble: Modoc sucker, rough sculpin and bull trout. We found the Modoc sucker was indeed endangered, but easy to protect, while the rough sculpin was reasonably secure. The bull trout, alas, we found to be extinct or nearly so in California. One of my students made the last recorded catch, on the McCloud River in 1975. Our 1970s surveys became a baseline for the status of fishes in one of the most interesting parts of the state.

As an untenured professor then, I thought it bit risky to base a career on finding rare fish. So I also undertook a study of Delta and longfin smelt, which at the time were two of the most abundant fish in the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta. These were routine life-history studies to fill some knowledge gaps for a book I was writing on California's fishes.

The studies lead me to start, in 1979, a monthly sampling program to keep track of the populations of smelt and other fish in nearby Suisun Marsh. Just a few years later I noticed a dramatic drop in our smelt counts. I checked other regular fish surveys (mostly for striped bass or salmon) and the same pattern appeared. The data led the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in 1993 to list the Delta smelt as “threatened,” affording it special protections under the Endangered Species Act.

The Delta smelt joined the Sacramento River winter run chinook salmon on the federal threatened list, followed by other fish native to Central California. Water policy and politics would never be the same.

I wish I could say that once the Endangered Species Act kicked in, everything got better for California fishes. But it hasn't. In fact, I have been recording a statewide decline of most native fishes, largely as the result of dams, diversions, water export pumps in the Delta and other manipulations of our water system. Meanwhile, climate change is warming the rivers and accelerating the declines of already depleted fish populations.

On the positive side, the ESA has prevented more extinctions of our native fishes and generated a lot of valuable information about them. We know better than ever their plight, causes of their decline and potential remedies.

With other researchers, I have just completed detailed accounts of the biology and status of more than 60 native fishes – all potential candidates for listing under the federal and state endangered species laws. The soon-to-be-released study for the state Department of Fish and Wildlife summarizes information gathered from biologists working all over California.

Most of our recommendations for preventing extinctions call for more and better water for the fish, or at least for protecting existing water they depend on. Funny how it almost always comes down to fish needing water.

The Endangered Species Act sets a high standard in this regard because it not only forbids extinction; it also mandates recovery of each species to a more sustainable state. The law takes a high moral ground when it comes to our treatment of other species.

Our treatment of native fishes and their habitats has been rather shabby, despite the efforts of our underfunded agencies. We can do better. We can measure up to the high moral standards we as a nation established in the Endangered Species Act of 1973. The fate of the fishes found only in California depends on it.

Peter Moyle is a fisheries biologist at the University of California, Davis, and is associate director of the Center for Watershed Sciences at UC Davis.

Lizard's Remarkable Recovery

The Endangered Species Act Works

Monday, April 29, 2013

BY NOAH GREENWALD

By the time the Endangered Species Act was passed in 1973 Southern California's picturesque Channel Islands had already devolved into an environmental nightmare. Overrun by introduced species, the islands' delicate and highly unique web of life was unraveling toward the point of no return.

Forty years later, the eight-island archipelago stands as testament to the fact that man-made problems have solutions if we're willing to do the work.

The recent announcement that the island night lizard – protected under the Endangered Species Act since 1977 – has met recovery goals and no longer needs federal protection is the culmination of a three-decade effort to reverse a century of habitat and rare species destruction on the islands.

The extraordinary recovery of the slow-growing four-inch lizards is also the latest proof that the Endangered Species Act, which marks its 40th anniversary this year, works quite effectively when we fully commit to protecting not only imperiled plants and animals, but the places they live.

Once rare, the lizards now number more than 21 million on one island and more than 15,000 on two others. The rebound came only after federal protections that resulted in disciplined habitat protection and the removal of nonnative species. Those efforts have also led to the gradual recovery of several of the islands' imperiled plants, including two that were deemed recovered just last year, as well as encouraging rebounds in populations of the cat-sized island fox and the San Clemente loggerhead shrike.

Long considered one of the world's most endangered songbirds, shrike populations had shrunk to fewer than 20 individuals before federal protection. At last count, there were roughly 185 birds. The island fox, which once numbered in the thousands, had been

reduced into the teens on two islands, and fewer than 60 on another. But with the help of the Endangered Species Act, its numbers have now swelled to more than 1,000.

The Channel Islands, which stretch for 160 miles from Santa Barbara to San Diego, are an intriguing chapter in the natural history of California. Their small size and proximity to the coast led to multiple events of species colonizing the islands from the mainland and then evolving into new species – like the island night lizard – that adapted to the island’s sun-drenched days and chilly nights.

But in the late 1800s, cattle, sheep, goats, rabbits, and pigs were introduced to the islands, leading to a downward cascade of dozens of plants and animals and an overall unraveling of the islands’ ecosystems. In one particularly interesting yet troubling example of this unraveling, the use of DDT in the 1960s led to the extirpation of the bald eagle on the islands. At the same time, the introduction of pigs provided a source of prey for golden eagles which, in the absence of bald eagles, colonized and subsequently began preying on island foxes, leading to their near extinction.

Efforts to remove introduced animals from the islands began in the 1960s, but really took off in the 1980s following protection of many species under the Endangered Species Act, including the island night lizard. Cooperative efforts by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, National Park Service, and U.S. Navy, which has a large presence on the islands, led to the eradication of many nonnative animals, including rabbits on Santa Barbara Island and goats on San Clemente Island, which in both cases have directly contributed to the recovery of the island night lizard.

None of this would have happened without the framework for recovery provided by the Endangered Species Act. Over the past four decades, the Act has repeatedly demonstrated that, when used to the full extent of the law, it works. To date, more than 99 percent of the more than 1,400 plants and animals under its care have been saved from extinction. And a study last year of more than 100 of those species found the great majority to be meeting or exceeding recovery timelines set by federal scientists.

But it’s instructive to remember that for some Channel Island species, federal protections came far too late. Several plants and animals native to the islands have already gone extinct, including the Santa Cruz Island monkeyflower and the Santa Barbara Island song sparrow.

As we take on the complex environmental challenges of the 21st century, those lost species serve as a constant reminder that the single greatest limitation on the Endangered Species Act’s ability to help us recover our scarred planet is our willingness to use it.

Noah Greenwald is a biologist at the Center for Biological Diversity where he serves as director of the Endangered Species Program.

OPINION: Keep Riverside County's habitat plans on track

Inland officials should redouble efforts to ensure the success of precedent-setting habitat plans in Riverside County, where canyons, water and sage scrub intertwine and lead across the landscape to magnificent deserts.

BY JANE BLOCK AND DAN SILVER

May 05, 2013

As we reflect back over the accomplishments of the Endangered Species Act, Riverside County can take particular pride, for it has been a national leader. Indeed, our region has led the way in going beyond saving particular, iconic species to saving the very ecosystems upon which all life depends.

In 1973, two congressmen — Pete McCloskey, R-Calif., and John Dingell, D-Mich. — introduced a visionary law. The Endangered Species Act drew “a line in the sand” — extinction of species — that our nation committed not to cross.

There have been major successes over the years, like aiding in the recovery of the bald eagle, grizzly bear, sea otter, grey whale and California condor. Soon, though, economic conflicts arose, such as when saving salmon fisheries meant that hydropower dams could not operate as they had in the past.

But when the legislation started protecting tiny fish, small birds and rodents, and even insects, controversy truly escalated. Such clashes, including examples from Riverside County, led to attempts — ultimately unsuccessful — to weaken the Endangered Species Act.

Out of this crisis came a new concept, pioneered in Southern California. Large-scale reserves would be created that broadly protected entire habitats and communities of life, saving species that were currently threatened as well as those that might become threatened. Other lands would be open to development. We found that we did not have to choose between roads, schools, and houses on the one side and God's Creation on the other.

Due to remarkable collaborative efforts and the leadership of local government, Riverside County now has two of these comprehensive plans in place — the Western Riverside County Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan and the Coachella Valley Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan. Development and conservation stakeholders helped craft the plans, and cities have joined county government in their implementation.

Oak-lined canyons, streams, and sage scrub intertwine and lead across the landscape to magnificent deserts. While the plans have a long way to go before working preserves are fully assembled, bighorn sheep and diminutive butterflies alike already benefit. Preserved lands are open to compatible recreation and serve as greenbelts for urban areas. As a result, Riverside will never have the wall-to-wall development of Los Angeles.

The plans provide streamlined permitting for infrastructure and development, eliminating what used to be years of delay. Developers and municipalities now plan ahead with certainty.

The Endangered Species Act will never recreate the staggering abundance of wildlife and fish that greeted early settlers. But residents of Riverside County can see a pond turtle, inhale the scent of sagebrush, and watch a hawk overhead not just in distant locations but near where they live.

Conserving nature unites us as Americans. As President Nixon said when signing the Endangered Species Act into law, “Nothing is more priceless and more worthy of preservation than the rich array of animal life with which our country has been blessed. It is a many-faceted treasure, of value to

scholars, scientists and nature lovers alike, and it forms a vital part of the heritage we all share as Americans.”

Although our plans have made good progress, they still struggle to find the funds needed to purchase land and still require political will to keep them on track. Let us redouble our efforts to ensure that Riverside County’s precedent-setting habitat plans are successful.

Jane Block was most recently honored by Riverside with its Spirit award for community activism. Dan Silver directs the Endangered Habitats League.

San Jose Mercury News

Don't weaken the successful Endangered Species Act

By Jeff Miller

This year is the 40th anniversary of the Endangered Species Act, America's landmark law to prevent the extinction of our most at-risk plants and animals. In the Bay Area, we can appreciate the protections this farsighted act has provided for our native wildlife and how preserving their habitat contributes to our quality of life.

Just last month, local agencies began the environmental review process for a series of fish passage projects that will allow steelhead trout to return to more than 10 miles of historic spawning and rearing habitats in upper Alameda Creek -- for the first time in half a century.

This regionally significant stream restoration has been driven by Endangered Species Act protections for steelhead trout, as have similar efforts to restore steelhead and iconic coho salmon in other Bay Area streams such as Codornices Creek, Suisun Creek, Napa River, Lagunitas Creek, San Francisquito Creek and the Guadalupe River.

The Endangered Species Act is one of our most successful environmental laws and the best tool we have for protecting biodiversity. The act's purpose is to stabilize populations of imperiled animals and plants in the wild and bring about their full recovery, at which point they can be removed from the endangered list.

The Endangered Species Act is the main reason we now have abundant and healthy populations of brown pelicans and peregrine falcons in the Bay Area. Both these species have rebounded as a direct result of federal protection and the subsequent banning of the pesticide DDT. Thanks to the Endangered Species Act, bald eagles recovered enough to come off the protected list in 2007. Bald eagles began nesting in the Bay Area in the 1990s and now regularly breed at half a dozen lakes around the Bay.

Endangered Species Act protections have also limited massive urban sprawl in the Bay Area that otherwise would have eliminated much of the remaining habitat for the region's distinctive and highly imperiled reptiles and amphibians.

The brightly colored San Francisco garter snake and Alameda whipsnake, the wetlands-dependent California red-legged frog, and the boldly patterned California tiger salamander would probably have disappeared from Bay Area habitats without the protections of the act.

A full 99 percent of the more than 1,400 plants and animals protected under the act have been saved from extinction, and hundreds of them are on the road to recovery. The longer a species is protected under the act, the more likely it is to be recovering.

The protected species most likely to be recovering are those for which areas of critical habitat have been designated; a formal recovery plan has been prepared; and conservation money has been invested, all actions that result from federal protections.

The first 40 years of the act make it pretty clear that protection and recovery of our most at-risk wildlife is a good investment that brings additional benefits such as clean water, protected open space, recreational and educational opportunities and tourism revenue. On this anniversary, Bay Area residents should voice their support for the Endangered Species Act and oppose congressional efforts to weaken it.

Jeff Miller is director of the Alameda Creek Alliance in Niles.



California can avoid the wolf wars

Lauren Richie

Published Thursday, April 4, 2013

The arrival in California of a male wolf, named OR-7, is a tribute to the 40-year-old Endangered Species Act. The act is one of our strongest federal environmental laws and the reason we still have iconic and ecologically important species such as the bald eagle, the grizzly bear and the wolf, the symbol of wild America.

The law can also create conflicts, manifested by battles pitting species protections against private property rights, development and fear.

Wolves have been no exception. The Endangered Species Act enabled the reintroduction of wolves into the northern Rockies, from where they spread naturally into Washington and Oregon, OR-7's origin. It set the stage for the arrival of OR-7 to California, the first wolf here since the species was extirpated nearly 90 years ago.

The wolves' return to the West has generated significant controversy because of their impacts on livestock, deer and elk. Federal delisting may soon occur where gray wolves are still protected, including in California. That, too, would be contentious.

Last month, 52 members of the [House of Representatives](#) co-signed a bipartisan letter to the [U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service](#) urging the agency to maintain protections for wolves.

Montana, Idaho and Wyoming provide an example of what can result after federal delisting. Since wolves lost protections in 2011 and 2012, more than 1,000 have been killed, from a 2011 population of about 1,600.

California can create a different story. The key is to focus on mutual respect and common goals. We all want to prevent livestock losses to wolves and have thriving deer and elk herds, on which wolves also depend. If we focus on solutions that arise from those shared interests, we can foster collaboration instead of polarization.

Many solutions already exist. For example, certain livestock husbandry practices and scaring off wolves with noisemakers and flagging - red strips hung at intervals off a rope - have successfully reduced livestock losses. Protecting and restoring deer and elk habitat are goals ripe for partnership between conservation and sportsmen groups.

California's [Department of Fish and Wildlife](#) has given us a head start by bringing stakeholders together to collaborate in planning for the wolf's return. The last meeting was in March. In these meetings, conservationists, ranchers, hunters, and others sit down together to discuss concerns and solutions. The department is also accepting scientific and technical comments through May 6 to inform its evaluation of whether to protect wolves under state law.

OR-7 trotted into our state Dec. 28, 2011, and then traversed seven Northern California counties, likely seeking a mate, but certainly capturing international attention. He has his own Twitter and Facebook pages, with hundreds of followers. He made headlines when he crossed back into Oregon earlier this year. He has done this before and could come back to California.

We can learn from states further along in the wolf saga. As the wolf returns to California, we can choose to focus on solutions that benefit the common interest. After 40 years of the Endangered Species Act to learn from, California can get it right.

[Lauren Richie](#) lives in San Francisco and is associate director for Northern California of the [California Wolf Center](#).

The Press Democrat

PD Editorial: Protecting our natural heritage

A bald eagle flies near Cache Creek in Lake County.(JOHN BURGESS / *The Press Democrat*)

December 28, 2013

With a little patience and a sharp eye, you might spot a bald eagle perched on a snag or gliding above the Laguna de Santa Rosa or Lake Sonoma.

Not so long ago, these majestic birds faced extinction. By the late 1960s, only a few hundred remained outside Alaska and Canada, mainly in the most remote and wild parts of the lower 48 states. For most Americans, this national symbol existed only on coins and banners, in photos and nature films.

Today, bald eagles can be seen from Alaska to Florida, their recovery a tribute to the Endangered Species Act.

The landmark law was signed 40 years ago today by President Richard M. Nixon.

“Nothing is more priceless and more worthy of preservation than the rich array of animal life with which our country has been blessed,” Nixon said at the time. “It is a many-faceted treasure, of value to scholars, scientists and nature lovers alike, and it forms a vital part of the heritage we all share as Americans.”

The law passed the U.S. Senate unanimously and the House with just four dissenting votes, a display of bipartisan unity that’s hard to imagine in contemporary politics.

And, despite inevitable conflicts, it works. Of the approximately 1,500 animal and plant species that have been listed as threatened or endangered, fewer than 1 percent have gone extinct and, according to the Fish and Wildlife Service, 68percent are stable or thriving.

The bald eagle came off the endangered species list in 2007. Other successes include the American alligator, the peregrine falcon, the brown pelican and, most recently, the eastern Steller sea lion, which was removed from the list in October.

But success produces fewer headlines than conflict, so you couldn’t be blamed for thinking that red tape and litigation are the only results of the Endangered Species Act.

In reality, few development projects are halted. Only 1 percent of 219,000 projects reviewed between 1998 and 2001 were found to jeopardize endangered species. And, according to the National Wildlife Federation, most were still able to move forward.

Some in Congress are looking to gut the law. They shouldn’t be allowed to succeed. As the recovery of the bald eagle shows, some things are worth extra effort and expense.



PD Editorial: Protecting our natural heritage

JOHN BURGESS / The Press Democrat

Published: Saturday, December 28, 2013

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SOUTHWEST

<http://m.sltrib.com/sltrib/mobile3/57319400-219/species-esa-endangered-plants.html.csp>

The Salt Lake Tribune

Op-ed: Endangered Species Act has proven its worth over 40 years

By George Fenwick

First Published Dec 30 2013 10:57 am

Forty years ago, on Dec. 28, 1973, the most important wildlife protection measure in U.S. history was signed into law by President Richard Nixon, who marked the occasion by issuing the following statement: "Nothing is more priceless and more worthy of preservation than the rich array of animal life with which our country has been blessed."

That's the point of view that helped give rise to the Endangered Species Act.

The long list of species it has helped save from extinction includes birds such as the peregrine falcon, wood stork, Kirtland's warbler, California condor, and Nêhê (Hawaiian goose). Other well-known beneficiaries of the ESA include Louisiana black bear and black-footed ferret.

The need for the ESA is proven by the fact that in the United States and its coastal waters, scientific studies have resulted in nearly 1,500 plants and animals being added to the federal list of threatened or endangered species. That should come as no surprise given the global extinction crisis.

The ESA protects these plants and animals by protecting their natural habitats. Sometimes, but not always, that is a process that puts limits on proposals to develop certain portions of those landscapes.

It's also a process that has helped prevent the extinction of 99 percent of the plants and animals it has been used to protect, including irreplaceable but less charismatic species ranging from Okaloosa darter to Maguire daisy and Lake Erie water snake.

In other words, when this law is allowed to work as it was designed to, it has been remarkably effective. Unfortunately, the ESA has been undercut for years by high-profile critics.

Some of these critics blame the ESA (falsely) for larger economic problems. Some would gladly sacrifice rare species and their habitats in order to boost short-term profits.

Allies of these critics in the U.S. Congress have repeatedly slashed funding for the ESA listing and enforcement process, which has been admirably carried out by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and National Marine Fisheries Service.

Under the Obama administration, problems linked to funding cuts have been compounded by a series of controversial ESA listing proposals. For various reasons, those proposals fail to

protect species in desperate need of conservation measures, such as the lesser prairie chicken, streaked horned lark, western yellow-billed cuckoo, a distinct bi-state population of the greater sage grouse, and northern spotted owl.

In Congress, bills that would destroy the ESA's effectiveness have been unveiled repeatedly in recent years.

The latest example is the "Endangered Species Management Self-Determination Act," which was recently re-introduced in both the House (H.R. 3533) and Senate (S. 31731). This bill would require governors and Congress to sign off on all new endangered species listings, and it would allow governors to take over management of species that reside solely inside their states' borders.

On top of that, this bill would automatically remove protected plants and animals from the Endangered Species List after five years.

The bill has little chance of passing this Congress and effectively turns biological and ecological decision-making into politically motivated decision-making.

Changes such as these could undo much of the good work done since 1973. If that happens, we will lose the wildlife that Richard Nixon called "a many-faceted treasure, of value to scientists, scholars and nature lovers alike ... a vital part of the heritage we share as Americans."

George Fenwick is president of the American Bird Conservancy.

THE ARIZONA REPUBLIC

Protections give species time to recover, thrive

By Noah Greenwald - Jun. 16, 2012

You don't have to look far to find a plant or animal that's been spared from extinction by the Endangered Species Act and is now on the path to recovery.

Across the Southwest, we witness the act's success with the strong return of Apache trout and Utah prairie dog populations and the more than 50 Mexican gray wolves living along the Arizona-New Mexico border.

The list of success stories goes on. A new study by the Center for Biological Diversity finds that of 110 protected species studied, 90 percent are right on track to meet recovery goals set by federal scientists.

The Endangered Species Act, signed by President Nixon in 1973, has saved 99 percent of the 1,482 native species under its care from disappearing. And scientists estimate that were it not for the act, 227 additional species would have gone extinct in the past 35 years.

But the act isn't just about avoiding extinction. It's about setting these species on a trajectory to recovery -- and getting them off the endangered-species list.

Through the years, the act has always had its critics, especially those intent on drilling for more oil, clear-cutting more forests or blasting away mountaintops to extract more coal.

Most recently, Rep. Doc Hastings, R-Wash., chairman of the House Natural Resources Committee, has called for hearings on the act. He claims it's "failing badly" because just 1 percent of all listed species have been taken off the list.

Yet, most species protected by the act were not expected to have recovered yet.

In fact, 80 percent of species haven't reached their projected de-listing dates, according to the new study of 110 species. On average, species were expected to be recovered 46 years after they were protected under the act, but have only been listed for 32 years.

So a little patience is in order. Our study offers a research-based measure of how well the act is helping species recover. It finds plants and animals in all 50 states that are recovering at the rate prescribed by federal scientists.

In Arizona, the habitat of the Apache trout, one of the state's two native trout populations, has expanded from the brink of extinction in 1940, to the brink of full recovery with 29 self-sustaining populations.

The Utah prairie dog population has rebounded to more than 11,000, and six breeding pairs of Mexican gray wolves are now known to be among the 58 wolves living along the Arizona-New Mexico border.

If you leave politics out of the equation, the best way to measure the act is to take an exhaustive look at recovery rates of individual species. When you do that, you find broad evidence that the Endangered Species Act not only protects species from extinction but leads to the recovery of healthy populations.

That's very good news for all species, including our own.

Noah Greenwald is endangered species program director at the Center for Biological Diversity.

http://journalstar.com/news/opinion/editorial/columnists/local-view-the-endangered-species-act-turns/article_64e072d2-f103-54ed-8b68-b5833bfdb603.html



Local View: The Endangered Species Act turns 40

December 28, 2013 • By [JOEL SARTORE](#)

All hail the whooping crane, the tallest of North American birds. It's big. It's beautiful. And it's a wonder it survives today.

As far back as 1900, the "white crane," as early settlers called it, was driven to near extinction by trophy and meat hunters. But it was not alone. Minus virtually any rules to protect wildlife, our forebears pretty much shot and trapped out all they could, everywhere they could, every time they could. The pioneers, like many of us, were greedy.

Human nature hasn't changed much since then, but we do have laws in place to throttle us back these days. Few are better than the Endangered Species Act.

Forty years ago yesterday, Richard Nixon signed the bill, which at the time made us the only nation on Earth to declare a basic right of existence for species other than our own. A public weary of rivers catching fire and toxins in breast milk had pushed Congress to protect the environment, and all of us along with it.

Without government regulation, unbridled hunting, pollution and development was going to doom much of America's bounty, and lawmakers knew it. So the goal of the Endangered Species Act was kept simple; to keep species from going extinct, no matter the cost. This was a law with a conscience.

And by and large it's worked. Today about 40 percent of the plants and animals listed under the ESA in the United States are stable or improving. Many would be gone without it.

Is there more work yet to do? Sure, but the moral of the story is this: given just a little slack, wildlife can and will rebound, albeit slowly.

Among the closest of calls were the California condor, the red wolf and yes, the whooping crane. All got down to fewer than 25 individuals, yet were pulled back from the very brink of extinction thanks to federal protection.

Some animals have done so well they've actually been taken off the Endangered Species List. The peregrine falcon, bald eagle and American alligator all were in real trouble back when the law was passed in 1973. Now they're commonplace.

And don't forget the gray wolf. Completely gone from the American West when the ESA came about, *Canis lupus* has since been reintroduced to Yellowstone, where it is thriving. Its haunting howl is the very definition of wilderness, one that tourists gladly pay millions to hear each year.

The ESA doesn't discriminate based on sex appeal or location though. It nurtures all of our flora and fauna, including rare Nebraska plants like the prairie fringed orchid and the blowout penstemon, as well as native animals like the Salt Creek tiger beetle, the pallid sturgeon and the black-footed ferret. In the eyes of the law, all are as important, and magnificent, as a grizzly bear.

And that's a great thing, because when we save other species, we're actually saving ourselves. We need pollinating insects like bees and even flies to produce our crops. We need birds and bats to control the insects we don't want. Grass and trees sequester carbon, filter our water and air, and regulate climate as well.

These days, some lawmakers seem to have lost their way. There are numerous efforts to cut funding for endangered species programs, block protections for certain species and bypass the Endangered Species Act altogether when they think it might be inconvenient.

And that's a shame. Future generations won't forgive us for causing extinctions. Indeed, long-term human survival depends on the preservation of all species and the wild places that nurture them.

For those of us who savor the walk up the hill as much as the view from the top, there has never been a better time to make a difference. Will we remain vigilant to honor that pledge embodied in the Endangered Species Act to protect wildlife? Nature, in all her resilience, awaits our response as never before.

Joel Sartore is a contributing photographer and fellow of the National Geographic Society. See his work to save species at www.photoark.com.

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 12, 2013

kansascityopinion

THE KANSAS CITY STAR.

Endangered Species Act isn't the enemy

Protecting our endangered fish will help protect all of us in the long run.

BY KEITH GIDO AND TIERRA CURRY



Keith Gido



Tierra Curry

Fewer than 50 years ago many Great Plains farmers could pump hundreds of gallons per *minute* from the seemingly bottomless aquifers hidden deep below the surface.

Now some are lucky to get that amount in a year.

Hardly are the farmers to blame — they're simply doing their best to provide reasonably priced, U.S.-produced food.

But we're now starting to fully understand the cost of our water consumption choices, both to humans and wildlife.

Whether we're experiencing a prolonged regional drought or flooding from prolonged downpours, the bottom line hasn't changed: When it comes to our diminishing surface and groundwater supplies, we must face up to the fact that we're in the midst of a conservation crisis of immense proportions.

The deterioration of aquatic habitat in Kansas has been ongoing since the 19th century. By 1900 almost 90 percent of Kansas had been plowed, and some fish populations were already in danger. The Dust Bowl of the 1930s was an early signal our land use practices were not sustainable.

Then in the 1960s the groundwater withdrawal started, and reservoir construction increased. Both practices reduced suffering from short-term climatic extremes but put our native fishes in jeopardy of extinction.

Many Great Plains fish species were already pushing toward extinction by the time the Endangered Species Act was passed 40 years ago.

Here in the plains, not everyone has positive thoughts about the Endangered Species Act. Farmers fear, unnecessarily so, that discovery of an endangered species on their land will shut them down. In fact, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service works closely with private landowners, offering incentives for conservation of federally protected species.

Along with protecting our most imperiled plants and animals, the Endangered Species Act plays an important role in helping us recognize our often wasteful water-use practices. No law is perfect, but it's clear we're much better off with the Endangered Species Act than we'd be without it. To date it has prevented the extinction of 99 percent of plants and animals it protects, along with helping to preserve the health of the landscapes they inhabit.

There's not much doubt that the act has aided in the conservation of fishes in the Great Plains, such as the Topeka shiner and pallid sturgeon, by encouraging protection and enhancement of critical habitats and establishing captive rearing programs.

It's understandable that not everyone can fully appreciate the value of some of these now rare species. But the point is, not so long ago these fish could be found in great abundance through entire river systems. And their relatively quick demise is a barometer of the broader water conservation crisis that everybody should care about, if only for their own sake.

Still, there's much to be optimistic about. Many farmers are turning to promising dry-crop methods. And there are plenty of opportunities to continue the work of improving or creating passageways through dams and road crossings that block natural migrations and are critical to preserving fish populations.

One of the most important ways to get funding for these kinds of improvements is through the Endangered Species Act. We still have plenty of fish, and habitats, right here in Kansas that would benefit from those protections.

Although some landowners are wary, the truth is fish and wildlife officials are looking for impact, not conflict. So in the great majority of cases, officials are not cramming anything down anybody's throat — the Endangered Species Act is just guiding how we spend a relatively tiny portion of our tax money in an environmentally constructive way.

In the long run, that's a good thing for all of us.

Keith Gido of Manhattan, Kan., is a Kansas State University professor of biology. Tierra Curry of Portland, Ore., is a conservation biologist who leads the Center for Biological Diversity's campaign to abate the freshwater extinction crisis.



Local View: Lessons from a beetle on Endangered Species Act's power

June 30, 2013 By [BUFFALO BRUCE McINTOSH](#)

This year marks the 40th anniversary of the Endangered Species Act, our nation's premier environmental law, which highlights the critical role biological diversity plays in maintaining a functioning space for all living beings.

Nebraskans don't have to look far to find examples of the act's remarkable record of preventing extinction and helping plant and animal species recover.

During the past century, more than 230 species of birds have been documented on our salt marshes, including such species as the piping plover and peregrine falcon, both of which have recovered from the brink of extinction with help of the Endangered Species Act.

But the plight of the Salt Creek tiger beetle here in Lancaster County is a stark reminder that the success of the act over the next four decades, and beyond, is limited to our willingness to follow the best available science rather than the most expedient politics.

With only a few hundred individuals remaining, not only is our little brown, half-inch-long beetle considered one of the rarest insects on the planet, it is struggling to survive in one of the most restricted ranges of any U.S. insect: 90 percent of its salt-marsh habitat has been destroyed or severely degraded.

Yet, earlier this month the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, announcing a long-awaited decision on how much critical habitat should be set aside for the beetle, proposed that only 1,110 acres be designated in Lancaster and Saunders counties. The decision stands in sharp contrast to a 2005 recommendation by scientists that 36,000 acres of habitat were needed to be protected to ensure the beetle's recovery.

Since the Bush administration, our government agencies have been taking a politically handcuffed, extremely timid approach to implementing the full power of the Endangered Species Act.

We saw it last summer in the decision not to extend the act's protection to the critically imperiled dunes sagebrush lizard, an outcome fueled by heavy lobbying from oil, gas and livestock industries. We saw it again late last year with the scientifically indefensible decisions to cut 90 percent of the mountain caribou's high-mountain habitat. And if we aren't careful, this politically compromised approach is likely to continue.

Led by U.S. Rep. Doc Hastings, R-Wash., Republicans have pushed hard in recent years to weaken the Endangered Species Act. Hastings, who chairs the powerful House Committee on Natural Resources, routinely has attacked both the act and the conservationists, like me, who work to enforce it.

Not surprisingly, the facts don't support Hastings' claims that legal petitions from conservationists forcing the Fish and Wildlife Service to make timely decisions about protecting imperiled species are a waste of time and taxpayer money.

A study published last year in the journal Science found that citizen-initiated lawsuits did a better job than the Fish and Wildlife Service of identifying the nation's most-imperiled plants and animals. Dan

Ashe, director of the service, has said he believes petitions from citizen and conservation groups are one of the strengths of the Endangered Species Act.

A perfect example is the recent lawsuit featuring the burying beetle, which forced the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to do a better job of limiting illegal “take” of protected species. That litigation also brought greater public awareness to why the 12 million-acre Sandhills region is referred to by scientists as “the most important biologically intact focal area within the Great Plains.” A side effect of that litigation was to assist the U.S. Department of State with the November 2011 determination to delay the Keystone XL pipeline until an alternative route circumventing the environmentally sensitive Sandhills was solidified.

It's clear only with the help of citizens can the Endangered Species Act continue its unequalled record of success: In its first four decades, the law has prevented the extinction of 99 percent of the more than 1,400 plants and animals it protects.

To make sure that success continues for another 40 years, all we have to do is follow the science, not the politics.

Formally with the Smithsonian and now living in Chadron, Buffalo Bruce McIntosh's history of environmental lawsuits started in 1973 where he prevailed in a case decision from the U.S. Supreme Court.

The Gazette

Gazette Staff Updated: 10 February 2013 | in [Statewide News](#)

Endangered in Iowa

Progress being made, but many species in state still face extinction

Since its enactment 40 years ago, the Endangered Species Act has helped to reverse the decline of many plant and animal species.

Especially noticeable to Iowans have been the remarkable comebacks of the bald eagle and peregrine falcon, whose recoveries have been so complete that ESA protection is no longer necessary for their survival.

Nevertheless, the list of Iowa resident plants and animals classified under the act as endangered or threatened continues to grow with the addition in January 2012 of two mussel species, the sheepsnose and spectaclecase.

With the exception of mussels, other Iowa resident animal and plant species listed as endangered or threatened under the act are generally holding their own, state biologists say.

Higgins eye pearly mussel

Status: Endangered in the U.S. and Iowa.

Description: 3- to 4-inch roundish, golden olive mussel that prefers deep water and moderate currents.

Habitat: The Upper Mississippi River and its larger tributaries.

Greatest threat: Siltation and invasive species.

Sheepsnose mussel

Status: Endangered in the U.S. and Iowa.

Description: Thick-shelled 5-inch mussel living in larger rivers and streams, usually in shallow water flowing swiftly over sand and gravel.

Habitat: Upper Mississippi and larger tributaries.

Greatest threat: Loss and degradation of habitat due to impoundments, channelization, contaminants and sedimentation.

Spectaclecase mussel

Status: Endangered in the U.S. and Iowa.

Description: Large mussel with an elongated, sometimes curved shell that can attain lengths of 9 inches.

Habitat: Upper Mississippi and larger tributaries, populations fragmented and limited to short stream reaches.

Greatest threat: Loss and degradation of habitat due to impoundments, channelization, chemical contaminants, mining and sedimentation.

Topeka shiner

Status: Endangered in the U.S., threatened in Iowa.

Description: A small, stout minnow not longer than 3 inches, silvery with a dark stripe along its side.

Habitat: Small prairie (or former prairie) streams in pools containing clear, clean water.
Greatest threat: Loss of habitat through siltation and stream channelization.

Pallid sturgeon

Status: Endangered in the U.S. and Iowa.
Description: A primitive fish with a dinosaur-like appearance, it has a flattened snout, long slender tail and rows of body plates instead of scales. It can attain a length of 6 feet and weight of 100 pounds.
Habitat: Large, silty rivers, primarily the Mississippi and Missouri.
Greatest threat: Impoundment of rivers.

Iowa Pleistocene snail

Status: Endangered in the U.S. and Iowa.
Description: Small land snail with a tightly coiled shell about the size of a shirt button.
Habitat: Rocky slopes over entrances to caves or cracks where ice is typically permanent underground.
Greatest threat: Climate change.

Least tern

Status: Endangered in U.S. and Iowa.
Description: Swallow-like bird, the smallest of the American terns, 8 to 9 inches long, with black crown, white underside and grayish back and wings.
Iowa habitat: From late April to August, sparsely vegetated sandbars along rivers, sand and gravel pits, or lake and reservoir shorelines.
Greatest threat: Loss of habitat.

Piping plover

Status: Threatened in the U.S. and Iowa.
Description: Small stocky shorebird with sand-colored upper body and orange legs.
Iowa habitat: Flat, wide, open, sandy or somewhat cobbly beach. Nesting territories often include small creeks or wetlands.
Greatest threat: Loss of habitat.

Indiana bat

Status: Endangered in the U.S. and Iowa.
Description: Blackish gray bat with pink lips, from 4 to 5 inches long with a wingspan of 10 inches.
Habitat: They hibernate in cool, limestone caves or mine shafts and disperse in summer to spend their days under bridges, in old buildings and under the loose bark of dead and dying trees along forested, slow-moving streams.
Greatest threats: Commercialization of caves, loss of summer habitat, pesticides and the disease white-nose syndrome.

Eastern and Western prairie fringed orchids

Status: Threatened in the U.S., endangered in Iowa.
Description: Long-living perennial arising from a fleshy tuber up to 3 feet tall with as many as 40 white flowers per stalk.
Habitat: Moist to wet tallgrass prairie and wet sedge meadows.
Greatest threat: Loss of prairie habitat.

Northern Monkshood

Status: Threatened in the U.S. and Iowa.
Description: An ice age relic noted for its blue hood-shaped flowers.
Habitat: Cold streams, mossy banks, cliffs and slopes, usually with cold air drainage nearby.
Greatest threat: Climate change.

Mead's milkweed

Status: Threatened in the U.S., endangered in Iowa.

Description: Perennial herb that may grow 2 feet tall with a single cluster of 10 to 20 greenish-cream flowers on a bent or drooping stem.

Habitat: Virgin tallgrass prairie with deep, unplowed silty loams.

Greatest threat: Loss of prairie habitat.

Prairie bush clover

Status: Threatened in the U.S. and Iowa.

Description: A member of the pea family, it has a clover-like leaf and pale pink or cream-colored flowers on an open spike.

Habitat: Dry tallgrass prairies with gravelly soil.

Greatest threat: Loss of prairie habitat.

Curated by Orlan Love, Laurie Harker, Jim Riley/The Gazette

GULF COAST

<http://www.mystatesman.com/news/news/opinion/giese-rhetoric-will-save-neither-jobs-nor-species/nZhKZ/>

ENDANGERED SPECIES

Rhetoric will save neither jobs nor species

BY COLLETTE ADKINS GIESE - SPECIAL TO THE AMERICAN-STATESMAN

Sept. 2, 2013

You wouldn't think a couple of 2-inch-long salamanders, including one that's blind, would strike fear in the hearts of Texans.

Nor should they.

But opponents of awarding Endangered Species Act protection and critical habitat to two of the nation's most-imperiled salamanders have worked very hard to make sure that's the case.

There is strong peer-reviewed science behind the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service designation this week of more than 4,400 acres of critical habitat in central Texas for the Austin blind salamander and Jollyville Plateau salamander, which spend their entire lives underwater in springs and wet caves in Travis and Williamson counties.

Determining how much protected habitat is critical to any species survival is a challenging process, one that includes detailed biological analysis as well as a close look at the potential economic impacts of that designation.

In recent years, opponents of the Endangered Species Act have been increasingly aggressive about rolling out pre-prepared troves of sky-is-falling talking points to make a pro-active case against proposals to protect species and critical habitat, especially when it comes to economic impacts.

One of those rhetorical battles is well under way now in California in response to a Fish and Wildlife Service proposal to protect two species of frogs and a toad and to designate more than 1 million acres as critical habitat for one of the frogs and 750,000 acres for the toad.

As is often the case, opponents -- including two California congressmen -- have provided much hyperbole but few facts to support their claims that the proposed protections would have a

“devastating” impact on the local economy and likely cause “severe restrictions” on access to public lands.

In fact, there are no facts to support either assertion.

Similarly, when oil and gas industry spokesmen and Texas politicians successfully lobbied to make sure the dunes sagebrush lizard would not be awarded Endangered Species Act protections last year, their largely unsubstantiated rhetoric, though repeated by many media outlets, was always extremely short on supporting data of any kind.

Texas Congressman Mike Conaway went so far as to say protecting the lizard would threaten the national economy by curtailing domestic oil production and raising the price of gasoline. His assertion mirrored industry claims that protecting the lizard would “shut down drilling activity for a minimum of two years and as many as five years.”

In fact, the lizard occurs on only about 2 percent of the Permian’s 39 million acres and protecting it would have had virtually no effect on thousands of new oil and gas wells planned for the region.

Similarly, if you believe opponents of protecting the Austin blind and Jollyville Plateau salamanders, designating more than 4,000 acres of critical habitat will pose a huge, job-killing threat to regional economies, infringe on private property rights and scare some developers from even considering the area.

The truth is complicated, but much less dramatic than that.

In most cases critical habitat designation has no impact on private property owners. Only on construction projects that use federal funding or require a federal permit does the designation create consultation and mitigation requirements for private landowners.

For the two salamanders, the Fish and Wildlife Service has estimated the economic impacts of the critical habitat designation would be mostly administrative costs and no more than \$40 million over the next 23 years. Consultants hired by Williamson County have estimated economic impacts of several hundred million dollars over the same period.

What we’re not very good at yet is measuring the positive economic benefits associated with preserving species and the irreplaceable habitats we share with them, a much more effective measure of long-term impacts both to the planet and our economy.

By some important measures, we have some dramatic challenges ahead. Scientists now estimate that more than 25 percent of our country's amphibians and reptiles are in danger of becoming extinct.

What it comes down to is how we make value judgments. And 40 years ago this year Congress passed the Endangered Species Act after determining that our values needed rebalancing because far too many species had gone extinct "as a consequence of economic growth and development untempered by adequate concern and conservation," according to the wording of the Act.

One thing is certain: Without the Endangered Species Act, there would likely be no balance at all.

FLORIDA

<http://www.miamiherald.com/2013/12/25/3836463/keep-endangered-species-act-strong.html>

Miami Herald

Letters to the Editor

Posted on Wednesday, 12.25.13

Keep Endangered Species Act strong for 40 more years

Forty years ago, on Dec. 28, 1973, the most important wildlife protection measure in U.S. history was signed into law by President Richard Nixon, who marked the occasion by issuing the following statement: "Nothing is more priceless and more worthy of preservation than the rich array of animal life with which our country has been blessed."

That's the point of view that helped give rise to the Endangered Species Act. The need for the ESA is proven by the fact that in the U. S. and its coastal waters, scientific studies have resulted in nearly 1,500 plants and animals being added to the federal list of threatened or endangered species. That should come as no surprise given the global extinction crisis.

The ESA protects these plants and animals by protecting their natural habitats. Sometimes, but not always, that is a process that puts limits on proposals to develop certain portions of those landscapes. It's also a process that has helped prevent the extinction of 99 percent of the plants and animals it has been used to protect, including irreplaceable but less charismatic species ranging from the Okaloosa darter to the Lake Erie water snake.

Unfortunately, the ESA has been undercut for years by high-profile critics. Some of these critics falsely blame the ESA for larger economic problems. Some would gladly sacrifice rare species and their habitats in order to boost short-term profits.

Allies of these critics in Congress have repeatedly slashed funding for the ESA listing and enforcement process, which has been admirably carried out by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and National Marine Fisheries Service.

Under the Obama administration, problems linked to funding cuts have been compounded by a series of controversial ESA listing proposals. For various reasons, those proposals fail to protect species in desperate need of conservation measures.

In Congress, bills that would destroy the ESA's effectiveness have been unveiled repeatedly in recent years. The latest example is the "Endangered Species Management Self-Determination Act," which was recently re-introduced in both the House (H.R. 3533) and Senate (S. 31731). It would require governors and Congress to sign off on all new endangered species listings, and it would allow governors to take over management of species that reside solely inside their states' borders. On top of that, this bill would automatically remove protected plants and animals from the Endangered Species List after five years. The bill has little chance of passing this Congress and effectively turns biological and ecological decision-making into politically motivated decision-making.

Changes such as these could undo much of the good work done since 1973.

George Fenwick, president, American Bird Conservancy, Washington, D.C.

As life breeds life, extinction begets extinction

By Jaclyn Lopez

LatinaLista

February 12, 2013

There have been five mass extinctions – times when the Earth has lost more than three-quarters of its species in a relatively short timeframe – during the past 540 million years.



Endangered species across the world.

Today, almost [20,000 species](#) of animals and plants worldwide are at a high risk of extinction, and it is estimated that 0.1% of the world's species go extinct annually.

If these 20,000 species were to go extinct, and that rate of extinction continued, we would lose at least three-quarters of all species on Earth within a few centuries. We will have created the [sixth mass extinction](#).

There is a background, or "[normal](#)" [rate of extinction](#) of about one to five species per year. Scientists estimate we are losing 1,000-10,000 times that background rate. Historically, mass extinctions have been due to natural events.

Meanwhile, the current extinction trend is largely the result of climate change and other human activities. It is estimated that we are outstripping the earth's renewable resources, land, and waste absorption [capacity by 50%](#).

Species like the majestic [West African lion](#) that once roamed freely are now a trophy hunt away from extinction. Of course the extinction rate is difficult to calculate. We do know that [extinctions have ripple effects](#), whereby one extinction can create an imbalance that leads to other extinctions.

We know there are about 1.7 million species, and suspect that there are at least twice as many species we have not yet discovered. Therefore, it is impossible to know the status of those species, or which species have recently gone extinct.

However, not all is gloom and doom.

A new study substantiates the theory that [biodiversity supports biodiversity](#) by protecting it against human impacts. Basically, having a high concentration of different species in an area allows ecosystems to withstand human disturbance and avoid catastrophe.

Also, a new set of [objective measures](#) to help countries measure and monitor biodiversity were recently prepared to help meet the United Nation's Convention on Biological Diversity's goal of halting the loss of biodiversity by 2020. The measures are intended to aid nations in providing evidence-based information on biodiversity.

Finally, we do have at least one tool to prevent species extinction: the Endangered Species Act.

The Act is a groundbreaking piece of federal legislation aimed at affording our Nation's most imperiled species VIP status by creating protections from the very threats that jeopardize their survival.

The Act has been nearly 100% effective in preventing extinctions since its inception in 1973. This year marks the 40th Anniversary of the Act – celebrate it by letting your elected officials know you [support its full implementation](#) and funding.

BATS- We may not see them, but we need them!

A high-flying Halloween icon worth saving

By Jaclyn Lopez

OCTOBER 26, 2012

Since the days when the roaring harvest bonfires of October attracted hordes of bugs followed by legions of bats hunting them down in a dazzling aerial circus, the furry flying mammals have served as the unofficial mascots of the Halloween season.

In Florida, home to so many uniquely subtropical species, we're lucky to have over a dozen species of bats. But one species outshines them all — the Florida bonneted bat, which like its distant cousin the vampire bat, has a flare for the dramatic.

With a wingspan pushing two feet, stubby tail, and relatively small body, the bonneted bat is designed for hawk-like hunting. An insect predator that soars across the Everglades and open spaces, it hunts using echolocation, calling into the night and listening for the echoes. If you're lucky enough to be near one you may be able to hear its high-pitched call which, unlike that of most bats, is audible to humans with good hearing.

So-named for the broad, rounded ears that reach like a hood above their eyes, Florida bonneted bats now number fewer than 300, making them one of the rarest animals on the planet.

Fortunately, earlier this month, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service announced it is proposing Endangered Species Act protection for the bonneted bat, a designation that if finalized, will help prevent the bat's extinction.

The Florida bonneted bat was all but presumed extinct until the fall of 1988 when a pregnant female was discovered on the seventh-floor balcony of a Coral Gables office building. Prior to that, the last sighting had been in 1978 when a male with a harem of seven females was discovered in a woodpecker cavity in a tree — a tree that shortly thereafter was removed for the construction of I-75.

The remaining bonneted bats roost along cliff crevices, in tree cavities, on buildings, and in bat houses from the coastal areas of Broward and Miami-Dade counties to as far north as Indian River and Okeechobee counties.

Bonneted bats are hardly alone among U.S. bat populations in their struggle to survive. In just six years, a fungal bat contagion of epidemic proportions called white nose syndrome has spread to 19 states and wiped out nearly 7 million bats.

Thanks to Florida's balmy weather that allows bats to stay active year-round, and due to efforts to contain the disease which can be spread by cavers, bats in Florida are not currently threatened by the disease which can wipe out an entire hibernating bat colony in one season.

Still, like so many declining species here, the Florida bonneted bat faces multiple threats, including widespread exposure to pesticides. Bats are efficient hunters, sometimes consuming two-thirds their body-weight in a single night. But in providing this valuable ecosystem service, the bat is unknowingly consuming its chemical competitor — insecticides.

Yet, with federal protection, there's every reason to believe we can still prevent this extraordinary animal from disappearing forever. Since being passed into law in 1973, the Endangered Species Act has prevented the extinction of 99 percent of the more than 1,400 plants and animals placed under its care. Studies by the Center for Biological Diversity in recent years have highlighted the encouraging recovery trajectories of many of those species, including two famous Florida survivors — the bald eagle and American alligator.

That's great news for the Florida bonneted bat, but it still has a long road to recovery.

It's a journey we can't get started on soon enough.

Jaclyn Lopez is a Florida native and attorney in the Florida office of the Center for Biological Diversity where her work focuses on the protection and restoration of wild places, native ecosystems, and imperiled species in the Southeast. jlopez@biologicaldiversity.org

GREAT LAKES

http://lacrossetribune.com/news/opinion/other-view-endangered-species-act-deserves-praise/article_6cfe2634-7184-11e3-b870-001a4bcf887a.html



EDITORIAL

Other view: Endangered Species Act deserves praise

December 31, 2013 • [Wisconsin State Journal editorial board](#)

The following editorial was published in Thursday's Wisconsin State Journal

If you love Wisconsin's wolves, thank the Endangered Species Act, which turns 40 years old this month.

And if you love Wisconsin's wolf hunt, do the same.

The landmark protection law, signed by President Richard Nixon on Dec. 28, 1973, allowed the majestic predator's resurgence here. At the same time, the animal's population — at more than 800 in Wisconsin last winter, just before lots of pups were born in the spring — was large enough for a second annual limited hunt, which just ended.

The proper balance between protection of such animals and their habitats, versus safeguards and conveniences for people and their property, is delicate and often controversial. Yet the gray wolf's return and success here shows the power of the Endangered Species Act to preserve and promote some of our most vulnerable creatures, often for the benefit of all.

After years of legal battles, the gray wolf has been taken off the endangered and threatened list in Wisconsin, which makes sense, given its flourishing numbers. State and wildlife officials now must use care to ensure the wolf thrives over time and never returns to imperiled status.

The Endangered Species Act is probably best known for helping to save the bald eagle and large mammals such as the grizzly bear. Yet the act has helped lots of smaller species of insects, fish, reptiles and plants.

Application of the act has sometimes gone too far. And it can increase the cost of construction projects because of extra study and alterations.

But the act helps humans more than it hurts.

Protecting the bald eagle, for example, led to a better understanding of and restrictions on the pesticide DDT — benefiting the regal birds as well as humans. An endangered mint has been found to act as a natural insecticide. The anti-cancer drug taxol comes from an endangered tree.

Then there are the wolves in Wisconsin and across the Midwest. They help to control the deer population, which helps to protect plant diversity.

On its 40th anniversary, the Endangered Species Act is worthy of far more celebration than detraction.

THE DUNN COUNTY NEWS

Praise for the Endangered Species Act

December 28, 2013 6:36 pm

If you love Wisconsin's wolves, thank the Endangered Species Act, which turns 40 years old this week. And if you love Wisconsin's wolf hunt, do the same.

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A Wisconsin State Journal editorial



Praise for the Endangered Species Act

December 26, 2013 • [Wisconsin State Journal editorial](#)

Wisconsin wolf biologist Adrian Wydeven revives a yearling female gray wolf in northwestern Wisconsin after trapping, sedating and checking its health in this file photo.

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<http://interactive.sheddaquarium.org/2013/12/shedd-celebrates-the-endangered-species-acts-40th-anniversary.html>

December 28, 2013

Shedd Celebrates the Endangered Species Act's 40th Anniversary

Forty years ago today, President Nixon signed the [Endangered Species Act](#) to help save animals, plants and their habitats from extinction. Today, we celebrate the successes of the law and the 2,140 species it continues to protect – including 14 endangered or threatened species at Shedd.

Under the Endangered Species Act, key species such as the bald eagle were able to recover. [Officials took action](#) by prohibiting the killing of eagles, improving water quality, protecting nest sites and restoring eagles to their previous areas. Now, the bald eagle no longer needs the protection of the ESA, and scientists are hopeful that the thousands of species still under watch will have similar success stories.

Yet, this recovery process is far from easy. For the Grand Cayman blue iguana – an endangered species Shedd cares for – habitat loss means not only fewer fruit trees, but also greater residential and tourist traffic, domestic animal predation and illegal capturing. Though the Grand Cayman blue iguana faces many threats, organizations like Shedd are working to provide care and [research](#) for the benefit of the species.

Other endangered animals at Shedd include the green sea turtle, South American red-lined turtle, giant South American river turtle, yellow-spotted Amazon River turtle, Goeldi's monkey and Asian arowana. Shedd also has several threatened species such as the northern sea otter, southern sea otter, ringed map turtle, yellow-blotched map turtle, Cuban ground iguana, shovelnose sturgeon and elkhorn coral.

Additionally, Shedd cares for five animals on the Illinois Endangered Species Protection Board's list – the alligator snapping turtle, lake sturgeon, hellbender, redspotted sunfish and Iowa darter – all of which can be found in the *At Home on the Great Lakes* gallery. An additional 27 endangered or critically endangered species at Shedd are listed under the International Union for Conservation of Nature's Red List, for a total of 46 protected species at Shedd.

Today, we are thankful for the 40 years of conservation work done through the ESA. "Nothing is more priceless and more worthy of preservation than the rich array of animal life," said President Nixon when signing the act. We couldn't agree more!

SOUTHEAST

<http://www.postandcourier.com/article/20131228/PC1002/131229457/1021/endangered-species-still-require-federal-protections>



Endangered species still need federal protections

Posted: **Saturday, December 28, 2013 12:01 a.m.**

BY GEORGE FENWICK

Forty years ago on December 28, 1973, the most important wildlife protection measure in U.S. history was signed into law by President Richard Nixon, who marked the occasion by issuing the following statement: "Nothing is more priceless and more worthy of preservation than the rich array of animal life with which our country has been blessed."

That's the point of view that helped give rise to the Endangered Species Act. The long list of species it has helped save from extinction includes birds such as the Peregrine Falcon, Wood Stork, Kirtland's Warbler, California Condor, and Nene (Hawaiian goose). Other well-known beneficiaries of the ESA include Louisiana black bear and black-footed ferret.

The need for the ESA is proven by the fact that in the United States and its coastal waters, scientific studies have resulted in nearly 1,500 plants and animals being added to the federal list of threatened or endangered species. That should come as no surprise given the global extinction crisis.

The ESA protects these plants and animals by protecting their natural habitats. Sometimes, but not always, that is a process that puts limits on proposals to develop certain portions of those landscapes. It's also a process that has helped prevent the extinction of 99 percent of the plants and animals it has been used to protect, including irreplaceable but less charismatic species ranging from Okaloosa darter to Maguire daisy and Lake Erie water snake.

In other words, when this law is allowed to work as it was designed to, it has been remarkably effective. Unfortunately, the ESA has been undercut for years by high-profile critics. Some of these critics blame the ESA (falsely) for larger economic problems. Some would gladly sacrifice rare species and their habitats in order to boost short-term profits.

Allies of these critics in the U.S. Congress have repeatedly slashed funding for the ESA listing and enforcement process, which has been admirably carried out by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and National Marine Fisheries Service. Under the Obama administration, problems linked to funding cuts have been compounded by a series of controversial ESA listing proposals. For various reasons, those proposals fail to protect species in desperate need of conservation measures, such as the Lesser Prairie Chicken, Streaked Horned Lark, western Yellow-billed Cuckoo, a distinct bi-state population of the Greater Sage-Grouse, and Northern Spotted Owl.

In Congress, bills that would destroy the ESA's effectiveness have been unveiled repeatedly in recent years. The latest example is the "Endangered Species Management Self-Determination Act," which was recently re-introduced in both the House (H.R. 3533) and Senate (S. 31731). This bill would require governors and Congress to sign off on all new endangered species listings, and it would allow governors to take over management of species that reside solely inside their states' borders.

On top of that, this bill would automatically remove protected plants and animals from the Endangered Species List after five years. The bill has little chance of passing this Congress and effectively turns biological and ecological decision-making into politically motivated decision-making.

Changes such as these could undo much of the good work done since 1973. If that happens, we will lose the wildlife that Richard Nixon called "a many-faceted treasure, of value to scientists, scholars and nature lovers alike ... a vital part of the heritage we share as Americans."

Dr. George Fenwick is president of the American Bird Conservancy, a not-for-profit membership organization whose mission is to conserve native birds and their habitats throughout the Americas.



Axel Ringe: Endangered Species Act also protects nature, people, economy

Posted November 23, 2013

Those of us living here in East Tennessee are familiar with the scars and the bleeding.

In this part of our state, you don't have to go far to come face to face with a mountain girdled with strip mine benches, bare swaths of earth that with every significant rainfall turn into rivers of mud that flow down and sully our waterways with oxygen-choking sediment and toxic heavy metals.

But we've also learned what can happen after the mining stops and Mother Nature is given even a sliver of a chance to make things right again. Over time, seeds gain purchase, grasses sprout and eventually bushy undergrowth and small trees replace the barren troughs with swaths of green.

Then, hoping to extract a few more loads of profit from the same fragile hillsides, the mining companies return with new proposals and promises of yet another temporary cluster of jobs destined to result in the same boom-and-bust economy we've all seen before.

As a result, though the work of many Tennessee residents helped to convince the National Coal Company to decide in August to get out of the surface mining business in our state, the work to protect our watersheds is not done. There are permit applications pending to reopen numerous mining sites within a couple hours' drive of Knoxville, sites that will impact thousands of acres in watersheds depended upon by wildlife and people in our region.

One of the best tools we have to protect not only imperiled plants and animals, but the health of the waterways we all depend on, is the Endangered Species Act, which Congress passed by nearly a unanimous vote 40 years ago.

If not for this signature federal law, the people of Tennessee would not now be enjoying the benefits of bald eagles at Reelfoot Lake and our Tennessee Valley Authority reservoirs; peregrine falcons in the Great Smoky Mountains National Park and our cities; our numerous water-cleansing mussels with enticing names like purple bean, Cumberland elktoe and rough rabbitsfoot; and Ruth's golden aster along the Hiwassee and Ocoee rivers in Polk County.

The Endangered Species Act played an important role in the August settlement with National Coal that will result in the closing of the Zeb Mountain mine. Though the brunt of the case had to do with violations of the Clean Water Act, conservation groups also threatened to file claims under the Endangered Species Act for discharges of selenium, a surface mining by-product that's been found to result in deformities in fish, including the endangered blackside dace native to our area.

There's no doubt that the possibility of having to face those powerful Endangered Species Act claims played a significant role in National Coal's decision to settle the case and close down its operations in Tennessee. And that's good news for all of us, because studies have linked pollution from surface mining to increased incidence of cancer and birth defects among humans.

Still, the mining permit applications currently pending all involve mines that would affect the quality of the water that's critical to maintaining healthy ecosystems in this part of Tennessee. As a result, there are plenty of challenges remaining for those of us interested in protecting our watersheds.

While the Endangered Species Act is best known for preventing the extinction of 99 percent of the species it protects as well as putting many of them on the road to recovery, in the process it has also done a great job of protecting our health.

Forty years after it passed, the Endangered Species Act continues to work today just as our congressional leaders envisioned it would, providing us with the legal tools necessary to balance our short-term economic interests with our long-term community interests.

Without it, there would be no balance at all.



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Critical tool helps threatened species

The Virginian-Pilot

© January 14, 2014

Endangered species in America would become considerably more endangered if the anti-regulation crowd in Congress ever gets its way.

Thankfully, that doesn't appear likely, at least anytime soon.

The Endangered Species Protection Act, signed by President Richard Nixon, reached its 40th birthday last month. It is one of those federal laws - like the Clean Air and Clean Water acts - that has done immense good for the nation simply by demanding that businesses and people be responsible for their own actions.

Of course, Washington is a different place at the moment. Polluters have far more influence on Congress than the people who must live with the lawmakers' decisions - and sometimes die as a result of their irresponsible behavior.

Without shame, lawmakers and interest groups will claim that requiring polluters to take responsibility for their pollution is government overreach. They will argue that asking businesses and people to refrain from destroying taxpayer-owned lands, or killing the last of a species, is somehow an infringement of rights.

Republican Sens. Rand Paul and Dean Heller have introduced legislation that would gut the Endangered Species Act, requiring an act of Congress to add a new animal, allowing states to opt out, and requiring individual protections to be renewed every five years.

Predictably, advocates of destroying species protections - which proved critical to the survival of the bald eagle, American alligator and grizzly bear, among dozens of others - cloak their campaign in the cynical assurance that it will actually make animals safer.

It won't.

Instead, such legislation would reverse decades of progress, imperiling species that are already threatened. It would create a patchwork of priorities and protections. It would subject environmental regulations to even greater political pressure.

The list of species exterminated by Americans is a long and sad one. The passenger pigeon, which once flew in flocks that covered the skies, was gone by 1914. The Carolina parakeet disappeared by 1918. The Smith's Island cottontail was lost by the 1980s. More recently, the eastern cougar, which once roamed the Appalachian Mountains, was declared extinct in 2011, though it hadn't been seen in

decades. Countless species of fish and amphibians and mollusks were exterminated before they were identified.

Indeed, some of those animals disappeared after the Endangered Species Act was passed. But in every case, the damage to the creatures' habitat and population by development and pollution had already been done.

That's precisely what the law is designed to prevent. It has worked for 40 years, and it shouldn't be sacrificed simply because animals can't write campaign checks.

Herald & Tribune

JONESBOROUGH, TENNESSEE

Story published: 01-21-2014

Forty years of endangered species act

By Frances Lamberts

As he wrote in 1940, some Sunday in January Aldo Leopold would walk his farm land to inform and reassure himself, from tracks or their lack in the snow, of animals still present in the area or newly absent. He did so annually, he stated, because "one appreciates what is left only after realizing how much has already disappeared."

He looked for "the mincing lady-like tracks of ruffed grouse" and the "hurried wanderings of coons" in the wood lot. In corn stubble by a marsh should be "the peculiar tap-dancing tracks of the prairie chicken" and in a grassy area evidence of "the kangaroo-like springs of the jumping mouse." Here and there, the river bank should show "the toboggan-slide of an otter playing in the snow."

Leopold worried about few coons emerging, about flying squirrels, screech and barred owls "eliminated from many a woods" and many counties already being "grouseless." The jumping mouse and prairie chicken had almost disappeared. Since the latter's "booming grounds [had been] plowed and their nesting cover pastured," he wondered if "we shall end with a chickenless state."

His observations reflect the sentiment about the value of living species, inherently and for people and the natural world, such as often stated by President T. Roosevelt, and as embodied in law by President Richard Nixon on December 28, 1973, in the Endangered Species Act.

Leopold noted the lack, under the tamarack trees, of regurgitated pellets of the long-eared owl.

Since at "three mouse skulls per pellet" this bird is culling 300 mice over a winter's time, he raised the conservation question: "Is it worthwhile to keep a few tamaracks just to have owls around?"

When signing the ESA, President Nixon stated: "Nothing is more priceless and more worthy of preservation than the rich array of animal life with which our country has been blessed."

The law's successes in recovering such wildlife species as the blackfooted ferret, wood stork, California condor and others are known. Of far greater importance yet is its keeping more than 1,500 plants and animals from becoming extinct within our borders.

The Tennessee coneflower, almost extinct in the early 1970s, became the first species from our state to be "listed" under the law. Three decades of protection gave it a new chance at a secure future. De-listed in 2011, this sprightly little sunflower can be seen at the Ardinna Woods Arboretum.

When the Appalachian elktoe was near extinction in 1994, school children in Chuckey urged its protection under the ESA. In letters to the US Fish and Wildlife Service they demanded that, “if people want to see them in years to come they can go see them any time they want to.” Although not yet delisted as secure, this mussel is present still, helping to cleanse the river’s water in the upper reaches of the Nolichucky.

The Endangered Species law was the people’s fundamental preservation gift to America’s future children. Its enactment forty years ago is an achievement we can be thankful for, and proud of.



Why we need salamanders

By Tierra Curry

August 4, 2012

When you think of mountaintop removal coal mining, you probably don't think of salamanders.

But you should.

Because when coal companies use the cheapest and most destructive methods to blow off the top of an Appalachian mountain to extract the coal buried inside, guess which animals make up the single-largest group that's destroyed in the process?

Yep, salamanders. The Appalachian Mountains, where 2.5 million pounds of explosives are detonated daily for surface mining, are home to more kinds of salamanders than anywhere else on Earth. By weight, there are more salamanders in the forest than birds and mammals combined.

And when you suddenly decimate the largest component of a food chain, it's bad news for the health of all kinds of animals for lots of years, maybe forever.

As a kid growing up in the Appalachian hills of Kentucky, I watched the coal companies strip bare the mountains around my home. It ruined our well water, cracked our windows and covered our daily lives in a blanket of dust. Turns out what's bad for salamanders is also bad for people.

We'd be wise not to ignore the plight of salamanders. Because they breathe through their skin and absorb the pollution around them, amphibians have long been considered an important early warning sign of the broader health of the environment. As frogs and salamanders go, so could the rest of us.

If pollution from mining decreases water quality, for example, it can cause the loss of entire populations of salamanders. But that's only the beginning of the destructive cycle that ripples throughout the food chain, including, in the case of highly mechanized mountaintop removal, pollution linked to cancer and birth defects in nearby human communities, and the crippling economic impacts of thousands of lost mining jobs.

Whether we like it or not, our amphibian and reptile friends offer us a forbidding glimpse of our own future. And right now, things don't look so bright. Although amphibians have been around for hundreds of millions of years and survived every major extinction period, now, due largely to human impacts, they're dying off at more than 1,000 times the historic extinction rate.

Overall, scientists estimate that 25 percent of the nation's reptiles and amphibians are in danger of extinction, yet they make up only 5 percent of the approximately 1,400 species on the endangered species list.

That's why I was compelled to be one of three biologists at the Center for Biological Diversity who just submitted the largest petition ever filed targeting the protection of amphibians and reptiles. We're seeking Endangered Species Act protection for 53 amphibians and reptiles, from lizards with specially adapted toes that help them run without sinking on desert sands, to green salamanders, whose lichen-like, splotchy markings make them almost impossible to spot as they sit like sentinels in the Appalachian Mountains on the lip of rock crevices they may not leave their entire lives.

For many of these species, time is running out. More than a million acres of forest in Appalachia and more than 2,000 miles of streams have already been destroyed. Nearly 25 percent of the total area of some West Virginia and Kentucky counties has been permitted for surface mining.

The good news is the Endangered Species Act works -- a remarkable 99 percent of species placed under its protection have been prevented from going extinct. It's worth protecting these frogs, turtles and, yes, salamanders. Because, in the end, protecting them will mean protecting us all.

Curry, of Portland, Ore., is a Knott County, Ky., native and is a conservation biologist at the Center for Biological Diversity where her work focuses on the protection and recovery of endangered species.



Americans can be proud of law that saved eagles, gators

December 27, 2013 • [T&D Staff](#)

THE ISSUE: Endangered Species Act; OUR OPINION: ‘Nothing is more priceless and more worthy of preservation’ than American animal life

It may be controversial with regard to the lengths to which it allows the law to go to protect animals when development and other interests are being blocked, but The Endangered Species Act in the eyes of most Americans has been a success in its 40 years.

The bipartisan legislation is credited with saving hundreds of species from extinction since being signed into law by then-President Richard Nixon 40 years ago on Dec. 28, 1973.

Two stories are the hallmarks of the law’s success: the bald eagle and the American alligator. The Nature Conservancy ranks both among major comebacks in nature in the 20th century:

* Bald eagles: “The national symbol of the United States is also a symbol of survival. In the mid-20th century, bald eagles were driven to the edge of extinction due to hunting, habitat loss and DDT contamination of their prey and habitat, which caused females to lay brittle eggs. By the 1950s, there were only 417 breeding pairs in the contiguous United States. Bald eagles were officially declared an endangered species in 1967, and DDT was banned in the United States in 1972.

“Since then, populations have rebounded. Their status moved from ‘endangered’ to ‘threatened’ in 1995 and removed entirely from the list of Endangered and Threatened Wildlife in 2007. Today, from New York to Alaska to our nation’s capital, there are estimated to be nearly 10,000 nesting pairs of bald eagles in the United States.”

* American alligator: “The American alligator ranges throughout the American Southeast in freshwater marshes, rivers and swamps, where it basks by day and hunts by night. It is one of North America’s largest reptiles, growing as long as 18 feet. ... In the 20th century, humans nearly accomplished what 65 million years of nature couldn’t: the extinction of the American alligator. Hunted widely for its meat and belly skin, which makes high-quality leather, the alligator was listed as endangered in 1967, though persistent poaching continued well into the 1970s. Concerted conservation efforts prevailed, however, and the creature was removed from the Endangered Species List in 1987. Over a million now live in the wild.”

Other success stories include two kinds of peregrine falcon, the brown pelican, eastern population of Steller sea lion, Lake Erie water snake and the Virginia northern flying squirrel. In all, 31 species are no longer endangered as a result of being protected by ESA. And the law continues to work today to protect and recover more than 2,100 animals and plants in the United States and around the world.

When he signed the Endangered Species Act into law 40 years ago, President Nixon spoke for all Americans in saying, “Nothing is more priceless and more worthy of preservation than the rich array of animal life with which our country has been blessed. It is a many-faceted treasure, of value to scholars, scientists and nature lovers alike, and it forms a vital part of the heritage we all share as Americans.”



Saving salamanders, and ourselves, from ourselves

By Tierra Curry

October, 2012

When you think of mountaintop removal coal mining, you probably don't think of salamanders.

But you should — because when coal companies use the cheapest and most destructive methods to blow off the top of an Appalachian mountain to extract the coal buried inside, guess which animals make up the single largest group that's destroyed in the process?

Yep, salamanders. The Appalachian Mountains, where 2.5 million pounds of explosives are detonated daily for surface mining, are home to more kinds of salamanders than anywhere else on Earth. By weight, there are more salamanders in the forest than birds and mammals combined.

And when you suddenly decimate the largest component of a food chain, it's bad news for the health of all kinds of animals for lots of years, maybe forever.

As a kid growing up in the Appalachian hills of Kentucky, I watched the coal companies strip bare the mountains around my home. It ruined our well water, cracked our windows and covered our daily lives in a blanket of dust. Turns out what's bad for salamanders is also bad for people.

We'd be wise not to ignore the plight of salamanders. Because they breathe through their skin and absorb the pollution around them, amphibians have long been considered an important early warning sign of the broader health of the environment. As frogs and salamanders go, so could the rest of us.

If pollution from mining decreases water quality, for example, it can cause the loss of entire populations of salamanders. But that's only the beginning of the destructive cycle that ripples throughout the food chain, including, in the case of highly mechanized mountaintop removal, pollution linked to cancer and birth defects in nearby human communities, and the crippling economic impacts of thousands of lost mining jobs.

Whether we like it or not, our amphibian and reptile friends offer us a forbidding glimpse of our own future. And right now, things don't look so bright. Although amphibians have been around for hundreds of millions of years and survived every major extinction period, now, due largely to human impacts, they're dying off at more than 1,000 times the historic extinction rate.

Overall, scientists estimate that 25 percent of the nation's reptiles and amphibians are in danger of extinction, yet they make up only 5 percent of the approximately 1,400 species on the endangered species list.

That's why I was compelled to be one of three biologists at the Center for Biological Diversity who just submitted the largest petition ever filed targeting the protection of amphibians and reptiles. We're seeking Endangered Species Act protection for 53 amphibians and reptiles, from lizards with specially adapted toes that help them

run without sinking on desert sands, to green salamanders, whose lichen-like, splotchy markings make them almost impossible to spot as they sit like sentinels in the Appalachian Mountains on the lip of rock crevices they may not leave their entire lives.

For many of these species, time is running out. More than a million acres of forest in Appalachia and more than 2,000 miles of streams have already been destroyed. Nearly 25 percent of the total area of some West Virginia and Kentucky counties has been permitted for surface mining.

The good news is the Endangered Species Act works — a remarkable 99 percent of species placed under its protection have been prevented from going extinct. It's worth protecting these frogs, turtles and, yes, salamanders. Because, in the end, protecting them will mean protecting us all.

HAWAII & ALASKA

<http://www.ketchikandailynews.com/free/local-edit-1-7>



1/7/2014

Endangered species

The Endangered Species Act celebrated its 40th birthday recently.

The law came about in an effort to protect species from extinction and to restore those threatened to a vibrant status.

It took effect in 1973, along with a conservation movement that has affected not only species, but economic development. It has pitted developers against conservationists, and caused frustration in trying to balance preserving species and making a living.

The law has been applied to protect whales, sea turtles, corals and salmon, among others. It has been successful in that species listed decades ago were delisted in the 1990s and again now. The Eastern Steller sea lion is one example coming off the list.

Congress has amended the act four times. Among the changes, it added plants to the conservation law and exempted the Department of Defense from critical habitat designations.

Like other laws that prompt a ream of regulations, it can be used to good or bad. In some cases, it has served the nation well by preserving species that might have gone extinct. But in other cases, it has been misused to impede and shut down development.

The act is as good or not-so-good as the intentions of those who apply it.

Iliamna seals matter, as does the Bristol Bay watershed

December 10, 2012

By KIERSTEN LIPPMANN

From the opening line of columnist Paul Jenkins' diatribe against the Center for Biological Diversity's recent petition seeking Endangered Species Act protection for Alaska's rare Iliamna Lake seals, ("Iliamna seals just the latest silly argument against Pebble," Nov. 24,) Jenkins demonstrates how little he understands the issues at stake. In so doing, he discounts both the people and wildlife of the Bristol Bay region that have relied on annual salmon runs for generations.

Throughout Jenkins' ramblings on Iliamna seals and the planned Pebble mine (that would be North American's largest open-pit mining operation) he repeatedly states that there needs to be an honest debate on the facts, and then presents faulty and misleading information on both Pebble and the Iliamna seals.

Jenkins suggests that because no application has been filed for the mine, it "does not exist" and it's pointless to debate its merits. But as Alaskans know - especially the tens of thousands who depend on the world's largest annual salmon runs -- the plans for the mine are very real, as are the irreversible environmental impacts that accompany an open pit mine larger than Manhattan and seven times deeper than the height of the Washington Monument. Every other copper sulfide mine of similar size in the United States has experienced unforeseen accidents or failures resulting in serious and long-lasting environmental damage. Acid mine drainage from sulfide mines in the Lower 48 has turned streams as acidic as lemon juice, devastating entire ecosystems.

After 50-some years, Pebble developers will walk with the money and the minerals and the 1,000 jobs they're touting, leaving Alaskans to deal with billions of tons of toxic waste and a potentially devastated salmon fishery -- the last great sockeye salmon fishery in the world.

Jenkins goes on to lambast the EPA for having the gall to do its job, which includes using the Clean Water Act to prevent pollution of the nation's waterways. He asserts the agency offered a "flawed, rushed survey" of potential impacts from large-scale mining in the Bristol Bay watershed. In fact, a consistent theme in the recent peer review of the EPA's assessment was that it underestimated potential impacts of the mine.

Jenkins suggests the Iliamna seals are "lollygagging" in the lake, and that "nobody cares a whit." What he fails to realize is that Alaskans do care. Whether we are outdoorsman who have hiked and hunted this rugged beautiful territory, or conservation-minded citizens working to preserve the diversity of life, or enjoy fresh, untainted wild-caught Bristol Bay salmon- we care.

Remarkably, in Jenkins' attempts to explain why the Iliamna Lake seals aren't a distinct population worthy of any special federal protection, he does a great job of making an argument for why the seals

are worthy of protection. To quote him: "It is rare for harbor seals to establish year-round, freshwater populations, and if Iliamna seals have, they would constitute one of five such groups in the entire northern hemisphere."

Exactly the point. And there's lots of evidence - including body size, fur patterns, diet, reproductive timing and use of ice-cave habitats - that makes a strong case for protection. Jenkins states that there is no proof that "any or all" of the seals remain in Iliamna Lake through the winter. This is factually incorrect, as aerial surveys and subsistence hunters both have provided ample proof that Iliamna seals do over-winter in the lake.

Before we entrust our salmon fisheries and the pristine, irreplaceable ecosystem that supports them, to the notoriously polluting mining industry, it is only reasonable to ensure we have the most informed debate possible.

Regardless of whether the Pebble mine moves forward, we know this: thanks to the Endangered Species Act, which has prevented the extinction of 99 percent of the plants and animals under its care, the evaluation of the Iliamna Lake seals' population will proceed. For all of us Alaskans that value this state's fish and wildlife, this is welcome news.

Kiersten Lippmann is an Anchorage-based biologist with the Center for Biological Diversity.



Honolulu Star-Advertiser:

Politics Aside, the Endangered Species Act Has an Envable Record of Success

By Noah Greenwald

June 2012

You don't have to look far to find an animal or plant in the United States that's been spared from extinction by the Endangered Species Act and is now on the path to recovery.

In Hawaii, we witness the Act's success with the hard-earned return of several endemic but long-struggling bird populations, including the Hawaiian coot, the Hawaiian duck and the state bird – the Hawaiian goose, all of which were victims of overhunting and habitat destruction brought on by unbridled development.

The list of success stories goes on. A new study by the Center for Biological Diversity finds that of 110 protected species studied, *90 percent* are right on track to meet recovery goals set by federal scientists.

The Endangered Species Act, signed by President Nixon in 1973, has become America's strongest environmental law. It has saved 99 percent of the 1,482 native species under its care from disappearing forever. Indeed, scientists estimate that were it not for the Act, 227 additional species would have gone extinct in the last 35 years.

But the Act isn't just about avoiding extinction. It's about setting these species on a trajectory to recovery — and eventually taking them *off* the endangered species list.

Still, the Act has had its critics over the past four decades, especially those intent on drilling for more oil, clear-cutting more forests or blasting away more mountaintops to extract coal.

So it's not surprising there's been resurgent opposition to the Act in Congress. Last summer, the U.S. House of Representatives proposed a bill that would have stripped all funding for new species protections and safeguards for habitat that's crucial to the survival of endangered plants and animals. (Fortunately, the bill failed.)

More recently, Rep. Doc Hastings (R-Wash.), chairman of the House Natural Resources Committee, has called for hearings on the Act. He claims it's "failing badly" because just 1 percent of all listed species have been taken off the list. The claim simply doesn't meet the smell test, for the simple reason that most species protected by the Act *were not expected to have recovered yet*.

Specifically, 80 percent of species haven't been listed long enough to reach their projected delisting date, according to the new study of 110 species. On average, species were expected to be recovered 46 years after they were protected under the Act, yet have only been listed for 32 years.

So a little patience is in order. And our recently released study offers a research-based measure of how well the Act is helping species recover.

The study finds plants and animals in all 50 states – from Florida panthers to Aleutian Canada geese in Alaska – that are recovering at the rate prescribed by federal scientists.

Both the Hawaiian coot and the Hawaiian duck have rebounded from declining populations of several hundred in the middle of the last century to more than 2,000. The Hawaiian goose population, reduced to only 30 birds in 1918, had increased to about 1,700 by 2006.

Even with all those remarkable success stories, Hastings and his allies are correct on one point: The Endangered Species Act can be improved. But not by gutting it, as these politicians might like. On the contrary, science-based studies suggest the Act could be strengthened if we move to protect species sooner, increase habitat protection, and raise the bar on what constitutes a recovered, sustainable population.

But right now, the best way to measure species recovery and the success of the Act is by taking an exhaustive look at all available evidence to measure the recovery rates of individual species.

When you take time to do that, you find broad evidence that the Endangered Species Act not only protects species from extinction but leads to the recovery of healthy populations.

That's very good news for all species, including our own.

*(Noah Greenwald is Endangered Species Program Director at the Center for Biological Diversity.
ngreenwald@biologicaldiversity.com)*

THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS

<http://www.sltrib.com/sltrib/opinion/57333730-82/species-act-sage-endangered.html.csp>

The Salt Lake Tribune

Opinion

Sunday, January 12, 2014



(Terry Tempest Williams will present her recent book "When Women Were Birds" Nov. 3 at the Sundance Author Series. (Courtesy photo) by Ted C. Brummon)

The anniversary of a federal act of empathy

By Terry Tempest Williams

The year 2013 has drawn to a close, and I doubt if one of the most significant events in Utah found itself on anyone's year-end list of consequence.

A small wildflower that grows in the Kaibab Formation in Washington County known as a Gierisch mallow (*Spaheralcea gierischii*) has finally been granted protection under the federal Endangered Species Act.

This vibrant orange crepe-petaled flower with yellow stamens can be seen squeezed between Interstate 15 and the Virgin River.

Some may say, "So what?" But if we look at the success story behind the 40th anniversary of the 1973 Endangered Species Act, we may be impressed by what a single law with vision can do.

Birds like the bald eagle and California condor were on the path of extinction in the 1960s due to pesticides such as DDT. The gray wolf was listed as an endangered species in 1967, having been shot, poisoned, and trapped to near extinction. In 1995, wolves were reintroduced to Yellowstone National Park. Sixteen years later, given their ability to repopulate, the gray wolf was delisted in 2011.

And then, there is the Utah prairie dog. Call them America's meercats. These communal creatures declined to perilous numbers due to the politics of livestock and an aggressive poison campaign, alongside plague and drought. In 1972, only 3,300 Utah prairie dogs remained. But today, the Utah prairie dog population is close to 12,000. In some instances, their habitat is being restored by the very ranchers who opposed them decades earlier. Utah prairie dogs stand outside their burrows as a small beacon of hope.

The 1973 Endangered Species Act has been more than 99 percent successful at preventing extinction of species under its watch.

On Dec. 28, 1973, Congress passed the Endangered Species Act into law. The vote in the Senate was 92 in favor, 0 opposed; in the House, it was 355 to 4. This seems like an astonishment, bordering on the impossible, given the rancor and rigidity of Congress today with the ongoing pressures from special interests to undermine and exterminate the Endangered Species Act, itself.

A journalist from Washington, D.C., recently asked me, "Who is the most powerful individual in the American West right now?"

"Sage grouse," I answered.

"I'm serious," he said.

"So am I," I replied.

In the Interior West, sage grouse are driving the conversation around oil and gas development. The Bureau of Land Management projections show that nearly 96,000 new oil and gas wells will be drilled over the next twenty years in six states: Colorado, Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, Utah and Wyoming. Oil wells could fragment 11.8 million acres of sagebrush habitat, an area larger than the state of New Hampshire. Development, as planned, could affect the greater sage grouse populations by 19 percent.

Historic populations of sage grouse once numbered 16 million. Today, the population may be half a million with local populations in the vicinity of oil fields being drawn down to extinction.

One male sage grouse standing his ground on his ancestral lek against Shell Oil is a kin to the lone man facing down a tank in Tiananmen Square.

Sage grouse are the latest bellwether species sounding the call for restraint on America's public lands. Slowly but surely, the sage grouse is finding its way toward protection.

Threatened species such as the willow flycatcher and wound-fin minnow have now become measures of the health of the Colorado River.

The beauty of the Endangered Species Act is that it is a federal act of empathy. It proceeds our Declaration of Independence and portends a Declaration of Interdependence. It gives us an opportunity to exercise our conscience and consciousness on behalf of all species.

The great consequence of the Endangered Species Act, over time, is that it ensures that we, as a species, will not be alone. Each time I hear the driving drumbeat of the sage grouse's ancient courtship dance among the aromatic splendor of sage, I remember that we are the heirs of wonder.

Terry Tempest Williams is the Annie Clark Tanner Scholar in Environmental Humanities at the University of Utah.

The Pueblo Chieftain

The value of wildlife conservation in Colorado

By Jonathan Proctor

Published: December 29, 2013

Coloradans can be proud this month as the Endangered Species Act (ESA) — our nation's law designed to protect imperiled plants and animals from extinction — turns 40. Some of the ESA's greatest success stories have occurred and are now occurring in our own back yard.

The black-footed ferret is native to Colorado and lives in large prairie dog colonies, but was nearly wiped off the face of the Earth due to poisons and habitat loss. In fact, the ferrets were thought to be extinct until a few were rediscovered in 1981. By 1986, only 18 remained.

Thanks to the ESA and with much work from Coloradans and others across the interior West and Great Plains states, the black-footed ferret is rebounding. In fact, a new population — the 21st — was just reintroduced last month to private lands near Pueblo, thanks to willing landowners and the many others involved, including the Cheyenne Mountain Zoo in Colorado Springs and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's black-footed ferret conservation center near Fort Collins.

The restoration of the black-footed ferret in Colorado is just one example of the importance of all wildlife to the people of this state and of this country. Conserving our nation's treasured natural lands and wildlife is something we stand for as Americans. When our natural heritage is endangered, we work together to protect it.

We came together as a nation 40 years ago when Americans looked around and saw that something was terribly wrong with our natural world. Smog choked our air, rivers were so polluted that one even caught fire, and species such as the bald eagle were headed toward extirpation.

In response, our political leaders in bipartisan agreement passed the Clean Air Act and Clean Water Act. And for our imperiled wildlife, huge Republican and Democratic majorities in the House and Senate passed, and President Nixon signed, the Endangered Species Act into law. It was the ultimate statement of optimism and hope from our leaders that it was an American duty to conserve our air, land, water and imperiled wildlife for future generations.

But after 40 years of successfully protecting America's endangered and threatened species, imperiled species conservation, something that once united us, today increasingly seems to divide us. Too often, short-term economic gains by a few seem to drive our natural resource public policies for the country, with more focus on today's bottom line than tomorrow's natural legacy. And too often, economic special-interest groups find willing allies in Congress, representatives who are hostile to the conservation values reflected in the ESA's passage 40 years ago.

Legislation has been introduced repeatedly in Congress to dramatically weaken the ESA, cut off funding for its implementation and even block and overturn listings of endangered wildlife. And today, these anti-environmental special-interest groups are active in Colorado. At times, the political fate and welfare of the ESA seems as uncertain as some of the endangered species it so effectively protects.

At the local level in Colorado, the spread of misinformation about the ESA — characterizing the act as

intrusive, inflexible federal overreach — dramatically misstates the truth. In fact, the ESA is one of the most flexible environmental laws we have. It offers a wide variety of tools and incentives to private landowners and state and local governments to facilitate compliance with the conservation goals of the act and to work collaboratively to protect endangered wildlife.

Regardless of political affiliation, I would hope that all Coloradans would agree that restoring Colorado's wildlife heritage is in the state's best economic interest. People travel from all across the U.S. and from around the world to visit Colorado's parks and wildlife refuges — from Rocky Mountain National Park and Great Sand Dunes National Park, to Alamosa and Monte Vista National Wildlife Refuges and the Colorado National Monument. Tourists come to see our iconic species and natural landscapes and their visits bring significant revenue into Colorado.

For example, a study conducted by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service found that visitation to national wildlife refuges in 2011 provided \$2.4 billion to the economy and supported 35,000 jobs. A more local study conducted by the National Park Service showed that Estes Park saw \$428 million in tourism dollars in 2010.

So next time you see or read about bald eagles, black-footed ferrets, or peregrine falcons, be thankful we can still show these wild creatures to our children and remember that these animals would likely not exist today if it were not for the ESA.

Jonathan Proctor is the Rockies & Plains program director for Defenders of Wildlife.

- See more at: <http://www.chieftain.com/opinion/2133204-120/wildlife-colorado-esa-black#sthash.vBoxrM4n.dpuf>



Timid steps won't recover wolverines in Colorado or anywhere

By Noah Greenwald

03/16/2013

The recent U.S. Fish and Wildlife proposal to protect wolverines as a threatened species will encourage the secretive high-mountain predator's reintroduction to Colorado and protect their highly fragmented populations across Montana, Idaho, Oregon and Washington.

The question is, amid 21st century climate realities, will 20th century-style protections be near enough to make any long-term difference?

With a heightened sense of smell that allows them to sniff out carrion buried beneath several feet of snow, massive climbing-friendly paws armed with semi-retractable claws and powerful jaws able to rip apart frozen carcasses, wolverines are among nature's most gifted survivalists.

Yet, for all their ferocity, the last remaining 250 to 300 wolverines that live in the wild in the lower 48 can't defend themselves against global warming, which is robbing them of the deep mountain snows they need to survive.

It's entirely possible that within this century wolverines - which once roamed mountains from Colorado to the Sierra Nevada in California and north through Washington and Montana - could be gone in the conterminous United States.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's decision last month to propose long-overdue Endangered Species Act protection for these reclusive mammals is an important step that would provide an immediate safety net.

As proposed, recognition as a threatened species will provide opportunities for the wolverine's return to Colorado and likely put an end to plans by the state of Montana to allow wolverine trapping. But the protections stop there.

Activities such as snowmobiling and development of roads and ski areas are specifically excluded from the prohibitions of the Endangered Species Act despite their likely impacts on the wolverine.

Federal scientists say that wolverines need persistent, deep spring snowpack of at least five feet for denning -and that warming temperatures are putting those snow-bound homes in jeopardy. In fact, they say, climate--caused habitat destruction is the single greatest threat to wolverines.

But just as was the case when Endangered Species Act protections were extended to polar bears in 2008, federal wildlife managers declared that protections extended to the wolverine would preclude the regulation of greenhouse gas pollution, the leading driver of rising global temperatures.

Our own short history of environmental regulation shows us that whenever we demonstrate the discipline to do that, we accomplish remarkable things. And many of the tools needed for the job are right there in the Endangered Species Act.

This year marks the 40th birthday of the Act, which has consistently demonstrated an unparalleled ability to protect and recover our most imperiled plants and animals: To date, a full 99 percent of the more than 1,400 species placed under the Act's care have been saved from extinction. And a study last year of more than 100 of those species shows the great majority are on the road to recovery.

But the Act only works when we follow what science tells us needs to be done.

The bald eagle wouldn't be America's greatest recovery story had we been unwilling not only to protect the national bird, but to ban DDT and other pesticides that had turned many of our waterways into life-killing chemical soups.

We can save wolverines too but not if we don't address what's truly putting them in danger. They are fierce fighters known to take on bears and capable of preying on moose and caribou many times their size. But it's been us humans who have hemmed these solitary predators into smaller and smaller stretches of habitat. And now climate change may push them over the edge.

Yes, the Fish and Wildlife Service deserves credit for taking the first step toward protections that will encourage conservation programs and prohibit trapping.

But it's only buying us a little time.

Meanwhile, the snowpack will continue to shrink. And the clock will continue to tick, for all of us.

Noah Greenwald is an ecologist at the Center for Biological Diversity where he serves as director of the Endangered Species Program. Email ngreenwald@biologicaldiversity.org

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

NATIONAL

<http://online.wsj.com/news/articles/SB10001424052702304137304579288573432491930>



THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

LETTERS

ESA Has Saved Thousands of Species From Extinction

The Endangered Species Act has prevented the extinction of 99% of the more than 1,500 plants and animals it protects.

Jan. 7, 2014

In their manifesto about the Endangered Species Act, Damien Schiff and Julie MacDonald omit the fact that the ESA has prevented the extinction of 99% of the more than 1,500 plants and animals it protects, along the way preserving the health of the irreplaceable forests, waterways and ecosystems we all share ("[The Endangered Species Act Turns 40—Hold the Applause.](#)" op-ed, Dec. 28). The act has put hundreds of species on the path to recovery. To its credit, the ESA has done a superb job of helping us balance our short-term economic needs with the long-term environmental and economic concerns that are in the best interest of our children and grandchildren.

Noah Greenwald

*Endangered Species Director
Center for Biological Diversity
Portland, Ore.*



Readers' views for April 26, 2013

ESA a resounding success for species

In his highly fictionalized account of the Endangered Species Act's success record ("ESA's birthday a time for reflection" in the April 12 edition), James Burning ignores critical facts while misrepresenting others -- a practice for which his employer, the Pacific Legal Foundation, is notorious.

Burning opens by contending that, looking back over the 40 years since its enactment, the act's accomplishments are "hard to identify." This statement alone demonstrates how little he actually knows about the act and its history of successes.

The undeniable truth is that 99 percent of the more than 1,400 plants and animals under the act's protection have been saved from extinction, including California condors, bighorn sheep, pelicans, butterflies, songbirds, whales, turtles, sea lions and countless other species. In fact, scientists estimate that without the act, at least 227 additional species would have gone extinct since 1973.

The act has not only prevented extinction, but has also helped imperiled species to recover. A study last year of more than 100 protected species showed the great majority to be meeting or exceeding the recovery timelines set by federal scientists. Additionally, the study revealed that the number of species delisted to date has no correlation with its success given that species recovery is frequently measured in decades.

Burning also grossly exaggerates any negative economic impact of the act. For example, describing the Pacific Northwest timber industry as having been "decimated" by the spotted owl listing, he ignores the significant factors that are to blame, including falling demand for timber products and mill closures due to new technologies and improved mechanization. Burning further disregards the enormous benefits of species protection to the tourism industry and the billions of dollars in ecosystem services from the protection of keystone species and critical habitats.

So, don those party hats. It's time to celebrate!

Brett Sommermeyer
Lincoln City, Ore.

PACIFIC NORTHWEST

<http://blogs.seattletimes.com/northwestvoices/2013/07/04/americas-birthday/>

The Seattle Times

NORTHWEST VOICES

July 4, 2013

America's birthday

The Endangered Species Act is a great American success

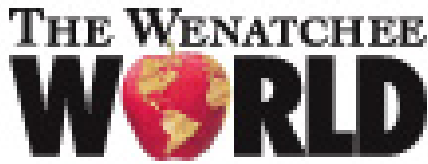
As the impending celebration of our nation's independence provides the opportunity to reflect on the great merits of our country, one piece of legislation stands as a shining example of what makes America so special.

The Endangered Species Act (ESA) is a uniquely American law, and this year, it turns 40. It is a testament to the idea that the protection of our native species and their ecosystems is, by its very nature, one that bridges the partisan divide and brings both sides together as human beings for the purpose of conserving the world that they live in.

Richard Nixon recognized this when he signed the law in 1973, and his belief in the cause has been vindicated by its success in the last 40 years. One must look no further than the dramatic recovery of the bald eagle in the Pacific Northwest to see its merits.

There are, however, those in Congress that would seek to gut the ESA and render it powerless. It would be foolish to turn our backs on such a unique and successful law, and I hope that my fellow Seattleites agree with me, and let their representatives know this.

Carl Crow, Mercer Island



Saturday, April 6, 2013

For wolves and humans

The news of two wolves in Chelan County ("Chelan County may have a pack," March 26) is sure to get a mixed reception, especially in a state like Washington, home to 1.1 million cattle. Personally, I am cautiously optimistic that the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife will find a balance that works in the best interest of all parties and our ecosystem.

One reason wolves are critical to their ecosystems is because of their predation on ungulates like elk, which spares vegetation from overgrazing, which in turn benefits soil, water and other animal populations. When the ungulates that wolves eat are cattle, however, WDFW must ensure that ranchers are fairly compensated and adequately prepared with nonlethal deterrent methods to prevent future incidents.

In the two years since a lawsuit stopped the state of Oregon from killing wolves, the state's wolf population has doubled to more than 50. Yet in Wallowa County, home to the majority of Oregon's wolf-livestock conflicts, fatal wolf attacks on livestock have fallen by 60 percent as ranchers and agencies were forced to rely on nonlethal conflict-prevention methods.

By contrast, in Idaho, where in two years hunters, trappers and state agents killed 718 wolves, the number of livestock killed by wolves increased by more than 75 percent. Since the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service dropped Endangered Species Act protections for wolves in the Northern Rockies, state-sanctioned wolf hunting and trapping has resulted in the killing of more than 1,000 of the region's roughly 2,000 wolves.

I hope that WDFW will respect the 40-year legacy left to us by the Endangered Species Act by protecting the wolves in our state in a way that works for everyone. I want Washington to have a bright future for wolves and humans alike.

*Tony Carr
Ellensburg*



Still work to do to protect Steller sea lions

Nov. 11, 2013

It's fantastic news when a once-endangered animal is removed from listing under the Endangered Species Act, which, in its 40-year history, has prevented the extinction of 99 percent of the species it protects.

But the fact that the Nov. 3 article, "Some sea lions are now off the endangered list," focused almost exclusively on whether Oregon officials will eventually be able to relocate Steller sea lions congregating at dams to eat salmon makes clear how important it will be for federal officials to monitor the sea lions' still-fragile population.

The strongest Steller populations are in Alaska and British Columbia. The farther south you go, the more problematic their recovery becomes.

Many challenges remain for sea lion recovery, most prominently the ongoing warming of the Pacific Ocean and the alarming rates of ocean acidification that already have resulted in die-offs of larval oysters in the Pacific Northwest and continue to deprive shell-building species of the materials they need for sturdy skeletons — a dire development for top of the food chain animals like sea lions.

Moving forward, the health of our Steller sea lion populations will signal how well we're protecting the oceans so important to us all.

Angela Crane
Vancouver, Wash.



Asks support for endangered species

July 21, 2013

Forty years ago President Richard Nixon did something really smart: He signed the Endangered Species Act into law, and here in the northwest, we've reaped the benefits.

Plants and animals have not only been spared extinction, they've been put on the path toward recovery. In the northwest they include the bald eagle, the Columbian white-tailed deer and a tiny little minnow called the Oregon chub.

By any measure the Endangered Species Act has been a success, and as we celebrate its 40th anniversary, it's worth pausing to give thanks.

Unfortunately some in Congress who value profits over protections don't see it that way. So if the act is going to be successful for another 40 years, we'll need to be vigilant to make sure it stays strong as ever.

Thomas Hall
Bellingham

Celebrate Endangered Species Act Lincoln City, Oregon

- Voices of Lincoln County

Celebrate Endangered Species Act

A recent Portland headline, "Oregon Zoo's endangered California condors lay first three eggs," is a reminder that we owe a lot to the Endangered Species Act (ESA), which turns 40 this year.

Condors once ranged widely across the West, fulfilling a critical ecological role in recycling nutrients and removing carrion from the landscape.

Human pressures, including poaching and the use of the pesticide DDT, nearly wiped condors out. As a consequence, they became one of the first species listed under the Act.

Captive breeding programs have been the centerpieces of painstaking

recovery efforts. These magnificent birds, which do not start reproducing until age 6, have shown us how difficult it can be to repair human-caused damage. However, thanks to breeding centers like the Oregon Zoo, condors have rebounded from nine in 1985 to about 180 in captivity and over 200 reintroduced to the wild.

It is easy to forget that condors would have disappeared forever without the protection of the ESA, which to date has prevented the extinction of 99 percent of the more than 1,400 plants and animals entrusted to its care. Without it, we would not have peregrine falcons, gray whales or brown pelicans in the Northwest.

Thanks to the Act, condors have a good shot at, one day, returning to their historic range right here in Oregon.

*Brett Sommermeyer
Lincoln City*



Celebrates Endangered Species Act success

Published: January 23, 2013

If you are looking for a reason to celebrate, here's one -- the Endangered Species Act turns 40 this year! No other law has done more to save America's most vulnerable plants and animals from extinction. And no other law has done more to inspire the same course of action around the world. Here in the Washington state, we can thank the Endangered Species Act for putting a long list of species on the road toward recovery, including the Grizzly bear, the woodland caribou and, perhaps the most iconic species of any area in the world, the Chinook salmon.

Sure, it's not all charismatic mega-fauna. The Endangered Species Act also protects such species as the Mardon skipper, a small orange butterfly. While there may be nothing fabulous about the Mardon skipper itself, it is our best indicator of health for a rapidly disappearing grassland habitat that is unique to the northwest.

Ultimately, it is the flora and fauna, the mountains and the waters, that make the northwest great. The Endangered Species Act is an American success story we can all be proud of.

Dean Rofkar
Bellingham



Headlight Herald

Happy 40th Anniversary!

Posted: Wednesday, January 23, 2013

Fauna-June Fauth Cloverdale

The Endangered Species Act turns 40 this year and I'm thankful it's around. No other law has done more to save America's most vulnerable plants and animals from extinction. It has prevented the extinction of 99% of the species placed under its protection. What law has a better record than that?

Since Richard Nixon (a Republican, oh, my!) signed the Act into law, we, in the Northwest, have reaped the benefits. The plants and animals spared extinction have been put on the path to recovery, including the gray whale, the Columbian white-tailed deer, and a tiny little minnow called the Oregon chub. And don't forget the bald eagle! It's easy to forget that in the 1960's, we, humans, nearly wiped them off the face of the earth! Due to federal protection and bans to harmful chemical compounds like DDT, they've rebounded so well you can probably spot them soaring over rivers in some urban areas. Recently, I spotted a bald eagle on East Beaver Creek and what an amazing sight it was!

But even if I never saw any of these species in person, they're part of what keeps the Northwest wild and natural and it heartens me to know they're out there. They are the main reason I moved to the Northwest.

The Endangered Species Act is an American success story and, because of it, we can all be proud.

Unfortunately, there are members of Congress who value profits over protections and they see things differently than most Americans. So it's up to us, as citizens, to be vigilant and make sure the Act will still be successful for at least another 40 years.

Call your members of Congress and let them know you value the Northwest for its wildness and natural beauty and you want the Endangered Species Act to be strengthened and preserved.

Happy 40th Anniversary, Endangered Species Act!

NORTHEAST

<http://www.wickedlocal.com/newton/news/opinions/x825441168/Newton-Alderman-celebrates-the-Endangered-Species-Acts-40th>



Newton Alderman celebrates the Endangered Species Act's 40th

Posted Dec 30, 2013

Newton —

This year the Endangered Species Act (ESA) turns 40. This landmark piece of legislation is based on three key elements—listing species as threatened or endangered, designating habitat essential for their survival and recovery, and ultimately restoring healthy populations of the species so they can be removed from the list.

President Richard Nixon, convinced that US conservation efforts aimed at preventing the extinction of certain plant and animal species were lacking, signed into law the Endangered Species Act on Dec. 28, 1973. He announced, “Nothing is more priceless and more worthy of preservation than the rich array of animal life with which our country has been blessed. It is a many-faceted treasure, of value to scholars, scientists, and nature lovers alike, and it forms a vital part of the heritage we all share as Americans.”

Today the Endangered Species Coalition marks the anniversary with a new report highlighting a few of the great wildlife conservation accomplishments since the Act’s passage. The report highlights species that are either steadily improving or have recovered and been removed from the list of imperiled species. They include the peregrine falcon, humpback whale, brown pelican, and the green sea turtle. More than 1,300 imperiled species in the United States have been protected by the Endangered Species Act, and only ten have gone extinct, according to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Another success story is the bald eagle. This magnificent bird was on the brink of extinction due to hunting, habitat loss and the scourge of DDT. Thanks to the ESA, this bird can now be regularly spotted in Massachusetts, including the in Newton area along the Charles River. Look for them this winter season.

--Alison Leary, Chapel Street, Ward Alderman, Ward 1

http://www.dailyrecord.com/article/20130722/NJOPINION02/307220005/Endangered-Species-Act-has-done-its-job?nclick_check=1



Endangered Species Act has done its job

Jul. 19, 2013

The Endangered Species Act turns 40 this year, and I, for one, am thankful it's around. No other law has done more to save Americans' most vulnerable plants and animals from extinction.

Here in the Northeast, we can thank the act putting a long list of species on the road toward recovery, including the bald eagle, Atlantic piping plover and Robbins' cinquefoil.

I may rarely get a chance to lay my eyes on any of these species in person, but they're part of what keeps the Northeast diverse and healthy, and it heartens me to know they're out there.

The Endangered Species Act is an American success story we can all be proud of.

Cindy Marvin
MORRISTOWN



Endangered Species Act is vital to life

May 14, 2013

This is the 40th anniversary of the Endangered Species Act, which was passed with bipartisan support, believe it or not! Friday, May 17, is Endangered Species Day.

We are in the midst of the greatest mass extinction in 65 million years, since the death of the dinosaurs. More than 200 species go extinct every day, and extinction is forever.

According to the Center for Biological Diversity, "The act is the best and possibly the last chance Americans have of securing a future for diverse native wildlife and the natural environments that wildlife depends on. To date, the act has helped the American bald eagle, black-footed ferret, gray whale, peregrine falcon and spotted owl." These are among the hundreds for which the act has helped improve their status.

We are part of the web of life and whatever happens to the web of life happens to man. The act benefits all of creation by maintaining healthy natural systems that provide us with clean air and water, food, medicines and other products that everyone needs to live a healthy life.

We benefit from the pollination of the honey bees of hundreds of our crops, and they are experiencing colony collapse. Bats are dying because of white nose syndrome, and they digest thousands of insects every night, important to farmers for healthy crop production.

Each of us can take action to contribute to a healthy ecosystem and be conscious of our connection to the natural world. We can stop supporting corporations that exploit Mother Earth, destroying our environment and plants and animals. Thomas Berry (ecoth theologian) says, "We are not a collection of objects, we are a communion of subjects."

MARY RUTH AULL

Penn Hills

The writer is a member of the Endangered Species Action Team of the Sierra Club.



LETTER: Focus On Endangered Species, Not Extinct Ones

12:13 p.m. EDT, May 1, 2013

I greatly enjoyed Robert Thorson's column about the passenger pigeon, and the practical and moral implications that go along with recreating the species [April 18, Opinion, "Effort To Revive Extinct Pigeon Misspent"].

It seems to me that if the de-extinction of this species were to actually be successful, it would lead the government to loosen focus on providing protection for endangered species.

Thorson brings up many valid points in his article, and one of the most important is the potential damage that reintroducing these species may cause. One of the problems that is already happening is "genetic pollution." In a laboratory setting, it is extremely hard to tell how genetically modified plants, once released, will affect the ecosystem. With the reintroduction of these long-extinct birds they could very well become an invasive species, and lead to the extinction of other species.

It seems to me that instead of spending the money to right the wrongs of the past we should be investing money into preventing future wrongs from occurring. This year is the 40th anniversary of the Endangered Species Act, and instead of spending money to bring a species back from the dead, it would do much more good to prevent the extinction of any more organisms.

Conor Ryan, Torrington



Standing up for endangered species

Posted: 03/29/2013 12:10:30 AM EDT

Friday March 29, 2013

Sometimes it's hard to find much to celebrate when you look around and see how we continue to find new ways to destroy the only planet known to sustain life. But it gives me hope that we now have 40 years of evidence showing we can stop the extinction of plants and animals whenever we show the political will to protect them by using the Endangered Species Act.

Even though there are always some shortsighted politicians in Congress working to weaken the Act, I think it's pretty clear it has proven to be one of the most effective conservation laws ever passed. It has prevented the extinction of 99 percent of the species placed under its protection.

It is hard to believe that President Nixon signed the Act into law but not hard to believe that the current Republicans will kill it by underfunding at the first opportunity, which is just another reason why we need Ed Markey in the Senate to save endangered species here at home and world wide as well.

RICHARD MASON
South Lee

Portland Press Herald

March 19, 2013

U.S. Navy must join efforts to shield rare whale species

Considered the rarest large whale species on Earth and among the rarest of all marine mammal species, North Atlantic right whales have, for centuries, found themselves in the wrong place at so many times in our nation's short history.

They're slow, and contain a high percentage of blubber, both of which made them the "right" whale to hunt during the height of 18th-century whaling, because they're easy prey and float even after being killed.

Now, as pointed out in Russell Wray's recent op-ed ("Maine Voices: Navy's training-testing plans pose unacceptable risk to delicate species," March 7) with fewer than 400 remaining, right whales are again under assault, this time from the U.S. Navy's underwater testing programs that are known to damage the whale's most precious sense – its ability to hear.

The fact that right whales – and other species likely to be affected by the Navy's planned use of explosives and mid-frequency sonar – have Endangered Species Act protections should be enough to encourage the Navy to take every step possible to relocate and limit their activities, which even the Navy acknowledges will result in countless instances of marine mammals experiencing temporary and permanent damage and even death.

Here, on the 40th anniversary of the Endangered Species Act, which has prevented the extinction of 99 percent of species entrusted to its protection, we should be doing everything we can to protect our most vulnerable plants and animals – and that "we" includes the U.S. Navy.

Peter Esterquest
Falmouth

THE GAZETTE

March 6, 2013

Don't Stop Protecting Endangered Species

Forty years ago President Richard Nixon signed the Endangered Species act into law but both Democrats and Republicans are now allowing it to be weakened.

It is not just about beauty, it is also about keeping the ecosystem in balance.

For instance, the Gray wolf is about to be taken off the Endangered species list. You might say why do I care?

Well the next time you hit a deer and have to pay the repair bill know that a Gray Wolf might have kept this from coming to fruition. They keep not only deer but rats and mice and coyote populations in check and are stunning if you are ever so lucky to view one.

So let your congressional member know you wish them to keep the Endangered Species Act strong for all of us on this little slice of Mother Earth.

Beth Jacobs- Niskayuna, NY

http://www.phillyburbs.com/news/local/courier_times_news/opinion/letters_to_editor/an-american-success-story/article_0f493130-2266-5854-8307-19a37722512e.html



An American success story

Posted: Sunday, February 24, 2013

Forty years ago, President Richard Nixon did something really smart: He signed the Endangered Species Act into law.

No other law has done more to save America's most vulnerable plants and animals from extinction.

Even if I never saw any of these species in person, it heartens me to know they're out there. The Endangered Species Act is an American success story we can all be proud of.

Thanks to the protection of the Endangered Species Act, by 1998 the Eastern North Pacific gray whale population had grown from about 13,500 to more than 20,000. Gray whales in the north Pacific were deemed recovered and de-listed in 1994.

The act has prevented the extinction of 99 percent of the species placed under its protection.

These are the kind of visionary actions Americans have taken to preserve our heritage. Whatever the inspiration, I believe it is one of the greatest connections to future generations to see something in danger of extinction and act to save it.

Bill Roseberry
Levittown



February 19, 2013

Endangered Species Act is doing its job

Forty years ago, President Richard Nixon did something really smart: He signed the Endangered Species Act into law, and here in the Northeast, we've reaped the benefits.

The act has prevented the extinction of 99 percent of the species placed under its protection. In the Northeast we can thank the act for putting a long list of species on the road toward recovery, including the bald eagle, the Atlantic piping plover and a yellow flower called the Robbins' cinquefoil.

By 1986, the Atlantic piping plover had been driven to the brink of extinction by ongoing habitat loss related to recreation, development and beach-stabilization projects. Thanks to protections from the Endangered Species Act, populations of this sparrow-sized bird in the Northeast have steadily grown. There are now nearly 2,000 stable nesting pairs from New England to the Southeast.

No other law has done more to save America's most vulnerable plants and animals from extinction.

It gives me hope that we now have 40 years of evidence showing we can stop the extinction of plants and animals whenever we show the political will to protect them by using the Endangered Species Act.

Even though there are always some shortsighted politicians in Congress working to weaken the act, I think it's pretty clear it has proven to be one of the most effective conservation laws ever passed. We need to celebrate the act and be vigilant to ensure it stays as strong as ever.

Deborah Carey
Amesbury

THE NEWS-TIMES
HEARST *media services*



Happy birthday. endangered species act

Posted on December 30, 2013 | By [Bob Miller](#)

Dec. 28 was the 40th anniversary of the federal Endangered Species Act. It's generally considered one of the most important pieces of environmental legislation passed in the US.

Because of it, bald eagles and peregrine falcons got the habitat protection they needed to recover after serious declines. If there are condors in California and manatees in Florida, it's because they are listed as endangered species. Likewise, gray wolves in the Rockies.

In Connecticut, the act offers protection to three sea birds - piping plover, red knots and roseate terns - and six turtles, including the bog turtle. Indiana bats, which are rare in Connecticut are considered endangered, along with a beautiful woodland orchid, the small-whorled pogonia.

There is much talk today that government can't do anything right. It can, and it does. the Endangered Species Act is a great example.

CALIFORNIA

<http://www.sacbee.com/2013/11/12/5902003/endangered-species-act.html>

THE SACRAMENTO BEE [sacbee.com](http://www.sacbee.com)

Towhee rebounds because of Endangered Species Act

Published: Tuesday, Nov. 12, 2013 - 2:25 pm

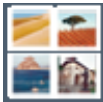
Re "Inyo towhee rebounds but is still a rare bird" (The Buzz, Nov. 6): Your report suggests incorrectly that the rare Inyo California towhee is rare only because it is uncommon for a species to be removed from a listing as an [endangered species](#).

The fact that the towhees' numbers have rebounded from a low of about 100 in the 1980s is a testament to the effort needed to bring a bird back from the brink of extinction. In the case of the towhee, it still took a legal settlement 14 years after the bird was protected in order to force the [Bureau of Land Management](#)

to enact the mining prohibitions, grazing restrictions and feral burro removals that were all central to the bird's recovery.

The Inyo towhee demonstrates that, though recovering imperiled species is never easy, we can get the job done with the [Endangered Species Act](#), which over its 40-year history has prevented the extinction of 99 percent of the species it protects.

-- Rabbi Susan Conforti, Auburn



THE TRIBUNE

ESA still needed

Published: June 24, 2013

By Suzanne White-Nichols — San Luis Obispo

This year marks the 40th anniversary of the Endangered Species Act. The ESA has served as our country's safety net for imperiled wildlife on the brink of extinction. Iconic species such as the bald eagle and the grizzly bear, in the Lower 48 states, have not disappeared from nature's landscape thanks to the act and adequate funding from our government.

However, at the present time, the act is under scrutiny by the government and facing devastating cutbacks and delistings by our Congress and Senate.

As I write this, one of our apex predators, the gray wolf, is slated to be removed from the act's lists with little regard for the years of scientific research that reveals the Wolf Recovery Program is still necessary for full implementation and sustainable recovery of the species.

I urge you to contact our legislators in the House and the Senate, and to voice your concern so a national treasure, the Endangered Species Act, remains a vital protector of another American treasure, our magnificent wildlife.

TRI-VALLEY TIMES

Tri-Valley letters: Endangered Species Act has proved beneficial

Times-Herald

POSTED: 04/25/2013

Endangered Species Act is worth keeping

Our country enjoys diverse ecosystems of thriving plant and animal life, which require constant vigilance to protect in the face of rampant development and human overpopulation. The Endangered Species Act (ESA) passed in 1973 gets much of the credit for helping prevent extinction of some of our iconic wildlife, such as the California condor, least tern and southern sea otter. These and other threatened species have slowly increased their numbers because of the ESA and the dedication of environmental groups such as the Center for Biological Diversity.

Last year I photographed California condors on the Big Sur coastline. Without our 40-year-old ESA, I might never have seen a condor in flight. Wouldn't it also be nice to photograph condors free of the numbers on their 9-foot wings and toxic lead in their blood?

Unencumbered Condors may not appear in my lifetime, but that's something to hope for as we defend the ESA against political attacks coming mostly from "conservatives" who often care more about conserving their own wealth than nature's awesome creatures.

Larry H. Thompson

Livermore

http://www.insidebayarea.com/ci_22840236/piedmont-montclair-letters-hope-pope-inspires-kindness-animals?IADID=Search-www.insidebayarea.com-www.insidebayarea.com



Piedmont/Montclair letters: Hope pope inspires kindness to animals

The Piedmonter and Montclarion

POSTED: 03/21/2013

Keep protection for endangered species

The Endangered Species Act turns 40 this year. Here in the Bay Area we can celebrate the return from extinction of the California condor, southern sea otter and California least tern among more that 200 species placed on the act's list for protection over the past few decades.

All species play a part in fragile-yet-complex biosystems that provide food and habitat as well as clean air and water -- the requirements for all life forms. However, due to the extreme escalation of human demands for higher technological standards of living, we are faced with a global crisis.

More and more species face habitat loss, introduction of alien species into their communities and fragmentation of their natural environment because of the physical assault of bulldozers, highways, etc. More species are on the brink of extinction.

The Endangered Species Act has a remarkable success record of saving 99 percent of those listed. We must ensure that this valuable legislation remains not only strong but expands its scope globally.

Maida Counts
Oakland



Defend the ESA

BY HOLLY SLETTELAND

March 17, 2013

The Endangered Species Act (ESA) turns 40 this year and I, for one, am glad it's around.

No other law has done more to save our most vulnerable plants and animals from extinction. The act has prevented the extinction of 99 percent of the species placed under its protection.

Here in California, we can thank the Endangered Species Act for putting a long list of species on the road toward recovery, including the California condor, southern sea otter and California least tern.

The act has proven itself to be one of the most effective conservation laws ever passed, but if we want it to be successful for another 40 years, we must be vigilant and defend it against those who would weaken it.



Endangered Species Act

Posted March 12, 2013

This year marks the 40th anniversary of the federal Endangered Species Act (ESA).

Right here in Ventura County, we have reason to celebrate. Many of our native species have been prevented from becoming extinct. Species such as the southern sea otter, snowy plover, arroyo toad and the majestic California Condor to name a few.

This far-ranging environmental law signed by President Richard Nixon has given us the important tools we need to protect all wild species in North America.

To continue diverse life on earth as we know it, it is important to preserve all species and their ecosystems.

Jim Hines, Ventura

THE SACRAMENTO BEE [sacbee.com](http://www.sacbee.com)

Celebrate 40-year-old Endangered Species Act

Published: Monday, Mar. 11, 2013

The [Endangered Species Act](#) (ESA) turns 40 this year, so it's a good time to celebrate its many successes. The ESA has been good for California and its wildlife.

The population of Southern [sea otters](#) had dropped to only 50 animals before it received ESA protection in 1977, but by 2005, the population had increased to more than 2,700. Similarly, the U.S. population of California Condors had dwindled to just 40 by the time it was listed as endangered in 1967. By 2011, the population had grown to 396 birds.

Other California species saved from extinction include Island night lizards and Peninsular bighorn sheep.

The ESA works.

There are some members of Congress who want to weaken the ESA. It is important that we remember how effective the ESA has been and make sure it stays in place to protect endangered species well into the future.

Roberta L. Millstein, Davis

http://www.mercurynews.com/opinion/ci_22749002/march-10-readers-letters-leon-panetta-endangered-species?source=autofeed#

San Jose Mercury News

March 10 Readers' the Endangered Species Act

Posted: 03/08/2013

Act ensures safety for endangered species

I'm not as old as the Endangered Species Act. In fact, it's almost twice my age. I wonder how vastly different our wild places would be today if President Nixon never signed it into law. Doubtless, I would not think much about the extinction of the California condor, or our sea otters. But the fact that they are still around, thanks to the Endangered Species Act, makes me very happy.

Jamie Jang
Redwood City



Letters to the Editor

Congress should expand Endangered Species Act

Saturday, Jun. 22, 2013 - 6:06 pm

Re "Tricolored blackbird count declines swiftly in California" (Our Region, June 21): I am alarmed to see tricolored blackbird bird populations declining in our state, especially in light of the fact that many [bird species](#) in Hawaii have already gone extinct.

The 40th anniversary of the [Endangered Species Act](#) celebrates is this year. It is time we started taking it as seriously as we did the day it was signed into law.

Many members in Congress would like to see the ESA dismantled. What protections will exist for threatened and endangered species if that happens? We need to uphold the Endangered Species Act, and add to it. The California congressional delegation should safeguard the act and push to give it the funding requested by President Barack Obama.

-- Janet Hoben, Burbank



Letters to the Editor

Hearing misled public about frog, toad listings

Published: Monday, Aug. 19, 2013 - 8:08 am

Re "Field hearing on amphibians was a stacked deck" (Editorials, Aug. 10): As a [wildlife biologist](#) who has studied amphibian declines extensively, I was shocked to learn that public officials are misleading their constituents about the basis for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's proposed listings.

The proposed listings of the yellow-legged frog and the Yosemite toad are not based on "[junk science](#)" nor are listings "destructive" of the environment.

There are numerous peer-reviewed studies that point to the need for federal protections for these species. Endangered Species Act listings do not prevent current efforts to conserve species. In fact, listing makes additional funding available to support [conservation programs](#), as well as scientific research and monitoring for the species.

-- Jennifer Loda, Oakland



Letters to the Editor

Wednesday, January 29, 2014

Frogs, toads are essential part of ecosystem

Published: Thursday, Aug. 15, 2013 - 7:08 am

Re "Field hearing on amphibians was a stacked deck" (Editorials, Aug. 10): As the holder of [Master's degrees](#) in environmental studies and marine biology, I am a staunch defender of our wildlife and its habitat.

Even as mundane as most people would think, frogs and toads are a vital part of the food chain and must be protected in order that [climate change](#) itself is not affected.

Keep the [Endangered Species Act](#) strong.

-- Joan Hunnicutt, [Citrus Heights](#)



Mountain ecosystems need amphibians

Published: Friday, Aug. 16, 2013 - 1:08 pm

Last Modified: Friday, Aug. 16, 2013 - 4:36 pm

Re "Field hearing on amphibians was a stacked deck" (Editorials, Aug. 10): For millions of years, amphibians have been an important link in the food chain, feeding on insects and are prey for other creatures. This means that they are a part of a mountain ecosystem that improves air and water quality. Their habitat, high-mountain meadows and lakes, must be protected for a chance at survival.

The yellow-legged frog and Yosemite toad need your support.

-- Karen Christine Irwin, El Cajon

SOUTHWEST

<http://www.sltrib.com/sltrib/opinion/57180047-82/utah-species-act-bird.html.csp>

The Salt Lake Tribune

Letter: Anti-environment lobbyist doesn't represent Utahns

First Published Nov 28 2013

Oil lobbyist [Jeff Hartley](#) ("Utah lawmakers look to amass environmental war chest," Tribune, Nov. 19) only speaks for his own pocketbook. Allowing energy lobbyists to speak for citizens is leaving the fox to watch the sage grouse house.

Those who profit from mineral/gas extraction will misrepresent data in coming years as feds decide whether the highly imperiled greater sage grouse deserves Endangered Species Act protections. Of course it does. Poor stewardship continues to destroy the remaining iconic bird's habitat.

Our legislators are neither biologists nor sophisticated world travelers. They laugh at a bird that is found nowhere else on Earth, because they don't know and don't appreciate how special Utah wild lands and their inhabitants are globally — nor do they understand extinction's permanent and far-reaching impacts.

Utah deserves more than boom-town, get-rich-quick schemes. We are hard-working people with a responsibility to leave a legacy for our children. In fact, that's the exact reason Congress passed the Endangered Species Act by near unanimous vote 40 years ago — to balance economic development against preservation of the systems we depend on for our own health, as well as the health of our economy.

Jessica Dwyer

Salt Lake City

http://azstarnet.com/news/opinion/mailbag/letters-to-the-editor/article_e7e34e18-4681-50b6-b4bb-01a933405117.html



Letters to the editor

September 27, 2013 12:00 am

Species protection is American success story

The Endangered Species Act turns 40 this year and many Americans are thankful this law is around. No other law has done more to save America's most vulnerable plants and animals from extinction.

Here in Arizona we can thank the act for putting a long list of wildlife on the road toward recovery, including bald eagles, Gila trout, Mexican wolves, northern aplomado falcons and black-footed ferrets.

Sometimes it's hard to find much to celebrate when we look around and see how we continue to harm the only planet known to sustain life, our only home.

But it gives us hope that we now have 40 years of evidence showing we can stop the extinction of wildlife whenever we show the political will to protect them. The Endangered Species Act is an American success story we can all be proud of.

Daniel R. Patterson

Southwest director, Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility



Talk of the Town

Tue, Apr 30, 2013

Protect environment with vigilance

DURING A 10-YEAR period in the days of bipartisan cooperation, Congress passed a series of environmental protection acts: the Wilderness Act (1964), the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act (1968), the National Environmental Policy Act (1969), the Clean Air Act (1970), the Clean Water Act (1972), and the Endangered Species Act (1973).

Each of these acts has been attacked by short-sighted opponents in modern times, especially the Endangered Species Act, which has been called the most important legislation designed to protect the natural world and its inhabitants — including us — ever to have emerged from the U. S. Congress.

In the present Congress numerous “riders” — bills attached to major legislation to avoid public scrutiny — have been introduced to water down or avoid the intent of major environmental protection laws. We must be eternally vigilant to avoid such desecration.

Keep in mind the history, especially as it relates to New Mexico. The first wilderness established in America occurred on the Gila National Forest in New Mexico due to the efforts of far-sighted Aldo Leopold 40 years before the Wilderness Act passed Congress.

New Mexico Sen. Clifford P. Anderson supported the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act that included the Ute Mountain Run of the Rio Grande, the river segment recently given greater protection by the establishment of the Rio Grande del Norte National Monument.

Like him or loathe him, conservative Richard Nixon signed the Endangered Species Act into law 40 years ago.

It has been instrumental in helping to bring back from the edge of extinction the bald eagle, whooping crane, Kirtland’s warbler, peregrine falcon, gray wolf, gray whale, grizzly bear, sea otter and black-footed ferret among other species.

As citizens we must let our elected representatives know where we stand on environmental protection, including endangered species.

VERNE HUSER
Albuquerque

<http://www.paysonroundup.com/news/2013/apr/26/ban-lead-ammo-condors/>

Friday April 26, 2013

PAYSON  ROUNDUP

Ban Lead Ammo For Condors

Editor:

There is no better time than Earth Day to than draw attention to one of our many environmental disasters that are happening right now on our planet. This involves our own state, and one of our most beloved areas.

It's astounding to me that 28 of the Grand Canyon region's 80 condors have been treated for blood poisoning over the same time period, and that overall, 38 of the 166 condors reintroduced in Utah and Arizona since 1996 have been killed by lead poisoning. Even the Arizona Game and Fish Department indicates that lead toxicity has been identified as the leading cause of death in condors in the Arizona reintroduction program. Here's the source for this fact:

http://www.azgfd.gov/w_c/california_condor_lead.shtml

These avoidable deaths are just the latest chapter in a growing body of evidence demonstrating that lead bullets keep on poisoning and killing birds and other wildlife long after the ammunition takes down their initial prey.

It makes no sense that we're allowing lead poisoning to continue its assault on wildlife long after the ammunition leaves the gun barrel.

With the help of the Endangered Species Act, which has prevented the extinction of 99 percent of the more than 1,400 species it protects, we've gone to great efforts to save California condors from extinction.

Today, they are among the hundreds of plants and animals protected by the Act that are on the road to recovery, including our Apache trout, black-footed ferrets and Northern Aplomado falcons that we see right here in Arizona.

Here in the 40th year of the Endangered Species Act, let's not throw away all our successful work, to date, to save California condors.

Dick and Sandi Crane
Payson



Grateful for act protecting species

Editor:

The Endangered Species Act turns 40 years old this year. The act has made a difference in protecting many endangered species, both animals and plants.

One of the plant species the act protects is the Pima Pineapple Cactus, native to the Sonoran Desert.

The cactus grows predominately in Arizona's Pima County as which is part of the Sonoran desert. The desert plant is quickly losing its habitat because of invasive species as well as habitat loss due to urbanization.

Some of the threats include people off roading, as well as buildings being constructed in its natural habitat. The Endangered Species Act helps combat extinction by helping overturn improper decisions which would rob this plant and other plants and animals of their natural habitat. It has also secured millions of acres for endangered species.

I know that perhaps many people don't really associate biodiversity with the desert. After all, here we don't see the lush vegetation one sees in other regions, which I suppose is understandable. However, the desert is just as rich in flora and fauna as even the greenest rainforest. Someone who had never come to the southwest, told me that when she never thought that there are actually so many different types cacti!

This is just one example of one of the very many reasons I have to be grateful for the Endangered Species Act.

Carmen Guerrero
Avondale

LAS CRUCES SUN-NEWS

Your View: Letters to the editor (April 21)

Posted: 04/21/2013

Endangered Species Act

Sometimes it's hard to find much to celebrate when you look around and see how we continue to find new ways to destroy the only planet known to sustain life. But it gives me hope that we now have 40 years of evidence showing we can stop the extinction of plants and animals whenever we show the political will to protect them by using the Endangered Species Act. Even though there are always some shortsighted politicians in Congress working to weaken the Act, I think it's pretty clear it has proven to be one of the most effective conservation laws ever passed. It has prevented the extinction of 99 percent of the species placed under its protection. What law has a better record than that?

I know that right here in New Mexico, if not for the Endangered Species Act, we would have never have saved Mexican wolves and Gila trout from disappearing forever. That, alone, is worth being thankful for.

NICOLE SYLVESTER

Las Cruces

The Salt Lake Tribune

Letter: Huggins wrong; Endangered Species Act has worked

First Published Jan 03 2014

Missing from [Laura E. Huggins' op-ed](#) ("Time to move beyond ESA to save species and economic interests," Opinion, Dec. 30) was evidence to support her primary assertion — that the Endangered Species Act fails to recover species.

Huggins' misleading assertion that the act is a failure because only 1 percent of species have been removed from the endangered list is a conservative invention designed to divert attention away from scientific research that shows quite the opposite: The act has put hundreds of species it protects on schedule to meet federal recovery targets.

Asserting otherwise is akin to suggesting that anyone under a doctor's care should be recovered today — regardless of the nature of their illness or the prescribed length of their treatment regime.

The fact is, the act — which turned 40 on Dec. 28 — has prevented the extinction of 99 percent of the more than 1,500 plants and animals it protects, in the process preserving the irreplaceable forests, waterways and ecosystems we all share.

As a result, the act continues to help us balance our short-term economic needs with the long-term environmental and economic concerns that are in the best interest of us all.

Noah Greenwald, M.S.

Endangered Species Director

Center for Biological Diversity

Portland, Ore.

CENTRAL

<http://www.muskogee phoenix.com/opinion/x405451042/THE-PEOPLE-SPEAK-Endangered-species-law-a-success-story>



July 11, 2013

THE PEOPLE SPEAK — Endangered species law a success story

The Endangered Species Act turns 40 this year, and I, for one, am thankful it's around.

No other law has done more to save America's most vulnerable plants and animals from extinction.

Here in the central part of the country, we can thank the act for putting a long list of species on the road toward recovery, including the majestic bald eagle and the tiny little piping plover.

I may rarely get a chance to lay my eyes on some of these species in person, but they're part of what keeps this region diverse and healthy, and it heartens me to know they're out there.

The Endangered Species Act is an American success story we can all be proud of.

MORGAN LINDSAY
Muskogee

GULF COAST

<http://letterstotheeditorblog.dallasnews.com/2013/12/saving-the-endangered-species-act-is-essential-to-our-national-soul.html/>



Saving the Endangered Species Act is essential to our national soul

[December 23, 2013](#)

This month we celebrate the 40th anniversary of the [Endangered Species Act](#). Unfortunately, celebration is overshadowed by a new bill in Congress that threatens the survival of the ESA itself.

U.S. Senate Bill 1731, Endangered Species Management Self-Determination Act, is sponsored by the ESA's political foes and backed by special-interest groups more interested in making a buck than in preserving our nation's wildlife. This bill, if passed, will essentially dismantle the Endangered Species Act, which was designed specifically to protect otherwise defenseless animals from humans.

America's wild places and wild creatures are essential to our national heritage and our national soul — and this trumps politics and self-serving special-interest groups! If America's endangered wildlife is to be preserved, I urge you to call or write your congressional representatives and voice your opposition.

<http://lubbockonline.com/editorial-letters/2013-12-02/letter-protect-economy-environment#.Upyq9tJUSO4>

MONDAY, DECEMBER 2, 2013



Letter: Protect economy, environment

Many people operate on the principle, “If it is good for me and mine it is good, if not, forget it.” Protecting the economy and environment is in everyone’s best interest!

We have driven many species of wildlife into extinction. When this happens the ability of nature to balance itself successfully is diminished. The guidelines of the Endangered Species Act, now 40 years old has served the best interest of us all.

This act requires that managers and landowners consult with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to determine what wide-ranging effects a given economic project might have on driving a particular plant or animal out of existence and thus weakening our own hold on existence.

When we pursue economic goals to the peril of plants and animals in the environment we may be destroying an irreplaceable line in our ecosystem. The best way we can keep our planet healthy and species alive. More than 99 percent of the plants and animals protected by the Endangered Species Act have survived and many are on the road to recover.

What good is a large bank account if we have destroyed the plants and animals that make human life sustainable? Who would have ever considered that the simple bee is such an integral part of our lives until they started to mysteriously disappear? Like it or not, if we are to survive we have to protect our shared habitat.

DORIETA ROGERS/Lubbock

http://www.galvestondailynews.com/opinion/letters_to_editor/article_ded0eb86-5986-11e3-87ed-0019bb30f31a.html?_dc=819688251009.2109



Posted: Saturday, November 30, 2013

Protect our cats

As someone who worked with carnivores at the Houston Zoo, I'm so saddened to hear about the auto collision that turned an endangered ocelot into highway road kill ("Endangered Ocelot killed in auto collision," Associated Press, Nov. 19). With only 50 ocelots remaining in the country, all in the Lower Rio Grande Valley, losing this one male ocelot is very painful.

As stated in the story, there are not many ocelots left in the United States. They were once hunted as "unwanted" predators and for their beautiful, creamy, chain-like spotted fur. Yet, they managed to survive, thanks in a large part to protection under the Endangered Species Act, which this year celebrates its 40th anniversary and to date has prevented the extinction of 99 percent of the more than 1,400 species it protects.

With hunting now prohibited, roads are an ever present threat to wildlife and one of the biggest threats to the ocelot.

With such few animals, losing even one individual comes at a huge expense to the entire population. We are fortunate to have these beautiful cats in Texas and need to do more to ensure their survival.

Joanie Steinhaus
Galveston

http://www.theeagle.com/opinion/editorials/article_e6214066-f0fb-5cbd-887e-a59e444c6409.html



Letters for November 6

We must care about the fate of the yellow-billed cuckoo

To listen to the debate about whether the rare yellow-billed cuckoo deserves recently proposed Endangered Species Act protections is to wonder whether people care about facts or are content merely to repeat unsubstantiated politically motivated assertions of doom and gloom.

When we hear that a bird once common along nearly every body of water in the West has been reduced to several hundred breeding pairs, it demands our immediate support.

Instead of addressing those facts, state officials are warning of dire economic consequences should the listing be successful. The comptroller's office could not provide specific estimates for the potential impact on the West Texas economy, but according to its report on the species, as many as 1,800 ranching and agricultural jobs could be affected.

Texans who care about our environment and our long-term job prospects should ignore these invented, unsubstantiated claims. The fact is, the yellow-billed cuckoo's willow and cottonwood habitats have been devastated by dams, livestock grazing and water withdrawals.

For more than a decade, this beautiful bird has been waiting for the protection of the Endangered Species Act, which in its 40-year history has prevented the extinction of 99 percent of the plants and animals entrusted to its care. It's time we face the facts and save this irreplaceable bird and what's left of the habitat we all share with it before it's too late.

LAURIE MARSHALL
Bryan



October 27, 2013

Endangered species

Re: "Can lesser prairie chicken and oil coexist?" (Page B1, Thursday), by endorsing a "voluntary" conservation plan for the lesser prairie chicken, the federal officials charged with protecting our nation's most imperiled plants and animals are doing a better job of protecting the interests of developers and extraction industries than the lesser prairie chicken, which has already lost more than 89 percent of its historic habitat to development.

The problem: The voluntary conservation plans are not only unenforceable but Texas officials insist they're not even public records, which means the very federal officials responsible for enforcing the plan can't make sure the volunteers are keeping their promises.

That's all very bad news for the lesser prairie chicken, whose numbers dropped by more than 50 percent just last year, according to a report released last month. So what's the answer?

It's called the Endangered Species Act. Over the course of 40 years, it has prevented the extinction of 99 percent of the plants and animals it protects. In the process, it's also protected millions of acres of habitat critical to the ongoing health of the planet we all depend on for everything from food and water to the jobs that keep our economy healthy and sustainable over the long haul.

Carolyn Mata, Houston

FLORIDA

<http://www.gainesville.com/article/20131107/OPINION02/131109775/1077/opinion02?p=2&tc=pg>



As described by an Oct. 30 story, “Record number of green sea turtle nests counted,” it’s clear that years of Endangered Species Act protections are starting to pay off for this beautiful turtle.

But as always, the news for our sea turtles is mixed: Both loggerhead and leatherback turtles were found to have fewer nests in Florida in 2013. It’s a sobering reminder that there’s much work to be done to return these highly imperiled turtles to healthy, sustainable populations.

Thanks to the Endangered Species Act, which over the past 40 years has prevented the extinction of 99 percent of the species it protects, earlier this year much-needed protected critical habitat on Southeastern beaches was proposed for loggerheads.

Still, there’s no room for complacency. All our sea turtles continue to face ongoing threats from pollution, fishing gear entanglement and loss of nesting beaches due to coastal development and sea-level rise.

*Judy Angley,
Gainesville*

<http://www.theledger.com/article/20130829/EDIT02/130829224?Title=Endangered-Species-Act-A-U-S-Success-Story-We-All-Should-Be-Proud-of>



Endangered Species Act A U.S. Success Story We All Should Be Proud of

Published: Thursday, August 29, 2013

The Endangered Species Act turns 40 this year, and I, for one, am thankful it's around. No other law has done more to save America's most vulnerable plants and animals from extinction. Here in Florida, we can thank the act for putting a long list of species on the road toward recovery, including crocodiles, wood storks and manatees.

Sometimes it's hard to find much to celebrate when you look around and see how we continue to find new ways to destroy the only planet known to sustain life.

But it gives me hope that we now have 40 years of evidence showing we can stop the extinction of plants and animals whenever we show the political will to protect them by using the Endangered Species Act.

Even though there are always some shortsighted politicians in Congress working to weaken the act, I think it's pretty clear it has proved to be one of the most effective conservation laws ever passed.

It has prevented the extinction of 99 percent of the species placed under its protection. What law has a better record than that? I know that right here in Florida, if not for the Endangered Species Act, we would never have the chance to see alligators, crocodiles or manatees.

I rarely get a chance to lay my eyes on any of these species in person, but they're part of what keeps this region diverse and healthy, and it heartens me to know they're out there. The Endangered Species Act is an American success story we can all be proud of.

GREGORY ESTEVE
Lake Wales

GREAT LAKES

<http://www.detroitnews.com/article/20131122/OPINION01/311220004/Our-readers-endangered-species-Prince-Fielder-President-Obama?odyssey=mod%7Cnewswell%7Ctext%7CFRONT>



NOVEMBER 22, 2013

Protect the skipperling

Re: Lauren Abdel-Razzaq's Nov. 19 report, "[Michigan could be hope for rare butterfly, feds say](#)": The News' story on the Poweshiek skipperling butterfly and its race for survival touched my heart. We absolutely must do more to preserve our natural heritage, including this butterfly and the prairie habitats it needs to survive.

These lovely tiny orange-fringed butterflies were once common throughout native prairie landscapes that spanned eight states. But the massive loss of tall-grass prairies due to agricultural conversion has left these lovely butterflies homeless. Skipperlings have already totally disappeared in Illinois and Indiana, so we Michiganders have an extraordinary opportunity to aid in saving this endangered butterfly.

As was noted in your story, loss of the skipperling will mean loss of many more species some we don't even know about. It will also mean we will have lost our chance at saving some of the best examples of native prairie habitat we have left in Michigan.

For all of these reasons, I support protection of the skipperling under the Endangered Species Act and any other species we're at risk of losing.

In its 40-year history, the Endangered Species Act has prevented the extinction of 99 percent of the plants and animals it protects.

We need to let the Act do its job here in southeast Michigan and put the skipperling on the road to recovery.

William McMullin, Royal Oak

http://www.mlive.com/opinion/grand-rapids/index.ssf/2013/11/letters_to_the_editor_3_19.html



By [MLive/Grand Rapids Press opinion](#)
on November 06, 2013

Commending coverage of Kirtland warbler

It wasn't long ago that the yellow-chested Kirtland's warbler, once a familiar sight across northern Michigan, looked destined for extinction.

Your insightful report **(Endangered Kirtland's Warblers: Looking good, but what lies ahead," Oct. 27)** did a great job of demonstrating what it takes to recover an imperiled species.

It's a testament to the remarkable power of the Endangered Species Act that Kirtland's warblers – which as you stated had been reduced to a couple hundred breeding pairs – have now rebounded to more than a 2,000 pairs.

Recovery has not been easy, requiring ongoing efforts to restore the jack pine forests it depends on for nesting. But here the 40th year of the Endangered Species Act it's great to remember that with the help of the Act, which has prevented the extinction of 99 percent of the species it protects, we can still save and recover species whenever we put our mind to it.

It was very profound reading your statement "The endangered species list is where species went to die", because I would like to believe that most of us have a good deal of compassion for the environment and ALL creatures found in it.

Ty Coon, Grand Rapids

http://host.madison.com/ct/news/opinion/mailbag/ryan-wagner-endangered-species-act-is-still-crucial/article_def5c282-c674-5951-81bd-9fef64a9b27d.html



Ryan Wagner: Endangered Species Act is still crucial

December 25, 2013 4:00 am

Dear Editor: Margaret Krome's column, [“Our hubris in trampling species breathtaking,”](#) did a great job of explaining the extinction crisis we face in the 21st century.

With habitat destruction and climate change playing lead roles in species disappearing at thousands of times historic extinction rates, we humans need to do everything in our power to stop the unchecked fraying of the ecosystems that depend entirely on the delicate relationships between every form of life on Earth.

Shortsighted Republicans in Congress blindly pushing to hand over more power to individual states in species protection decisions fail to see what Congress saw so clearly 40 years ago this month, when by almost unanimous vote it passed the Endangered Species Act.

The text of the act, which has now prevented extinction of 99 percent of the species it protects, explains why it was needed then, and still today: “The Congress finds and declares that various species of fish, wildlife, and plants in the United States have been rendered extinct as a consequence of economic growth and development untempered by adequate concern and conservation.”

The act helps us to balance our short-term economic interests with our long-term environmental and economic interest.

Without the act there would be no balance at all.

Ryan Wagner
Madison



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December 24, 2013

Endangered Species Act is vital to bats, other species: Letter to the Editor

Your story ("[**Endangered bats might create roadblocks for Ohio oil, electricity, coal and road work**](#)," Dec. 6), reminds us why Congress passed the Endangered Species Act 40 years ago this month. It is not surprising to see tales of economic hardship raised by companies that make huge profits by extracting natural resources without concern for the long-term health of the environment we all depend on.

That is why in December 1973, Congress passed the Endangered Species Act - because our leaders wisely understood the long-term health of our planet and our economy depended on balancing short-term economic profits with thoughtful protection of the ecosystem.

It's undeniable northern long-eared bats need protecting. Many of their colonies have experienced nearly 100 percent mortality rates due to white-nose syndrome, which has spread to 22 states. History suggests we can save them with the Endangered Species Act, which has prevented extinction of 99 percent of the species it protects.

Kent Scott
Madison



Published: December 9, 2013

I was heartened to read the recent report on efforts by the state and its partners to save our Ohio's unique and endangered eastern hellbender ("Hellbenders return to Ohio," Dec. 2).

These giant aquatic salamanders are in big trouble and require Herculean intervention to save them from looming extinction.

The hellbender is one of the largest salamanders in the world and is so ugly that it crosses over to adorable. It requires clear, clean streams, making it an excellent indicator of stream health. In other words, protecting the hellbender means protecting streams that benefit us all in Ohio.

The hellbender is currently under consideration for protection under the Endangered Species Act. I support such protection for these amazing animals.

This year marks the 40th anniversary of this landmark wildlife law, which has prevented the extinction of 99 percent of the species under its protection and put hundreds of species on the road to recovery.

My wife and I are expecting our first child, and I want him to grow up in a state with wild animals like the hellbender.

Casey Weinstein
Hudson

<http://www.mininggazette.com/page/content.detail/id/531886/Wolf-hunt-is-just-plain-wrong.html?nav=5004>

The Daily Mining Gazette

Wolf hunt is just plain wrong

November 8, 2013

To the editor:

Thank you for your article, "Wolf season is new kid on the Block," this November/Inside the DNR. As the granddaughter of a Michigan native, I am extremely disappointed at the state's decision to hold a wolf hunt that is unwanted, unneeded, and just plain wrong.

The Endangered Species Act was signed into law 40 years ago to help species that are heading toward extinction to recover. Under this Act, wolves, once almost eradicated in this country, have been making a tremendous comeback. But they still occupy nowhere near the historic range they once had and recovery is not complete. The decisions to remove the gray wolf from ESA protections in the Rocky Mountain and Great Lakes regions, and the proposal to remove all gray wolves in the lower 48 from protections, has not been based on sound science.

Even so, the decision on whether or not to hold a hunt was up to Michigan. And Michigan chose to ignore both sound science and the will of its citizens, over a quarter of million who signed petitions so that the wolf hunt could be put on the ballot and decided on by the people, and instead changed the regulations and render the people mute.

Michigan has a chance to honor both the spirit of the ESA and the will of the people. There is still time to right this wrong if the hunt is canceled now.

Janet Hoben
Burbank, Calif.



Letter: Keep Endangered Species Act strong

Posted: Tuesday, September 24, 2013

FROM RICHARD LAUBHAN 31 STONY POINT, GALENA, ILL.

Forty years ago, President Richard Nixon did something really smart: He signed the Endangered Species Act into law. Many plants and animals have not only been spared extinction, they've been put on the path toward recovery. The act has proved to be one of the most effective conservation laws ever passed.

An outstanding example is the gray wolf, which gained Endangered Species Act protection in 1974 and -- beginning with its re-introduction in Yellowstone National Park -- has made remarkable progress.

But this year, the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service -- succumbing to misinformation from ranchers and hunters about livestock predation and depletion of game herds -- decided that it should remove gray wolves from the Endangered Species Act protection. Public hearings will be held in the next couple of months before Fish & Wildlife takes this action. I hope the hearings turn the tide.

Wolves, and many other endangered species, play an important part in preserving a portion of our heritage that is wild and natural, but sadly on the wane.

The Endangered Species Act is something we can all be proud of. I hope that politicians and special interests will not be successful in weakening it.

RICHARD LAUBHAN, GALENA, ILL.

<http://www.troyrecord.com/articles/2013/07/21/opinion/doc51eaefe54a934236348688.txt#.Ue8RMcEYn78.twitter>



Serving Troy and its surrounding
communities

Pulse of The People: Endangered Species Act is a success story

Published: Sunday, July 21, 2013

The Endangered Species Act turns 40 this year, and I, for one, am thankful it's around. No other law has done more to save America's most vulnerable plants and animals from extinction.

Here in the Northeast, we can thank the act putting a long list of species on the road toward recovery, including the bald eagle, Atlantic piping plover and Robbins' cinquefoil.

I may rarely get a chance to lay my eyes on any of these species in person, but they're part of what keeps the Northeast diverse and healthy, and it heartens me to know they are out there. The Endangered Species Act is an American success story we can all be proud of.

Betty J. Van Wicklen
Watervliet



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Congress should maintain integrity of Endangered Species Act: Letter to the Editor

January 10, 2014

The Sierra Club draws attention to the possible weakening of the Endangered Species Act shielding wolves and other wildlife in the contiguous 48 states. This means that countless creatures could painfully perish by firearms, traps and even poison.

Congress should be asked to maintain the integrity of the 40-year-old legislation. Indeed, habitat of wolves and other animals should be safeguarded throughout our adjacent states.

Conversationalist Samuel Johnson (obit. 1784) somewhere remarks that hunting was labor for the ingenious Americans, but had become amusement for 18th century English gentlemen. One hopes we have become more merciful and humane in these enlightened times.

William Dauenhauer,

Willowick

SOUTHEAST

<http://www.tennessean.com/comments/article/20131124/OPINION02/311240025/TN-right-protect-crayfish>



TN right to protect crayfish

Nov. 24, 2013

Thank you for the Nov. 18 article, "Endangered crayfish affects work on Concord Road," describing how workers widening Concord Road are taking care not to harm endangered Nashville crayfish, which play an irreplaceable role in the ecosystems of Mill and Owl creeks.

After reading online comments on the article, it's clear that most people don't realize that crayfish are important, because the holes they dig create habitat used by literally hundreds of other species, including bass, catfish, frogs and small mammals. Crayfish also keep our streams cleaner by eating decaying plants and animals, and in turn they are eaten by fish, birds and otters, making them an important link in the food web.

The fact that we're rearranging the construction schedule of this project to protect these species is a great example of how the Endangered Species Act, which turns 40 next month, helps us to balance our own needs with the needs of plants and animals that maintain the health of the ecosystems we all depend on for our own long-term environmental and economic health.

We are lucky to have crayfish, and fortunate to have the Endangered Species Act, and which to date has prevented the extinction of 99 percent of the more than 1,400 species it protects.

Laura Bradley
Nashville

Kingsport, TN

November 7, 2013

Let's flex our muscles for mussels

In Kingsport, we do a lot for domestic animals. We have a fantastic network of animal rescuers, we hold community dog walks and benefits, and nearly every weekend the Kingsport Animal Shelter showcases its wonderful adoptable pets at PetSmart. We are an impressive community of domestic animal welfare advocates. But what about our region's wild and endangered critters? What are we doing for them? Did you know that there are more freshwater mussel species in the Southeast than anywhere else in the world? Many of them right here in East Tennessee? These little invertebrates might seem unappealing, but we need mussels to thrive because they are important water-filtering species that remove pollutants from our rivers, which means better water quality for people, fish and other aquatic creatures.

The Cumberland Bean, the Spectaclecase, the Appalachian Monkeyface and the Snuffbox are all endangered mussel populations that need our help. Years of dam building, gravel and coal mining and agricultural runoff have fouled Tennessee's rivers and put most freshwater mussel populations on the road to extinction. Thankfully, there's still hope for mussel species in East Tennessee. This year the Endangered Species Act turns 40, and no other law has done more to save America's most vulnerable plants and animals from extinction. In fact, the act has prevented the extinction of 99 percent of the species under its protection. It's a remarkable law. Our community has a big heart for animals, so I say we flex our muscles for our state's freshwater mussels and let's honor the Endangered Species Act's continued success. Only we can ensure the Snuffbox and its mussel species counterparts aren't snuffed out forever.

Melanie Tate
Kingsport

Endangered Species Act celebrates 40 years

Jocelyn Brumbaugh
jocelyn@tribune-georgian.com

As the Endangered Species Act celebrated its 40th anniversary on Dec. 28, its goal remains the same as it did four decades ago — to save not only iconic animals like bald eagles, alligators and wolves, but also the lesser known plants and animals that provide a base ecosystem.

Noah Greenwald, biologist and endangered species director for the Center for Biological Diversity in Portland, Ore., said that coastal Georgia is recognized nationally as a hot spot for aquatic diversity.

"There's nowhere else in the world with as much diversity as the southeast," he

said.

Greenwald said the law protects species unique to the area — from salamanders, snails and turtles to fish, birds and shellfish. According to an interactive map on the Center for Biology's website, Camden is home to several protected species, including the eastern indigo snake, green sea turtle, West Indian manatee, loggerhead sea turtle, wood stork, leatherback sea turtle, red-cockaded woodpecker and hawksbill sea turtle.

Greenwald said that one of the area's most precious resources is its fresh water, where pollution can lead to endangering rare types of native animals. One species, the Altamaha spiny mussel,

was just discovered in 2011 and is unique to the freshwater rivers of coastal Georgia.

"Saving these species is saving the rivers and saving fresh water, which is a huge benefit to people as well," he explained.

Protecting natural coastlines is another benefit to saving species like the loggerhead turtle. Protecting the turtles' natural habitat protects against flooding and preserves the natural coastline views that many enjoy.

According to a press release from the Center for Biological Diversity, the Endangered Species Act has prevented the extinction of 99 percent of the more than 1,300 plants and animals it

protects and studies suggest that it has put a majority of those species on the road to recovery.

Endangered species are given this term when a certain population of a particular type of animal is at risk of extinction. Threatened species are titled when they were at the risk of being endangered in the near future. Recovered species are those that were endangered, but due to the success of a protection program, have started to increase in population again.

The American alligator, bald eagle, brown pelican and American peregrine falcon are animals that call the southeast home and have been delisted from the endangered species list thanks

to the act, according to the Center for Biological Diversity's website.

As biologists face challenges like habitat destruction, population growth and climate change, one of the biggest hurdles will be more funding for recovering endangered species, Greenwald said. Scientists,

activists, biologists and citizens continuously monitor species' population and work together to petition to add more animals to the list as their numbers plummet, he said, but sometimes it can take years for a species to be officially added to the list and protected by the act.



Tribune & Georgian file photo

Loggerhead turtles nest on Cumberland Island, yearly.

HAWAII

<http://www.mauinews.com/page/content.detail/id/578549/Benefits-of-Endangered-Species-Act-all-around-us.html?nav=18>



Benefits of Endangered Species Act all around us

November 6, 2013

Hawaii is paradise, but not always so for nonhuman species. And it saddens me to know that Hawaii is considered the endangered species capital of the world, as detailed in "Animals, plants join list of endangered" (The Maui News, Oct. 31).

And while our geographic isolation is partly responsible for conferring upon our state this discouraging title, we haven't always done the best job of protecting all the natural gifts bestowed upon us. That's why we're fortunate to have the Endangered Species Act, a law that's prevented the extinction of 99 percent of the species it protects - to help us balance human endeavors with the needs of the stunning plants and animals that make living on Maui, and all of Hawaii, so unique.

Evidence of the act's 40-year success can be found all around us on the islands. Through the years it's helped us save everything from the Laysan duck and Hawaiian goose to many of our beautiful sea turtles and whales. And now it will help us save these 15 irreplaceable plants and animals.

Pam Brachmann
Hana

THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS

http://missoulain.com/news/opinion/mailbag/endangered-species-act-hope-for-another-years/article_e56abaa0-7158-11e3-b44f-0019bb2963f4.html



Endangered Species Act: Hope for another 40 years

December 30, 2013

Few environmental laws can boast the success stories of the Endangered Species Act, launched in 1973 by President Richard Nixon. Passed by Congress to protect animal and plant species from extinction, it realized the essential value of the natural world. Nixon wrote, "It is a many-faceted treasure, of value to scholars, scientists, and nature lovers alike, and it forms a vital part of the heritage we all share as Americans." Extinction is a genuine threat, species gone forever. Perhaps the loss of the passenger pigeon struck the first chord in this campaign, human-caused destruction of the most abundant bird in North America. Since its passing, more than 1,300 species have been protected, listed as endangered and may be "delisted" only when their numbers have reached a recovery level. Impressive comebacks are the humpback whale and American alligator, but also included are the El Segundo blue butterfly and Robbin's cinquefoil (a flower).

Two birds that almost disappeared from the lower 48 are the bald eagle and peregrine falcon. Their listing as endangered on the ESA was a critical factor in the banning of the pesticide DDT, which had a much wider-reaching effect than saving just these two species. Peregrines went from endangered to delisting in just 29 years after an extensive recovery effort, and now populations may surpass pre-DDT numbers. In Montana, bald eagle numbers increased from just a dozen nests in the mid-1970s to well over 600 today. The ESA realizes that habitat protection is the key to species recovery. Besides saving plants and animals at critical population numbers, the Endangered Species Act helps guarantee a healthier environment for the rest of us. With the great track record, let's hope the ESA continues another 40 years and we won't see another species vanish forever.

Kate Davis, executive director, Raptors of the Rockies, Florence



May we all be agents of change in the coming year

Megan Hollingsworth | Posted: Thursday, January 2, 2014

As we celebrate the successes of the Endangered Species Act this month, I am struck by both the sheer need for this protection of other species from us and by assaults the act has endured since it was signed into law 40 years ago. Overseen by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the National Marine Fisheries Service, the Endangered Species Act allows species of wildlife in danger of extinction to be listed as threatened or endangered and to receive protections to prevent the loss of the species. Why society should require such a law commanding the basics of care for others has long been a puzzle in my mind and heart. While I think I have figured the puzzle out for myself, as a peacemaker it is difficult to discern effective action aside from bearing witness to both the losses others have endured for lack of our care and the hopeful responses of those who care so much they will put their own lives on the line to protect the endangered.

The successes of the act, which protects species and ensures the creation of plans for the recovery of these species, include the recoveries of bald eagle, American alligator, whooping crane, and humpback whale. The assaults on the act include Congress' 2004 National Defense Authorization Act, exempting the Department of Defense from critical habitat designation provided that a natural resources management plan is in place.

Here and now, as has always been, we command others as casualties of our wars. My prayer for 2014 is that we make peace with change, accept that our neglects have endangered all of us, and rise to the highest call of appreciation and gratitude for others. May we, each and every one of us, be agents of the act.

Megan Hollingsworth
Livingston



Endangered Species Act: Landmark law proven effective

December 29, 2013

More than 40 years ago Republican President Richard Nixon's staff invaded the Democratic Party headquarters illegally, with his knowledge, and he had to resign his presidency over it. But, he also did a couple of things really smart: He opened up relationships with China; and he signed the Endangered Species Act into law.

Here in the Rocky Mountain region, we've definitely reaped the benefits of the ESA. We can thank the ESA for putting many species on the road toward recovery.

However, some members of Congress have set their sights on weakening the ESA. Some of our own Montana politicians are among them. They are abandoning the concept of conservation of imperiled wildlife and refuse to renew our national commitment to protecting and recovering wildlife. They value economic profits, and their own re-election, over protection of wildlife.

The fact that tourism is Montana's biggest industry and related job producer, and those tourists are visiting to view the wildlife, are somehow lost on them under the undue pressures from the timber industry and motorized recreational vehicle users among their voting constituents. (Wildlife cannot vote.)

Sometimes it's hard to find much to celebrate when you look around and see how we continue to find new ways to destroy the only planet known to sustain life. But there is hope now that we have 40 years of evidence showing we can stop the extinction of plants and animals whenever we show the political will to protect them by using the ESA.

Despite those shortsighted politicians in Congress working to weaken the ESA, it's pretty clear it has proven to be one of the most effective conservation laws ever passed. It has prevented the extinction of 99 percent of the species placed under its protection. What law has a better record than that?

*Bill Baum,
Kalispell*



Endangered Species Act: Landmark law proven effective

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*Bill Baum,
Kalispell*



Legislation threatens endangered species

By Norman A. Bishop | Posted: Monday, December 30, 2013

This month marks the 40th anniversary of the Endangered Species Act, one of the world's strongest and most effective wildlife protection laws. Unfortunately, just at this time when Montanans celebrate four decades of success with the ESA, bills that could rightly be called the "Extinction Act" have been introduced by anti-environment lawmakers in the U.S. House and Senate (H.R. 3533 and S. 1731). These bills would end protections for most of the species that are currently protected by the Act and make it virtually impossible to protect new species under the law. They would also eliminate protection for habitat that's critical to the survival of rare and struggling animals and plants around the country.

These bills would gut the ESA and put imperiled species at greater risk, by:

- *Automatically removing them from the lists of endangered and threatened species after five years, whether or not they've recovered.

- *Letting politics win over science by requiring that state governors give their consent before species in their states can be listed under the ESA, and requiring a joint resolution of Congress to approve the listing of species as threatened or endangered.

- *Undermining citizens' ability to enforce the ESA in court and to help protect imperiled species by filing citizen listing petitions.

Montana's Peregrine falcon, bald eagle, grizzly bear, gray wolf, and black-footed ferret were rescued from the brink of extinction thanks to the Endangered Species Act. But if anti-wildlife lawmakers get their way, the ESA's vital protections would be cast aside.

Please contact Sens. Baucus and Tester, and Congressman Daines to defend the ESA by opposing the Extinction Act.

Norman A. Bishop
Bozeman



Excellent act

Jan. 7, 2014

Sometimes it's hard to find much to celebrate when you look around and see how we continue to find new ways to destroy the only planet known to sustain life. But it gives me hope that we now have 40 years of evidence showing we can stop the extinction of plants and animals whenever we show the political will to protect them by using the Endangered Species Act.

Even though there are always some shortsighted politicians in Congress working to weaken the act, I think it's pretty clear it has proven to be one of the most effective conservation laws ever passed. It has prevented the extinction of 99 percent of the species placed under its protection. What law has a better record than that?

I know that right here in the Rockies, if not for the Endangered Species Act, we wouldn't have eagles, wolves or grizzlies. That, alone, is worth being thankful for.

— Mary Sarumi,

Great Falls

Idaho Statesman

Letters to the editor: 12-23-2013

Wolves and elk

The story on Fish and Game's latest ploy for gunning down wolves, ("Idaho Fish and Game turns to hired hunter," Dec. 17), was extremely disturbing.

It's unbelievable that in the 21st century we're returning to the days of state-hired bounty hunters to further decimate a wolf population already reduced by more than 10 percent this past year, mainly due to wolf hunting.

State-hired bounty hunters are killing wolves because Idaho hunters think wolves are killing too many elk that Idaho hunters want to kill. We're quickly getting a good idea of where this absurd line of thinking ends: In the two years since federal protections have been stripped from wolves in the Northern Rocky Mountains and Great Lakes regions, more than 2,000 have been slaughtered.

How quickly we forget the work it took to save wolves from extinction with the Endangered Species Act, which turns 40 on Dec. 28. We know the act works — it's prevented the extinction of 99 percent of the species it protects and put many on the road to recovery.

The act works and that's why some folks want to drop protections for wolves: First they kill the protections, then they kill all the wolves.

ELIZABETH BRYANT, Meridian



Letter: Don't stop progress by delisting wolves as endangered species

Dec. 20, 2013

Missing from your recent story ("Obama proposal to stop protecting gray wolf fuels controversy," Dec. 8) were the voices of the nation's leading wolf scientists, who concur that the wolf population in this country is far from recovered.

So, although it's not surprising to hear the executive vice president of the Colorado Cattlemen's Association assert that wolves have "recovered amazingly," his opinion has very little to do with the best-available science and everything to do with partisan politics.

Although U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Director Dan Ashe wants us to believe the delisting decision is rooted in science, facts suggest the opposite. That was demonstrated in the agency's politically driven efforts to exclude comments from leading wolf researchers — all of whom oppose delisting — in the required peer-review of the service's flawed proposal to delist wolves.

The service had to backtrack from excluding the scientists' comments, just as they should backtrack from this premature push to delist wolves.

Wolves are an Endangered Species Act success story in progress. The fact that in states where wolves were delisted two years ago more than 2,200 wolves already have been killed in state-sanctioned hunts makes clear why wolves need ongoing protection through the Endangered Species Act, which has prevented the extinction of 99 percent of the species it protects.

Those claiming wolves are recovered need to explain how only about 75 wolves across the thousands of acres of superb wolf habitat available in Washington, Oregon and California amounts to recovery.

Karen Wheeler, Bellvue

THE Durango HERALD

Wolf foes want to undermine protections

Tricia Cook's recent commentary ("Sun setting on wolf recovery," Herald, Nov. 21) offered a glimmer of hope because it presented an honest, accurate case for why we still need Endangered Species Act protections for gray wolves, which to date have recovered to only about 5 percent of their historic range in the United States.

As Cook detailed, the facts do not support the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's proposal to drop federal protections for most gray wolves in the lower 48. Nor do they support the agency's paltry, livestock industry-pandering, efforts to pretend they're trying to recover Mexican gray wolves in the Southwest, where years of "recovery" efforts have resulted in only about 75 wolves living in the wild.

As our top scientists concur, wolves have in no way recovered to sustainable populations in this country. The fact that politically driven policymakers are pretending wolves have recovered is not a reflection of the best-available science but of the power of the livestock and sport-hunting industries.

As is clear in Rocky Mountain and Midwest states where wolves already have lost protections, state wildlife agencies are configured to run hunting seasons, not animal recovery programs. As a result, during the last two years, more than 2,000 wolves have been killed in state-sanctioned hunting and trapping seasons.

The arbitrary wolf-management decisions being made by state wildlife managers remind us of exactly why Congress passed the Endangered Species Act by almost unanimous vote 40 years ago next month.

They realized that species do not live in states, but in ecosystems, and that the only way to ensure sustainable populations was to establish federal control. That decision created one of the world's most successful conservation laws. To date, the Endangered Species Act has prevented the extinction of 99 percent of the species it protects and put many on the road to recovery.

The act's success recovering wolves is precisely why those opposed to wolves have worked so hard to get them delisted. Their plan is clear – get rid of Endangered Species Act protections, then get rid of all the wolves.

Veronica Egan, Mancos

The Pueblo Chieftain

Conservation

It was a pleasure to read the piece on the value of wildlife conservation in the Dec. 29 Pueblo Chieftain.

The author succinctly explained the need for laws such as the Clean Water Act, the Endangered Species Act and the Clean Air Act. The essay was a good follow-up to The to the Chieftain's earlier coverage of the release of endangered black-footed ferrets in Pueblo County.

As one of the 550 members of the Arkansas Valley Audubon Society, I encourage The Chieftain to continue to publish similar articles about a topic that is vital to our quality of life and that enhances our tourism economy.

Leon Bright

Pueblo

- See more at: <http://www.chieftain.com/opinion/2138842-120/pueblo-act-chieftain-future#sthash.kPvZgK3g.dpuf>



Donna Bonetti: Black-footed ferrets balance prairie ecosystems

POSTED: 11/05/2013

Thank you for covering the story of the reintroduction of black-footed ferrets in Colorado. Over a hundred years ago the people who settled the West had no notion of ecology or environmentalism. Land was for farming or other human use and animals such as prairie dogs were killed off and the complex prairie ecosystem with prairie dogs as a prime keystone species lost in most places.

Once most of the prairie dogs were eliminated their most important predator the black-footed ferret nearly went extinct. Now with the help of the Endangered Species Act, scientists working through captive breeding programs and along with cooperative ranchers, the black-footed ferret is being returned to a prairie community where prairie dogs have become over populated. With this step we have moved closer to balancing the components of the delicate prairie ecosystem, helping to maintain the health of the planet we share with all living things.

It's important to remember that without the Endangered Species Act we wouldn't have any black-footed ferrets to reintroduce to the wild. The Endangered Species Act, which was enacted 40 years ago has prevented the extinction of 99 percent of the plants and animals it protects.

DONNA BONETTI

Boulder

NEWS

NATIONAL

<http://www.cbsnews.com/news/40-years-later-why-the-endangered-species-act-still-matters/>



40 years later: Why the Endangered Species Act still matters

By **SHOSHANA DAVIS** CBS NEWS *May 17, 2013*

Forty years ago today, President Richard Nixon signed the Endangered Species Act into law. The legislation was created to protect threatened species from extinction, and, unlike some laws that have gone on the books, decades later it's still very relevant.

"The Endangered Species Act is hands down one of the country's strongest conservation laws. As a result, we've saved hundreds of animals, plants, birds, and fish and protected thousands of acres of lands," Leda Huta, executive director of the Endangered Species Coalition, told CBSNews.com. "We changed from being a country that drove species to extinction, extirpating billions of passenger pigeons by 1914, killing off the last known Caribbean monk seal by 1952, and losing the Atossa fritillary butterfly in 1960, to a nation that undertakes extraordinary means, at times, to protect some of our most fragile species."

The Endangered Species Act itself is administered by both the United States Fish and Wildlife Service and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). The law works by listing a species as threatened or endangered, then designing a habitat for their survival, and ultimately restoring the population so that the species can be removed from the list.

In fact, the organizations have found that being able to save one species within an ecosystem actually helps to sustain the entire bio-network. Huta explained that once the gray wolf was restored to Yellowstone National Park, the whole ecological unit was positively impacted.

"It changed the way that elk and deer behaved. They no longer hung out in wide open areas, over-grazing the vegetation. So, cottonwoods and willows returned to the riverbanks. That cooled off the temperature of the rivers," she said. "We saw fish returning to these stretches of river. The restored riparian (river-side) habitat also brought back birds, insects and beaver. The whole ecosystem came alive. And of course, the tourists came flocking to see the wolves, bringing economic benefits for the whole region."

These wolves became endangered because they were hunted to near extinction and by 1974, only a few of them were left in Michigan. The animals were then released into a protected environment in Yellowstone National Park and by 2008, there were 1,700 wolves in the Northern Rockies and 4,000 in the Great Lakes area.

The gray wolves are not the only species who have been helped by this legislation. Since the passage of the Endangered Species Act, many animals have been brought back from the brink of extinction.

Even the U.S. symbol of freedom, the bald eagle, was close to dying out in 1963. They had declined to only 416 nesting pairs because DDT, an insecticide, had thinned the shells of their eggs, and their habitats had been destroyed. However, after years of being carefully protected, by 2007 the species was taken off the endangered list as their numbers had risen to 11,000 nesting pairs in the United States.

Friday is not only the anniversary of this legislation; it is also recognized as the eighth annual [Endangered Species Day](#). The U.S. Senate began the tradition in 2006 to honor the importance of protecting America's threatened, endangered, and at-risk species. The day is also meant to celebrate the success stories of recovered species.

The government-backed Endangered Species Day is celebrated around the U.S. with over 200 events geared toward educating people. Huta explains that America's program to help these threatened species is much more comprehensive than those in other countries, and the success can be seen in the number of species saved.

"There is a deep sense that we owe it to our children and grandchildren to be good stewards and protect endangered species and the special places they call home," said Huta "The Endangered Species Act articulated America's desire to fulfill that responsibility."



Grizzlies an issue as Endangered Species Act turns 40

Elizabeth Weise, USATODAY December 28, 2013

The first species to be pronounced fully recovered under the Endangered Species Act was the brown pelican, in 2009.

STORY HIGHLIGHTS

- This week marks the 40th anniversary of the Endangered Species Act
- It was signed into law by President Nixon on Dec. 28, 1973
- Some environmental groups argue that animals such as Yellowstone's grizzly bears are still threatened

Forty years ago Saturday President Nixon signed the Endangered Species Act, credited with saving hundreds of U.S. species from extinction, including the bald eagle, the American alligator, Florida panthers, sea otters, pumas and manatees.

The anniversary comes as wildlife officials in the northern Rockies are considering lifting protections for hundreds of grizzly bears in and around Yellowstone National Park, a move environmental groups decry as short-sighted. The grizzlies were first granted federal protections in 1975 after they had been wiped out across much of their historical range.

They have since made a slow comeback, prompting the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to advance plans on whether to take more than 700 bears across the Yellowstone region of Montana, Idaho and Wyoming off the threatened-species list.

A decision is expected in January. It would open the door for limited sport hunting of the bears in the area, though protections for their habitat would remain in place.

As that battle heats up, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration celebrated the full recovery of 31 species that had hovered on the brink of extinction. The first species that was pronounced fully recovered and delisted was the brown pelican.

Today they are still working to protect 1,436 U.S. species.

One, the black-footed ferret, was originally thought to be extinct. Then in 1981 a tiny population was discovered in Wyoming. At one point there were only 18 of the ferrets, making them the rarest mammal on Earth. While still endangered today, about 1,000 of the slinky, cat-sized creatures have been reintroduced in eight states.

The grizzly debate comes as Yellowstone bears are increasingly encountering humans as the bears move down from mountain areas, causing conflicts with hunters, ranchers and tourists.

Environmental groups say the bears face an uncertain future because of declines in one of their key food sources, due to climate change. Nuts from the whitebark pine are an important part of grizzlies' diet.

As the area has warmed, the mountain pine beetle has devastated the whitebark pines, cutting into the grizzlies' food source.

However, the federal Interagency Grizzly Bear Committee issued a report in November that found that the bears' survival is not threatened by the loss of pine nuts.

Contributing: Associated Press



Celebrating 40 Years of Endangered Species Act Success

December 31, 2013

WASHINGTON, DC, December 31, 2013 (ENS) – Forty years ago this month, Congress passed the Endangered Species Act as a safety net for fish, plants and wildlife on the brink of extinction. Today, while 99 percent of listed species have been saved from extinction, the law is under repeated attack by anti-environmental politicians in Congress.

Marking the anniversary, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Director Dan Ashe said, "The Endangered Species Act has played an integral role in wildlife conservation for four decades, giving us the ability to work with partners across the nation to prevent the extinction of hundreds of species, recover many others, and protect fragile habitat that supports both species and people."

"We face enormous challenges as we seek to sustain and build on this success, which is why we're committed to improving our ability to work collaboratively with landowners and other key stakeholders at a landscape scale," said Ashe.

Interior Secretary Sally Jewell said, "This landmark law has helped to stop the slide towards extinction of hundreds of species. Along the way, we have strengthened partnerships among states, tribes, local communities, private landowners and other stakeholders to find conservation solutions that work for both listed species and economic development."

A [study](#) by the nonprofit Center for Biological Diversity has found that 90 percent of protected species are recovering at the pace expected in their scientific recovery plans.

The Center says 99 percent of listed species have been saved from extinction. Of the more than 1,400 plants and animals placed under the care of the Act over the past four decades, 99 percent have been saved. To date only 10 species protected under the Act have been declared extinct, and of these eight were very likely already extinct when they were granted protection.

A 2006 study by the Center found that 90 percent of endangered species in the northeast U.S. were meeting or exceeding federal recovery goals and moving toward eventual removal of protected status.

More recently, the Center identified 110 species from across the country that have seen their numbers rise because of the Endangered Species Act protections.

The Endangered Species Act has strong public support. A national poll commissioned by the Center earlier this year found that two out of three Americans want the Endangered Species Act strengthened or left alone, but not weakened.

On its [website](#), the Center for Biological Diversity features more than 100 Endangered Species Act success stories in all 50 states. A few highlights:

- Nesting pairs of California least terns have increased 2,819 percent;
- San Miguel island foxes have increased by 3,830 percent;
- The number of nesting female Atlantic green sea turtles in Florida is up by 2,206 percent;
- El Segundo blue butterflies have increased by 22,312 percent.

The Endangered Species Coalition marked the anniversary with a new annual report highlighting a few of the wildlife conservation accomplishments since 1973 when the measure was signed into law by President Richard Nixon.

Entitled, "Back from the Brink: Ten Success Stories Celebrating the Endangered Species Act at 40," the [report](#) highlights 10 species that are either steadily improving or have been recovered and removed from the list.

They include Hawaii's nene goose, the American peregrine falcon, the El Segundo blue butterfly, the bald eagle, the southern sea otter, the humpback whale, the American alligator, the brown pelican, the green sea turtle, and the only plant on the top 10 list, the Robbins' cinquefoil.

All of the species in the report were nominated by Endangered Species Coalition member groups from around the country. A panel of distinguished scientists reviewed the nominations and decided which species to include in the report.

"Conservation Council for Hawaii nominated the nene for the report because, although this Hawaiian bird is still imperiled, its recovery efforts, such as captive breeding and release into the wild, predator control, habitat protection, and aloha saved the nene from extinction," said Marjorie Ziegler, executive director of the Council.

More than 1,300 imperiled species of plants, fish and wildlife in the United States have been protected by the Endangered Species Act, and only 10 have gone extinct, according to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

When President Nixon signed the Endangered Species Act into law on December 28, 1973, he announced, "Nothing is more priceless and more worthy of preservation than the rich array of animal life with which our country has been blessed. It is a many-faceted treasure, of value to scholars, scientists, and nature lovers alike, and it forms a vital part of the heritage we all share as Americans."

"Thanks to wisdom and the vision of Congress in 1973, our children will have the opportunity to witness the magnificent breaching of a humpback whale, or hear the call of the peregrine falcon," said Leda Huta, executive director of the Endangered Species Coalition "We owe it to future generations to

continue to protect our endangered species and the special habitats they call home.”

The Endangered Species Coalition’s Top 10 Success Stories Celebrating the Endangered Species Act at 40:

Nene Goose

Habitat protection and captive breeding programs have rebuilt the nene goose population from the brink of extinction in the mid-1900s to approximately 1,300 individuals in 2013. Still listed under the Endangered Species Act, the nene is also protected by collaborative programs with landowners designed to bring the goose to full recovery.

American Peregrine Falcon

The U.S. population of peregrine falcons dropped from an estimated 3,900 in the mid-1940s to just 324 individuals in 1975, and the falcon was considered locally extinct in the eastern United States. Their comeback has been truly remarkable. Today, there are approximately 3,500 nesting pairs.

El Segundo Blue Butterfly

By 1984, only about 500 of these butterflies remained. The butterfly has rebounded significantly, with an astonishing 20,000 percent comeback recorded in 2012. The resurgence of the El Segundo blue butterfly is an story of the Endangered Species Act’s ability to protect critical habitat.

Bald Eagle

By the early 1960s, the count of nesting bald eagles plummeted to about 480 in the lower 48 states. Today, with some 14,000 breeding pairs in the skies over North America, the bald eagle endures as a testament to the strength of the Endangered Species Act.

Southern Sea Otter

Sea otters once numbered in the thousands before the fur trade and other factors reduced their numbers to about 50 in 1914. Listed under the

Endangered Species Act in 1977, this remarkable species rebounded to approximately 2,800 individuals between 2005 and 2010.

Humpback Whale

The whaling industry dramatically depleted humpback populations from a high of more than 125,000; by the mid-1960s, only 1,200 individuals swam in the North Pacific. That tiny population of humpbacks has swelled to more than 22,000 members today due to a strong recovery program implemented under the Endangered Species Act.

American Alligator

By the 1950s, the American alligator had been hunted and traded to near-extinction. Captive breeding and strong enforcement of habitat protections and hunting regulations have contributed to its resurgence. Alligators now number around 5 million from North Carolina through Texas, with the largest populations in Louisiana and Florida.

Brown Pelican

Brown pelicans were dramatically impacted by habitat destruction and DDT. Driven to extinction in Louisiana, pelicans have made a dramatic comeback under the Endangered Species Act; in 2004, the population in Louisiana numbered 16,500 nesting pairs. Thanks to ambitious reintroduction programs, the brown pelican was fully delisted in 2009.

Green Sea Turtle

In 1990, fewer than 50 green sea turtles were documented nesting at the Archie Carr National Wildlife Refuge on Florida's east coast. This 20-mile stretch of beach hosted more than 10,000 green sea turtle nests in 2013, making this one of the greatest conservation success stories of our time.

Robbins' Cinquefoil

Although it was once close to extinction, today the original Robbins' cinquefoil population on a small, rugged site in New Hampshire's White Mountains numbers about 14,000 plants, with 1,500 to 2,000 flowering

individuals. In a remarkable win for the Endangered Species Act, Robbins' cinquefoil was officially delisted in 2002.

In honor of the 40th anniversary of the Endangered Species Act, the Association of Zoos and Aquariums today announced that AZA-accredited zoos and aquariums support the field conservation of more than 650 species – about 200 of them currently listed under the ESA.

Each year, the 223 zoos and aquariums accredited by the AZA collectively contribute \$160 million a year to field conservation, supporting more than 2,650 conservation projects in 115 countries.

"The implementation of Endangered Species Act in 1973 was an important step in unifying efforts to protect the world's threatened and endangered animals and plants," said AZA President and CEO Jim Maddy. "AZA-accredited zoos and aquariums are dedicated to the conservation of these species and collaborate not only with each other but also other like-minded organizations to help secure the future of all wildlife."

Defenders of Wildlife President Jamie Rappaport Clark, a former director of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service said, "Because of the Endangered Species Act, our lives are indeed richer. Recovering wildlife are restoring balance to damaged ecosystems across the country, and Americans are reaping \$1.6 trillion dollars per year in benefits provided by wildlife and habitat conservation in the form of food, medicine, clean air and water, flood protection and wildlife recreation."

"But most importantly," said Clark, "when we created the ESA, our political leaders from both the Republican and Democratic parties enshrined our nation's conservation values into law and affirmed for all Americans that this country's national resources are too valuable to let perish."

"Today, we find ourselves again at a conservation crossroads. Accelerating climate change, invasive species, habitat destruction and development, along with intense pressures to increase energy production are among the emerging threats to imperiled species. But none of these threats are as

great as the opposition to the law from extreme anti-environmental politicians."

"Legislation has been introduced repeatedly in Congress to wave ESA protections for short-term economic gain, cut off funding vital to the recovery of particular animals and to block and overturn listings of imperiled wildlife," she said.

Clark calls on Americans and the legislators they elect to protect America's natural heritage and wildlife for future generations.

"Forty years ago we believed that conserving America's diverse wildlife and special habitats was essential to the nation's way of life; the value of conservation united us across party lines. Today, once again, all of us have a choice: will we sit passively, and watch species vanish or will we work to conserve and recover them? The choice each of us makes will chart the course for this country for decades to come."

http://ecowatch.com/2013/12/07/success-stories-endangered-species-act/?utm_source=rss&utm_medium=rss&utm_campaign=success-stories-endangered-species-act

EcoNews

POWERED BY ECOWATCH

10 Success Stories Thanks to the Endangered Species Act

[Endangered Species Coalition](#) | December 7, 2013

Forty years ago this month, Congress passed the [Endangered Species Act](#)—our nation’s safety net for fish, plants and wildlife on the brink of extinction. [The Endangered Species Coalition](#) marks the anniversary with a [new report](#) highlighting a few of the great wildlife conservation accomplishments since the Act’s passage in 1973.

“Any law would be fortunate to have the kind of record that the Endangered Species Act does,” said Leda Huta, executive director of the Endangered Species Coalition. “Turning 40 never looked so good. To bring species after species back from the very edge of extinction—that kind of success is a remarkable testament to what we Americans have accomplished.”

The report, entitled *Back from the Brink: Ten Success Stories Celebrating the Endangered Species Act at 40*, highlights ten species that—thanks to the Endangered Species Act’s protections—are either steadily improving or have been recovered and removed from the list of imperiled species.

They include the nēnē goose, American peregrine falcon, El Segundo blue butterfly, Robbins’ cinquefoil, bald eagle, southern sea otter, humpback whale, American alligator, brown pelican and the green sea turtle. All of the species in the report were nominated by Coalition member groups from around the country. A panel of distinguished scientists then reviewed the nominations and decided which species to include in the report.

More than 1,300 imperiled species of plants, fish and wildlife in the U.S. have been protected by the Endangered Species Act, and only ten have gone extinct, according to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Additionally, a [recent study](#) found that 90 percent of protected species are recovering at the pace expected in their scientific recovery plans. Biologists have indicated that the task of recovering a species from near-extinction is a decades-long endeavor.

“Thanks to wisdom and the vision of Congress in 1973, our children will have the opportunity to witness the magnificent breaching of a humpback whale, or hear the call of the peregrine falcon,” said Huta. “We owe it to future generations to continue to protect our endangered species and the special habitats they call home.”

When President Richard Nixon signed the Endangered Species Act into law on Dec. 28, 1973, he announced, “Nothing is more priceless and more worthy of preservation than the rich array of animal life with which our country has been blessed. It is a many-faceted treasure, of value to scholars, scientists, and nature lovers alike, and it forms a vital part of the heritage we all share as Americans.”

The Endangered Species Coalition has also produced a [slide show](#) to accompany the report, featuring stunning photos of each of the ten species in the report.

Ten Success Stories Celebrating the Endangered Species Act:

Nēnē Goose

Habitat protection and captive breeding programs have rebuilt Hawaii’s nēnē goose population from the brink of extinction in the mid-1900s to approximately 1,300 individuals in 2013. Still listed under the Endangered Species Act, the nēnē is also protected by collaborative programs with landowners designed to bring the goose to full recovery.

American Peregrine Falcon

The U.S. population of peregrine falcons dropped from an estimated 3,900 in the mid-1940s to just 324 individuals in 1975, and the falcon was considered locally extinct in the eastern United States. Their comeback has been truly remarkable—today, there are approximately 3,500 nesting pairs.

El Segundo Blue Butterfly

By 1984, only about 500 of these butterflies remained. The butterfly has rebounded significantly, with an astonishing 20,000 percent comeback recorded in 2012. The resurgence of the El Segundo blue butterfly is an inspiring story of the Endangered Species Act’s ability to protect critical habitat.

Robbins’ Cinquefoil

Although it was once close to extinction, today the original Robbins’ cinquefoil population on a small, rugged site in New Hampshire’s White Mountains numbers about 14,000 plants, with 1,500 to 2,000 flowering individuals. In a remarkable win for the Endangered Species Act, Robbins’ cinquefoil was officially delisted in 2002.

Bald Eagle

By the early 1960s, the count of nesting bald eagles plummeted to about 480 in the lower 48 states. Today, with some 14,000 breeding pairs in the skies over North America, the bald eagle endures as a testament to the strength and undeniable moral correctness of the Endangered Species Act.

Southern Sea Otter

Sea otters once numbered in the thousands before the fur trade and other factors reduced their numbers to about 50 in 1914. Listed under the Endangered Species Act in 1977, this remarkable species rebounded to approximately 2,800 individuals between 2005 and 2010.

Humpback Whale

The whaling industry dramatically depleted humpback populations from a high of more than 125,000; by the mid-1960s, only 1,200 individuals swam in the North Pacific. That tiny population of humpbacks has swelled to more than 22,000 members today due to a strong recovery program implemented under the Endangered Species Act.

American Alligator

By the 1950s, the American alligator had been hunted and traded to near-extinction. Captive breeding and strong enforcement of habitat protections and hunting regulations have contributed to its resurgence. Alligators now number around 5 million from North Carolina through Texas, with the largest populations in Louisiana and Florida.

Brown Pelican

Brown pelicans were dramatically impacted by habitat destruction and DDT. Driven to extinction in Louisiana, pelicans have made a dramatic comeback under the Endangered Species Act; in 2004, the population in Louisiana numbered 16,500 nesting pairs. Thanks to ambitious reintroduction programs, the brown pelican was fully delisted in 2009.

Green Sea Turtle

In 1990, fewer than fifty green sea turtles were documented nesting at the Archie Carr National Wildlife Refuge on Florida's east coast. This 20-mile stretch of beach hosted more than 10,000 green sea turtle nests in 2013, making this one of the greatest conservation success stories of our time.

SCIENTIFIC AMERICAN™

Extinction Countdown

The 5 Biggest Myths about the Endangered Species Act

By [John R. Platt](#) | September 18, 2013

This December will mark the 40th anniversary of the U.S. [Endangered Species Act](#) (ESA), a vital piece of legislation that has been called one of the world's most effective environmental laws. But despite four decades of successes, the ESA remains poorly understood. Here are five of the biggest myths and misconceptions surrounding the law.

Myth # 1: It doesn't work

Critics of the ESA are fond of saying that only a handful of species protected by the act have ever recovered enough to be removed from the endangered species list. One of the most recent people to make this claim was U.S. Rep. Cynthia Lummis (R-Wyo.) who [said last month](#), "We have a law where only 1 percent of the species that have been listed have actually been delisted. To me, that indicates a law that is failing in its ultimate goal, which is to list species, recover them and then delist them."

It is true that only 26 species have ever recovered enough to leave ESA protection, but preventing extinction in the face of numerous ongoing threats is a difficult task that can take generations to accomplish. "The reality is that many of the species that we have listed are facing decades or more of habitat loss and degradation," says Gary Frazer, assistant director for endangered species at the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS). "Getting them to the point where they no longer face extinction is very challenging and oftentimes a complex road."

Meanwhile, the vast majority of the plants and animals currently on the endangered species list are now stable and their populations are no longer in decline. "We view success as preventing a species from going extinct—to keep them from sliding further," Frazer says. "We've been very successful at that."

Myth # 2: It will take away your land

Some people fear that federal agents will swoop in to take control or the government will seize their homes or land if an endangered species turns up on their property. The FWS Alaska Region discusses this on their ["Endangered Species Act—Demythified" Web page](#):

There is no reason a person would lose their home because an endangered species is on their property and we know of no situations in which this has occurred. It is illegal to harm or kill a threatened or endangered species whether it is on private or public land. However, even if a threatened or endangered species were inadvertently harmed on private land, it would not lead to the eviction of a homeowner from his or her home or property. Projects can occur on private land and if it is anticipated that a threatened or endangered species may be harmed, the landowner can work with a local U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service biologist to find the best solution.

Presence of a listed species on your land does not preclude projects or activities from happening on your land and does not grant access to your land by Federal employees.

This misconception appears to come from the portion of the ESA that designates so-called “critical habitat” for protected species. Critical habitats are simply geographic areas that contain the features necessary to the survival of a particular listed species, but many people mistakenly perceive them as inviolate nature reserves. In fact, critical habitat designations only affect actions by federal agencies or actions that the federal government funds or permits on those habitats. Although private land is often identified as critical habitat, that designation does not change or challenge property ownership. Critical habitat only describes the areas that are important to the recovery of a species.

Myth # 3: It kills jobs

Many foes characterize the ESA as being in direct opposition to economic activities (the oft-touted [“lizards versus oil jobs”](#) headlines). But the reality, Frazer says, “is that a conservation plan that serves to protect a species is also a conservation plan that provides for the reconciliation of the species’s conservation needs and economic development needs. It’s almost never a ‘this or that.’ It’s finding a path forward for both objectives to be obtained.” This was evident earlier this year when FWS granted a proposed wind turbine project a preapproved license to “take” a critically endangered California condor in case the operation of the site accidentally [harms or kills one of the birds](#).

The ESA may require people or businesses to modify their behaviors in areas where threatened species live, but that “doesn’t mean that the wheels are going to come off of that economic engine,” Frazer says. “We have almost 1,500 species listed in this country and we have a very healthy economy. We have a growing population with the highest standard of living in the world. That’s often lost. Instead, we hear about the potential for a species to shut down oil and gas development in that particular area.”

Myth # 4: Conservation groups and biologists just want money from the federal government

Several lawmakers in recent years have introduced bills that would make it illegal for environmental groups to receive “economic gain” from filing lawsuits under the ESA, an attack on citizen involvement because some environmental groups have received court costs from the FWS following lawsuits. These lawmakers and other activist groups characterize ESA lawsuits as something making lawyers and conservation groups rich.

Research shows this to be false. A 2009 study by the State Bar of Texas, cited last year by [Statesman.com](#), found that the average nonprofit lawyer earned an annual salary of \$83,000. That's about half what corporate attorneys made that year.

Meanwhile, other critics accuse biologists of purposely skewing or falsifying endangered species data so they can keep their cushy jobs. According to the job site [Indeed.com](#), the average per annum salary for a wildlife biologist is just \$53,000—15 percent below the national average. The ESA is hardly the path to riches. (The act also has a strong peer-review process, which helps to keep the science accurate.)

Myth # 5: It's an international plot

Here's one from the fringe. The Internet is full of conspiracy sites about something called Agenda 21, which, according to these sites, uses the ESA and other environmental laws to destroy property rights and will result in people being rounded up and forced into "sustainable" cities. According to one [well-distributed video](#), "The ESA is an excuse for the federal government to control water, destroy farms, inhibit economic growth and create circumstances ripe for fraud. The ESA is a tool used by globalists to control Americans through Agenda 21, which is the action plan to implement sustainable development."

In reality, of course, the ESA does no such thing. Agenda 21 was a nonbinding, completely voluntary action plan published by the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development 20 years ago. It promoted sustainable development, but that's about it. This hasn't stopped Tea Party activists and affiliated politicians from opposing it, though. Last year the Republican Party even came out [formally against Agenda 21](#), calling it "erosive to American sovereignty." While all this fear fosters, most of the U.N. Web pages about Agenda 21 are actually out of date and full of broken links or no longer exist at all. As [Mother Jones](#) wrote last year, Agenda 21's "impact on the world has been just about as negligible as you might imagine."

There are plenty of other myths about the ESA, ranging from what it protects (or doesn't) to who benefits from it to what's going to happen to your antique polar bear rug. Although the ESA is not a perfect law and its execution is occasionally flawed, the truth is that it works and it still has a lot of work left to do.

(Author's note: This article expands on some elements from my article "The Endangered Species Act at 40: Forty Things Journalists Should Know," which appeared in the summer 2013 issue of SEJournal, the magazine of the Society of Environmental Journalists.)

<http://newswatch.nationalgeographic.com/2013/12/27/four-conservation-experts-look-back-on-and-beyond-40-years-of-the-endanger>

Four Conservation Experts Look Back on and Beyond 40 Years of the Endangered Species Act

Since the Endangered Species Act (ESA) was signed by President Nixon on Dec. 28, 1973, the Act has helped recover more than 30 species, prevented the extinction of [99 percent of the species](#) it protects and currently protects more than 2,140 species. Conservation and learning at accredited zoos and aquariums, in partnership with local and federal agencies, have been key players in wildlife recovery efforts, including animals on the ground such as the black-footed ferret to those in the sea including the green sea turtles and those in the air like the California condors. Forty years later, the numbers are an incredible reminder of the power of a single act.

While our efforts have saved some species, we have lost others in the wild. Today, a few species that are thought to be extinct in the wild can only be seen in aquariums and zoos – a reminder of the frailty and majesty of the living world and our impact on it. At [Shedd Aquarium](#) in Chicago, we are home for 14 animals on ESA's threatened or endangered list, 33 animals on the IUCN Red List and five threatened in Illinois. As the anniversary approaches, four leaders from Shedd reflect on 40 years of the ESA and what the next 40 years will hold.

Species protection with extinction prevention

Accredited zoos and aquariums have always been conservation-minded, but the way we approach conservation has expanded. We now use a multi-dimensional approach focused on individual animals in our care, field research on wild populations and their natural habitats, and public education.

We as a zoo and aquarium community have forged stronger and more collaborative recovery efforts to create a substantial impact as a united front. Many of us care for animals protected under the ESA, and we play a key role in advancing the science of wildlife recovery that is critical to avoid further species extinction.

The most important part of our work is the emphasis to keep species *off* the threatened or endangered list. A long-sighted view about protecting animals and habitats that are currently thriving is essential to successful conservation. I hope one day we are so successful in our efforts that we no longer need to add new animals to the ESA list each year.

Ken Ramirez, Shedd Aquarium's executive vice president of animal care training

Evolution of conservation philosophy

When zoos and aquariums first opened, we thought of ourselves as modern Noah's arks – protecting wildlife from the approaching “flood” of species extinction. Now, we have a broader focus on direct, in-the-field research aimed at habitat preservation and

species protection. We are evolving into conservation centers supported by public awareness and education efforts.

We build intimate connections between the public and the animals in our care because people won't care about saving a species if they don't appreciate it on a deep level, or even know it exists. This connection cannot be made while staring at a screen. We continually look for new ways to inspire people through on-the-floor interactions, citizen science programs, and even field work expeditions.

As a [field biologist](#), and co-chair of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Iguana Specialist Group, I see first-hand how human encroachment and habitat destruction is devastating wild populations – including the Bahamian Rock Iguana which are the most endangered lizards. Much is being done, but we have more to do.

The Endangered Species Act and conservation bodies like the IUCN are the foundation of a network of experts, policy-makers, and resource managers who seek to address the most urgent conservation priorities. I can say with certainty that without a coordinated effort between conservation partners and governments, none of this would be possible.

Chuck Knapp, Ph.D., Shedd Aquarium's vice president of conservation and research

Applied conservation

I have been involved in [wildlife rescue and rehabilitation](#) efforts for decades and while it's both important and rewarding work, saving a single animal is not conservation.

Rather, conservation is applying what we learn from rescued animals and – even more so – what we learn from having animals in human care. The animals in our care serve as a yard stick, or baseline, for

what a healthy animal looks like. Because of our non-invasive research and preventative health care in zoos and aquariums, we understand their biology, needs and best practices for interacting with them. We then take these learnings into the field to influence conservation efforts.

Zoos and aquariums are positioned to support field conservation efforts through on-the-ground staff and resources. We collaborate with other organizations and work with leaders around the world—scientists, educators, government officials, businesspeople, citizens—to forge solutions to tomorrow's conservation challenges. We can also leverage emerging technologies such as drones to study animals in remote locations, or genetic testing to learn about population history and diversity.

We have barely dipped below the surface and with new technology available to support conservation research we have new and exciting ways to study and preserve species.

Tim Binder, Shedd Aquarium's vice president of collection planning

The future of the ESA: Power of Personal Action

I've been at Shedd Aquarium for *almost* as long as the ESA is old. I've had the opportunity to see national efforts unfold and evolve.

One of the most impactful changes is the partnership between zoos and aquariums and government agencies leading the ESA including [NOAA Fisheries](#) and the [U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service](#). These partnerships allow us to share data and techniques learned from the animals in our care to improve rescue and rehabilitation in the wild. These valuable collaborations apply federal efforts on the local level. For example, I'm a board member for the [Illinois](#) Endangered Species Protection Board. This Board serves in an advisory capacity to the Illinois Department of Natural Resources. Our function is to advise on methods of assistance, protection, conservation and management of endangered species and their habitats. Looking back, it's incredible to see the change in the public's interest in environmental conservation – from a movement embracing recycling and green living to today's young generation with increased interest in protecting animals and their environment. At Shedd, I've seen how touching the smooth skin of a stingray at an aquarium can lead a young guest to think about what type of sustainable seafood dish to order at dinner. It's those experiences that have demonstrated the critical role that zoos and aquariums play in conservation. You don't have to be a scientist to take action to help endangered species. The everyday choices we make can protect not only endangered species, but all species. At Shedd, our responsibility is to bring light to the imminent dangers to the amazing creatures in our care through incredible stories of recovery told through science, determined agencies, organizations and, most of all, inspired individuals. So I ask you to reflect, what are you doing to help protect these animals?

Jim Robinett, Shedd Aquarium's senior vice president of external and regulatory affairs

<http://www.redorbit.com/news/science/1113036192/endangered-species-act-40th-anniversary-122813/>



Conservationists Reflect On Four Decades Of Endangered Species Act

December 28, 2013

redOrbit Staff & Wire Reports – Your Universe Online

Saturday marks the 40th anniversary of the [Endangered Species Act](#), the landmark piece of legislation designed to protect critically imperiled creatures from extinction in the US due to economic growth and development.

According to [National Geographic](#), the law has helped recover more than 30 species and prevented the extinction of 99 percent of all species it was designed to protect since it was originally signed into law by [President Richard Nixon](#) on December 28, 1973.

The first species to be declared fully recovered under the Endangered Species Act was the [brown pelican](#) in 2009. Since then, the Act has been credited with saving hundreds of US species from extinction, including the bald eagle, the American alligator, sea otters and pumas.

“There have been many good and bad times that have happened over the years. Many animals on the list have started to thrive, including some that may lose protection because their populations are doing so well,” said Tina Elliott of the [Guardian Liberty Voice](#), adding the act “has saved many species from the brink of extinction, and has protected over 1400 domestic wildlife, fish and plants, as well as 600 foreign species.”

Rachel Santymire, who serves as director of the Lincoln Park Zoo’s Davee Center for Epidemiology and Endocrinology told Justin Breen of [DNAinfo Chicago](#) the act was “one of the best things we’ve done for our environment.”

Santymire helps monitor the population of the rare [black-footed ferret](#), which according to Elliott were believed to be extinct in 1981, but thanks to the Act have now repopulated eight states.

The anniversary comes at a time when wildlife officials in the northern Rockies are debating whether or not the hundreds of [grizzly bears](#) located in and around Yellowstone National Park should continue to be protected, Elizabeth Weise of [USA Today](#) reports. The creatures, which were first granted federal protection in 1975, are on the road to recovery. Those in favor of continuing protection argue that lifting their protection would be, in Weise’s words, “short-sighted.”

Jim Robinett, senior vice president of external and regulatory affairs at the [Shedd Aquarium](#) in Chicago, said, “One of the most impactful changes [of the Endangered Species Act] is the partnership between zoos and aquariums and government agencies... These partnerships allow

us to share data and techniques learned from the animals in our care to improve rescue and rehabilitation in the wild. These valuable collaborations apply federal efforts on the local level.” Robinett, who has been working at the aquarium for the bulk of the past 40 years, called it “incredible to see the change in the public’s interest in environmental conservation – from a movement embracing recycling and green living to today’s young generation with increased interest in protecting animals and their environment... I’ve seen how touching the smooth skin of a stingray at an aquarium can lead a young guest to think about what type of sustainable seafood dish to order at dinner. It’s those experiences that have demonstrated the critical role that zoos and aquariums play in conservation.”



US Endangered Species Act Turns 40, With Hundreds of Comeback Stories
By Good News Network Sunday, December 29, 2013

President Richard Nixon signed into law, 40 years ago on December 28, the strengthened Endangered Species Act after Congress realized that without further protection from human actions, many of our nation's plants and animals would become extinct.

The bipartisan 1973 legislation is credited with saving hundreds of species from extinction, including the bald eagle, America's national bird, which increased from 416 pairs in 1963 to 9,789 pairs. 30 additional species have fully recovered thanks to the landmark law, including the Steller sea lion, the American alligator, brown pelican, and Virginia northern flying squirrel.

Politicians believed that America's rich natural heritage is of "esthetic, ecological, educational, recreational, and scientific value to the Nation and its people." Today, the ESA protects over 1,400 U.S. species and 600 foreign species, with hundreds of animal populations having soared since the conservation measures were first instituted.

Among the species to benefit are the whooping crane (which increased from 54 to 513 birds between 1967 and 2006); the Kirtland's warbler (which increased from 210 to 1,415 pairs between 1971 and 2005); the peregrine falcon (which increased from 324 to 1,700 pairs between 1975 and 2000); the gray wolf (whose populations increased dramatically in the Northern Rockies, Southwest, and Great Lakes); the gray whale (which increased from 13,095 to 26,635 whales); and the grizzly bear (which increased from about 224 to over 500 bears in the Yellowstone area between 1975 and 2005).



Growing a Greener GOP From the Ground Up

40th Anniversary of the Endangered Species Act

DECEMBER 28, 2013 BY STAFF

Today, marks the 40th anniversary of Republican president Richard Nixon's signing of the Endangered Species Act. The Act passed the House by a vote of 355-4. Our late, good friend Russell Train played a key role in writing the bill.

It's difficult to think of a more successful piece of legislation. Today, we take for granted the healthy populations and expanding range of the American bald eagle, alligator, grizzly bear, and scores of other species.

ConservAmerica has advocated traditional conservative approaches to environmental and conservation issues since 1995. The Endangered Species Act represents the great principles of conservatism, and its development should be a model of Republican policy. Here is President Nixon's statement upon signing the Act:

"I have today signed S. 1983, the Endangered Species Act of 1973. At a time when Americans are more concerned than ever with conserving our natural resources, this legislation provides the Federal Government with needed authority to protect an irreplaceable part of our national heritage—threatened wildlife.

This important measure grants the Government both the authority to make early identification of endangered species and the means to act quickly and thoroughly to save them from extinction. It also puts into effect the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora signed in Washington on March 3, 1973.

Nothing is more priceless and more worthy of preservation than the rich array of animal life with which our country has been blessed. It is a many-faceted treasure, of value to scholars, scientists, and nature lovers alike, and it forms a vital part of the heritage we all share as Americans. I congratulate the 93d Congress for taking this important step toward protecting a heritage which we hold in trust to countless future generations of our fellow citizens. Their lives will be richer, and America will be more beautiful in the years ahead, thanks to the measure that I have the pleasure of signing into law today."



December 27, 2013

U.S. Endangered Species Act Turns 40

BY MAREX

The recovery of the bald eagle owes its success to the Endangered Species Act, which turns 40 on December 28.

The Endangered Species Act, the bipartisan legislation that is credited with saving hundreds of species from extinction, was signed into law by President Nixon 40 years ago on December 28, 1973.

This landmark law has been the catalyst for fully recovering 31 species, including the bald eagle, eastern population of Steller sea lion, American alligator, Lake Erie water snake and the Virginia northern flying squirrel. It continues to work today to protect and recover more than 2,100 animals and plants in the U.S. and around the world.

NOAA's National Marine Fisheries Service and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service share responsibility for implementing the Endangered Species Act.

There are approximately 2,140 species currently listed. Of these species, approximately 1,515 are found in part or entirely in the U.S. and its waters; the remainder are foreign species.

Some marine mammals on the list include the blue whale, false killer whale, southern right whale and the humpback whale.

"Nothing is more priceless and more worthy of preservation than the rich array of animal life with which our country has been blessed. It is a many-faceted treasure, of value to scholars, scientists, and nature lovers alike, and it forms a vital part of the heritage we all share as Americans," said president Richard Nixon upon signing the Endangered Species Act, December 28, 1973.

<http://www.newsana.com/environmental-protection/story/2013-12-31-celebrating-40-years-of-endangered-species-act-success>



ELEVATE THE CONVERSATION
2nd of Jan. 2014

Celebrating 40 Years of Endangered Species Act Success

~ FROM ENVIRONMENT NEWS SERVICE ~

WASHINGTON, DC, December 31, 2013 (ENS) – Forty years ago this month, Congress passed the Endangered Species Act as a safety net for fish, plants and wildlife on the brink of extinction. Today, while 99 percent of listed species have been saved from extinction, the law is under repeated attack by anti-environmental politicians in Congress. Marking the anniversary, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Director Dan Ashe said, “The Endangered Species Act has played an integral role in wildlife conservation for four decades, giving us the ability to work with partners across the nation to prevent the extinction of hundreds of species, recover many others, and protect fragile habitat that supports both species and people.” The El Segundo blue butterfly is found in Los Angeles and Santa Barbara counties and nowhere else on Earth. (Photo by Stonebird courtesy Center for Biological Diversity)

Link to video segment: <http://www.cbsnews.com/videos/the-endangered-species-act-celebrates-a-milestone/>



The Endangered Species Act celebrates a milestone

DECEMBER 29, 2013

National Geographic photographer Joel Sartore looks back on a pioneering law signed by President Richard Nixon 40 years ago that has rescued threatened species from extinction.

<http://www.sciencefriday.com/segment/01/03/2014/forty-years-of-the-endangered-species-act.html>



01/03/2014

Forty Years of the Endangered Species Act

The Endangered Species Act was passed in 1973, nearly unopposed. Conservation biologist Joe Roman and environmental historian Peter Alagona discuss how effective the Act has been in the last forty years and what steps could be taken for greater success in the future.

Produced by Alexa Lim, Associate Producer

GUESTS

Joe Roman

Author, Listed: Dispatches From America's Endangered Species Act
McCurdy Visiting Scholar
Duke University Marine Laboratory
Burlington, Vermont
Fellow, Gund Institute for Ecological Economics
University of Vermont
Burlington, Vermont

[http://www.aboutmyplanet.com/environment/fish-recovery-shows-that-the-endangered-species-act-works/?utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+Aboutmyplanetcom+\(aboutMyPlanet.com\)](http://www.aboutmyplanet.com/environment/fish-recovery-shows-that-the-endangered-species-act-works/?utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+Aboutmyplanetcom+(aboutMyPlanet.com))



Fish recovery shows that the Endangered Species Act works

MARCH 27TH, 2013 BY EVE RICKERT

The U.S. government is debating the renewal of the Endangered Species Act, and critics cite the low number of “recovered” species as proof that the Act doesn’t work.Â But researchers say that the recovery of the short-nosed sturgeon, which lives in rivers on the Atlantic Coast, demonstrates the effectiveness of the law.Â In New York’s Hudson River, numbers of the long-lived fish have quadrupled since the population was last studied in the 1970’s.Â Because of their listing under the Endangered Species Act, short-nosed sturgeon have been **protected** for 40 years from fishing and habitat loss, which the scientists say contributed to their recovery. Source: M.B. Bain et al.Â (2007)Â [Recovery of a US Endangered Fish](#).Â PLoS ONE 2(1):e168.

- **Eve Rickert**



An Endangered Species Act success story

After near-extinction, bald eagles flourish in Skagit County and worldwide

Posted: Monday, January 6, 2014

By Kimberly Cauvel

ROCKPORT — With the forested North Cascades in the east, coastal waters to the west, and the Skagit and Samish rivers delivering snow melt from the peaks along winding paths to the bays, Skagit County is an ideal home for bald eagles. Some eagles nest and breed in trees near the river banks year-round. Hundreds more swoop in from Alaska and Canada for a winter stay timed around salmon that climb the rivers each year.

Of the state's rivers that attract the foraging raptors, the Skagit usually draws the highest numbers with abundant chum salmon and some coho and steelhead, according to the state Department of Fish and Wildlife's 2007 Status Report for the Bald Eagle.

The annual feast sparks the monthlong Skagit Eagle Festival in eastern Skagit County, where locals and tourists can join walking tours and boat rides, enjoy live music, Native American dance and more in and around Concrete, Marblemount and Rockport each weekend in January.

During the celebration, the birds can be easily spotted in trees along Highway 20 and on the banks and bars of the river.

Guided tours are also offered at the Marblemount Fish Hatchery the same weekends. Onlookers are likely to catch the raptors feeding on salmon that returned from the sea to spawn, as well as learn about the full life cycle of the fish. Fish and Wildlife biologist Paul DeBruyn said both Skagit's resident and visiting eagle populations appear healthy and may even be increasing, but scientific data is lacking.

"My impression is there are more all the time because there are new nests all the time," DeBruyn said.

But no formal survey has been conducted in the state since the 2007 status report the agency produced using data from 2005.

In Utah, West Nile virus killed 27 bald eagles and sickened five more as of Dec. 31, The Salt Lake Tribune reported.

With up to 1,200 wintering eagles migrating to Utah each year, the deaths are not anticipated to impact the state or national population. The Utah Division of Wildlife Resources believes the Utah eagles contracted West Nile by eating infected eared grebes that also migrated to the Great Salt Lake for the winter.

The majestic, national symbol with white head and tail feathers, yellow beak and talons, and dark brown wings that span up to 8 feet across has not always flourished. With habitat destruction, illegal hunting and the now-banned pesticide DDT debilitating its reproduction, it came under threat of extinction by the early 1960s.

Now, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service calls the eagle's road to recovery an Endangered Species Act success story.

Federal protection for the birds began in 1940, but still the population declined, reaching a low of 417 pairs across the nation in 1963.

With protection measures in place including the Endangered Species Act, coupled with conservation efforts in communities across the country and a ban on DDT, the population began to rebound.

In 2007, some 40 years after the bald eagle was designated an endangered species, it was delisted based on 2006 data tallying 9,789 breeding pairs, according to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. At that time, Washington had the fourth-largest population behind Florida, Minnesota and Wisconsin.

Although delisted, the bird is still protected under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act and Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act. Combined, they enforce the same restrictions as the original federal rules of 1940.

While December and January are the best time to spot bald eagles upriver, February is the best time to see them in areas near Edison, like the Samish Flats, where the raptors feed on waterfowl at the mouths of the rivers when the salmon run is over.

"There can be 19, 20 eagles in a given tree there," DeBruyn said.

Bird watchers are least likely to spot eagles between August and October, when the local population takes their own vacation in search of food.



Endangered Species Act turns 40

Federal law credited with species conservation, logging downturn

By [Dylan J. Darling](#) / The Bulletin / [@DylanJDarling](#)

Updated Dec 29, 2013 - Published Dec 28, 2013

Forty years ago today President Richard Nixon signed the federal Endangered Species Act into law.

Since Dec. 28, 1973, the ESA has been a “tremendous success story,” said Paul Henson, state supervisor for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in Oregon. Henson, who worked his way up from the field as a biologist to the supervisor’s office, speaks from 20 years of experience with the ESA.

“Job one for the Endangered Species Act is to keep species from going extinct and it has done a great job at that,” he said.

Over its four decades, the ESA has earned the praise of conservation groups and ire of resource-based industries, particularly the timber industry in Oregon.

The 1990 ESA listing of the northern spotted owl as threatened contributed to the downturn of logging in the state.

Noah Greenwald, for the Center for Biological Diversity’s Portland Office, sees the listing of the spotted owl as part of the success of the ESA. He said it led to the protection of old growth forest. The ESA, he said, has dramatically changed the connection Americans have with wildlife and natural resources. “Before the Endangered Species Act, we just didn’t protect species hardly at all,” he said.

But Tom Partin, president of the American Forest Resource Council in Portland, sees the spotted owl as an example of what is wrong with the ESA. He said the listing of the birds and setting aside woods for its habitat haven’t stopped barred owls from encroaching on spotted owl territory and wildfires from burning up habitat.

Partin said he wants the Fish and Wildlife Service to take an approach to repairing and preserving ecosystems by working with public agencies and private landowners that doesn’t single out species and protect them with top-down directives from the government. While he said the ESA is well meaning, he said it isn’t working.

“It doesn’t seem like it has been the correct approach to save the critters,” Partin said.

Greenwald and Sean Stevens, executive director for Oregon Wild, argue the opposite and support the ESA.

“I think the record shows the ESA is working very well,” Stevens said.

When listing the successes of the ESA, the bald eagle, the emblem of the United States, is often the first species that comes up. The bald eagle was listed for ESA protection in 1978, going on the endangered list for much of the country and threatened list for Oregon, Washington, Michigan, Minnesota and Wisconsin. The Fish and Wildlife Service credits the Environmental Protection Agency’s banning of DDT in the 1970s and protections of the ESA — which accelerated recovery through captive breeding programs, increased law enforcement against people who harmed the bird and enhanced protection of habitat around nests — for significant increases in bald eagle populations around the country. The agency delisted the bald eagle in 2007.

The Center for Biological Diversity put together a website, www.esasuccess.org, listing the achievements of the ESA in reviving species that were potentially headed toward extinction.

“It’s put hundreds of species on the path to recovery,” Greenwald said.

Along with the bald eagle, the group lists the revival of the peregrine falcon among the ESA successes. The Fish and Wildlife Service listed the falcon as endangered from 1973 until 1999. Bald eagles and peregrine falcons are found in Central Oregon.

Now the Fish and Wildlife Service is considering whether to list another bird, the greater sage grouse, and an amphibian, the Oregon spotted frog, under the protections of the ESA. The sage grouse is found in Central and Eastern Oregon, on sagebrush range east of Bend. The spotted frog is found in riverside wetlands, particularly around Sunriver and even in the Old Mill District in Bend. Fish and Wildlife officials have said both are being considered for protection because of habitat loss.

As a rancher near Burns, Tom Sharp said the ESA listing of the sage grouse, and possibly the spotted frog, could impact his business. He’s trying to be ahead of any coming regulations and serves as the chair of the ESA committee for the Oregon Cattlemen’s Association. The group represents the cattle industry in the state.

He tells ranchers to consider the ESA and the animals it protects now and it may protect in the future, when making decisions about how to manage their land.

“The (Endangered Species) Act is alive and active and I see that continuing for at least the next 40 years,” he said.

Friday, December 27th, 2013 | Posted by [Kim Kalliber](#)

Endangered Species Act: a 40-year fight to save animals

Photo courtesy Howard Garrett / Orca Network, June
Members of L pod, one of the Salish Sea's resident orca pods, heads north up Boundary Pass to Georgia Strait.

By [Bill Sheets](#), The Herald

Forty years after the passage of the federal [Endangered Species Act](#), the state and Snohomish County remain squarely on the edge of that preservation frontier.

More than 40 animal species in Washington are listed by the federal government as either endangered or threatened under the law, signed by President Richard Nixon on Dec. 28, 1973. Many others are listed as species of concern.

Among creatures found in waters in and around Snohomish and Island counties, seven species of fish or marine mammals are listed under the act.

[Southern resident killer whales](#) and [bocaccio rockfish](#) are listed as endangered. [Puget Sound chinook salmon](#), [Puget Sound steelhead](#), bull trout, [yelloweye rockfish](#), [canary rockfish](#) and [Pacific smelt](#) are threatened.

Nationwide, [645 species of animals and 872 plants or trees](#) native to the U.S. are listed as threatened or endangered, according to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Of the local fish species and orcas, salmon and bull trout were listed in 1999, the killer whales in 2005 and the other fish species in 2010.

Reasons cited for the decline of the fish are many, including pollution, overfishing and loss of habitat. In the case of killer whales, dwindling supply of their diet staple — chinook salmon — is a major contributing factor, officials say.

Supporters claim many success stories for the Endangered Species Act, with bald eagles and peregrine falcons among the more prominent examples.

Gray whales were taken off the list in 1994 and steller sea lions just this year.

According to U.S. Fish and Wildlife, 99 percent of the hundreds of species listed since the Endangered Species Act became law have been prevented from going extinct.

The law protects species by preventing them from being harmed or captured and by regulating human activity in their habitat areas.

Perhaps the best feature of the Endangered Species Act, some say, is that it keeps the species' problems in the public spotlight.

"It has pulled people together to talk about what to do," said Daryl Williams, environmental liaison for the Tulalip Tribes.

Recovery for many species, however, is slow and not guaranteed.

"Listing is a way of sort of planning for recovery, if you will," said Brent Norberg, a marine mammal biologist with the [National Marine Fisheries Service](#) in Seattle.

The southern resident orca population, for example, had 88 whales in 2004, the year before it was listed under the ESA. The population now is down to 80, according to the [Orca Network](#), a Whidbey Island-based group that tracks the whales.

"Because they're so long-lived and their recruitment is so slow and their numbers are so small, it's going to be quite a lengthy process," Norberg said.

William Ruckleshaus, the first director of the [Environmental Protection Agency](#) under Nixon in the early 1970s, is 81 and lives in Medina.

The EPA was created and Endangered Species Act was passed after pollution and declines in species had reached alarming levels, Ruckleshaus said. The Cuyahoga River in northeast Ohio, for example, famously caught fire in 1969.

"The public demanded something be done about it and the president responded," he said. He said the endangered species law might have overreached.

"We passed laws that promised levels of perfection that probably weren't possible. It's hard to do it, to be honest with you," Ruckleshaus said. The law has been refined over time, he said. Ruckleshaus works part-time for Madrona Venture Group, a venture capital firm, and has served on the boards of the [Puget Sound Partnership Leadership Council](#) and the [Salmon Recovery Funding Board](#).

“The motivation behind the ESA couldn’t have been any higher — we want to preserve all living things on Earth. Who’s against that?” Ruckleshaus said.

“I think it’s been very positive overall,” he said. “It’s shown how what we believe to be innocent acts can have devastating effects on species.”

The Endangered Species Coalition, a Washington, D.C.-based environmental group, has issued a report titled “[Back from the Brink: Ten Success Stories Celebrating the Endangered Species Act at 40.](#)”

Among those stories is perhaps the most high-profile recovery: the national symbol, the bald eagle.

[The eagle’s numbers](#) in the 48 contiguous states declined from roughly 100,000 in the early 19th century to only 487 nesting pairs in 1963, according to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife website.

Several measures were taken to help the eagle, beginning with the [1940 Bald Eagle Protection Act](#), which made it illegal to kill an eagle. The pesticide DDT, found to have thinned the eggshells of eagles and other birds, was banned in 1972.

Still, “listing the species as endangered provided the springboard” for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to accelerate recovery through captive breeding, law enforcement and nest-site protection, according to the agency’s website. Bald eagles rebounded and they now number about 10,000. The eagles were taken off the list in 2007.

The Endangered Species Act’s effect on salmon is not so clear, the Tulalips say.

Development that destroys habitat is not restricted enough to offset the losses, Williams said. “We’re still losing habitat faster than we’re gaining it from restoration,” he said.

The problem is inconsistency in rules among various agencies involved in environmental protection, said Terry Williams, fisheries and natural resources commissioner for the tribes. Also, because of the ESA, some habitat restoration projects have to jump through the same hoops as other construction, causing delays in measures that could help fish, Daryl Williams said.

“I kind of have mixed feelings about it,” he said.

Those restrictions may be a necessary evil, said Norberg, of the fisheries service.

For example, if creosote-soaked logs are being removed from a waterway, if it's not done properly, it could result in creosote finding its way back into the water, "so it does as much harm as it does good," he said.

Restrictions also can affect landowners' use of their property. This not only angers some property owners but can defeat the intent of the law, said Todd Myers, environmental director for the [Washington Policy Center](#), a right-leaning think tank in Seattle.

Because the law governs use of land where a listed species is found, some landowners take steps to eliminate habitat for a species on their property so it won't be seen there, Myers said. "You get a regulatory stick that puts landowners at odds with habitat recovery," he said. A better way, he said, is to reimburse landowners for measures taken to preserve or promote habitat, he said.

"That at least takes a step toward making a landowner a partner as opposed to an opponent." Despite the ESA's flaws, "it is working well in terms of bringing all the various parties together to talk and to plan accordingly," Norberg said.

The decline of the salmon might not be reversed without it, Ruckelshaus said.

"It is an extraordinarily complex problem," he said. "But for the ESA I doubt we would have paid the attention to it we have, and I think that is absolutely necessary for it to recover."



Endangered Species Act: a 40-year fight to save animals

Photo courtesy Howard Garrett / Orca Network, Feb.

J pod, one of the Salish Sea's resident orca pods, heads south through Admiralty Inlet.

By **Bill Sheets**, Herald Writer

Published: Friday, December 27, 2013, 12:01 a.m.

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NORTHEAST

http://www.stardem.com/sports/outdoors/article_3065e347-742f-5d33-ab99-fa4c38da943c.html



Delmarva fox squirrel a local example of a good law

Easton, Maryland: Outdoors

Outer Limits: Chris Knauss

Posted: Saturday, December 28, 2013

On Dec. 28, 1973, the United States became a better place. Signed into law that date by President Richard Nixon, the Endangered Species Act was designed to protect imperiled species from extinction as a “consequence of economic growth and development untempered by adequate concern and conservation.” The U.S. Supreme Court found that “the plain intent of Congress in enacting” the ESA “was to halt and reverse the trend toward species extinction, whatever the cost.”

The ESA is administered by two federal agencies, the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). This year, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has honored the 40th anniversary of the ESA, which has been so successful in stabilizing populations of species at risk, preventing the extinction of many others, and conserving the habitats upon which they depend.

Right here on the Eastern Shore, a perfect example of the law’s success is the Delmarva fox squirrel. Catching a glimpse of Delmarva fox squirrels was once very rare within the forests of the peninsula connecting Delaware, Maryland, and Virginia. By the time it was originally listed as endangered under the Endangered Species Preservation Act in 1967, the large, silver-gray tree squirrel could only be found in a handful of counties on peninsular Maryland—just 10 percent of its historic range. That range had included the Delmarva Peninsula, southeastern Pennsylvania, and southern New Jersey

Today, after 45 years of coordinated efforts to boost populations and conserve habitat, the future looks bright for this fox squirrel. The squirrel’s range has increased to 10 counties, with a current population of up to 20,000. Habitat is the key word. If conservation efforts continue to preserve the places where the fox squirrel thrives, they should be around for a long time.

The Delmarva fox squirrel can be found in the mature woodlands of mixed pines and hardwoods with a closed canopy and open understory. It thrives in the rural landscapes of Delmarva and is more likely to be found in the woods near farm fields than in suburbs.

The squirrel's rapid decline was triggered by a combination of factors. As forests were cleared for farms and development, the squirrel's habitat decreased. In addition, timber harvests on short cycles decreased the amount of mature woodlands needed by the fox squirrel. Over-hunting of fox squirrels may have also played a role in its decline.

In 1979, the first recovery plan was developed to protect the habitat and increase the population of the squirrel. The plan consisted of 11 sites in Maryland where biologists attempted to reintroduce males and females and to assess the reproduction rates and survivability of each sex. In a more recent conservation effort, many private and publicly owned lands were used to serve as habitat restoration areas. Private lands within the Delmarva fox squirrel range constitute 87 percent of its historical range, while only 13 percent is public land. Many private land owners contributed to the restoration process by allowing biologists to assess their land.

Eleven successful translocation sites now exist across the squirrel's range, and its distribution has grown to now cover nearly a third of the peninsula. The fish and wildlife service's most recent scientific evaluation of the Delmarva fox squirrel population, called a five-year status review, concludes with a recommendation to remove it from the federal list of threatened and endangered species.

If you're interested in other success stories, the service has a website spotlighting efforts to protect and recover America's threatened and endangered species. You can find it at www.fws.gov/endangered/ESA40/index.html.

CALIFORNIA

http://www.thereporter.com/news/ci_24799328/endangered-species-act-turns-40?source=rss

THE REPORTER

Endangered Species Act turns 40

By Richard Bammer

POSTED: 12/27/2013 08:14:22 AM PST

In an era of less bipartisan legislation, the Endangered Species Act, an example of relative political comity in another time and in a different America, turns 40 on Saturday.

Considered the world's most powerful law protecting plants and animals from extinction, including several in Solano County, it was signed into law by President Richard M. Nixon on Dec. 28, 1973.

"This landmark law has been the catalyst for fully recovering 31 species," including the bald eagle, eastern population of Steller sea lion, American alligator, Lake Erie water snake and the Virginia northern flying squirrel, Gavin Shire, a spokesman for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in Washington, D.C., said in a press release.

"It continues to work today to protect and recover more than 2,100 animals and plants in the U.S. and around the world," he added.

Recovery of endangered species is not just the job of the USFWS, which seeks to conserve, protect and enhance fish, wildlife, plants, and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. The act requires all federal agencies, in cooperation with state and local authorities, to conserve and protect endangered species, noted Duane Kromm, a former Solano County supervisor from Fairfield.

Now-commonplace environmental impact reports (EIRS) are key to protecting endangered species, he said.

"You can't just go in and destroy habitat willy-nilly," he said in a reference to developers who want to build in environmentally sensitive areas in Solano County and elsewhere across the United States.

Kromm, who served eight years on the county board of supervisors, cited the red-legged frog native to the Cordelia hills and several animal and plant species native to Solano's vernal pools, in particular those in Jepson Prairie near Dixon, as examples of the act's effects, its success stories.

Among others, as noted by Noah Greenwald, a spokesman for the Center for Biological Diversity, are nesting pairs of California least terns (their numbers increasing nearly 3,000

percent); San Miguel Island foxes (their numbers increasing nearly 4,000 percent); and El Segundo blue butterflies (their numbers increasing by more than 22,000 percent).

The act's benchmark achievements include the saving of 1,400 plant and animals species and the successful recovery of 110 species throughout the nation, he said.

Additionally, the act has gained strong political support during its four-decade life. A national poll commissioned by the center found that two out of three Americans "want the Endangered Species Act strengthened or left alone, but not weakened," said Greenwald.

The ESA has evolved over time since its early days, when the battle to save the snail darter prevented the Tennessee Valley Authority from building a \$137 million dam. But the case went to the Supreme Court, which sided with the fish, and only when Congress intervened did the dam go forward.

At its outset, the law was used mostly to block development and preserve the habitat of a species close to extinction. In later years, the law's enforcement has taken a different track. The government and landowners design management plans to protect habitats of many species across tracts of private land, but, at the same time, allow development to proceed.

This was a fundamental change in the law, noted Kromm, adding that it coincides with the act's primary purpose: to protect healthy and biologically diverse habitats, and not just one threatened species after another.

"The feds get local communities to adopt habitat conservation plans (HCPs)," he said. "It's a big-picture look" at the environment and biodiversity.

Giving an example, he cited the Monticello Dam, west of Vacaville. It is owned not by Solano County but by the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation but the county leases it.

"When it (the lease) came up for renewal with the Solano County Water Agency, the feds said, 'If you want to get this thing renewed, you're going to have to adopt an HCP,' " said Kromm.

Once an HCP is approved, it "identifies major areas" where certain species should be, then protects those areas, he noted.

"It's private property you can keep protected but you eventually have to buy the land," said Kromm.

He was unsure of the ongoing measures taken to help endangered species recovery but more than 1,200 such plans are in place across America.

"It's a revolution over time," said Kromm. "We've learned to adapt. The earth continues to spin and most critters continue to live."

But he said arguments advanced that place human concerns above the environment are misguided.

"As long as the human is thriving, most everything else is of minor consequence?" Kromm asked rhetorically. "I don't buy that. The human species is the only one that can affect everything else."

Yet he noted "a lot of knee-jerk reaction" to both sides of the argument, saying to present scientific facts "is a good way to approach it."

While he served as supervisor, Kromm recalled it being easier to work with federal

environmental officials rather than state officials and Caltrans, mostly because the state agencies were "stretched" financially.

"From my official standpoint, it was easier to deal with the feds, because they had bodies you could actually talk to," he said.

The USFWS website, www.fws.gov/Endangered, contains a decade-by-decade timeline; state-by-state guide, and additional resources; downloadable copies of the Endangered Species Bulletin newsletter; and the latest edition of Fish and Wildlife News magazine that focuses on the act.

The Center for Biological Diversity website, www.biologicaldiversity.org, also has information related to the 40th anniversary of ESA.

Follow Reporter Staff Writer Richard Bammer at [Twitter.com/REBammer](https://twitter.com/REBammer)..

Endangered species in Solano county

1. Swainson's hawk
2. Delta smelt
3. Two kinds of fairy shrimp and the tadpole shrimp
4. Solano grass
5. Dwarf downingia

Some endangered species in the U.S.

(Common name, geographic range)

1. Gray bat, central, southeastern U.S.
2. California Condor, western U.S.
3. American crocodile, Florida
4. Mountain yellow-legged frog, California, Nevada
5. Steller sea lion, Alaska, California, Oregon, Washington
6. Silversword, Hawaii
7. Soapwort gentian, East Coast
8. Pink lady-slipper, Appalachians to Great Lakes
9. Stinking cedar, southeastern U.S.
10. Pygmy fringe tree, central Florida

Source: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Status of endangered and threatened species, 2013

(Animals: mammals to birds and fishes to crustaceans in the U.S.)

Endangered: 450

Threatened: 173

Species with recovery plans: 471

(Plants: flowering plants to ferns to lichens in U.S.)

Endangered: 702

Threatened: 151

Species with recovery plans: 671

Source: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service



Endangered Species Act celebrates 40 years of protecting animals

December 30, 2013

December 28, 2013 was the 40th anniversary for when the [Endangered Species Act](#) became law. This law repealed the old Endangered Species Conservation Act of 1969 and put into place a stronger, more comprehensive law that included provisions to set aside complete conservation areas and tougher restrictions on the taking and transporting of species listed as “endangered” by the act. The law has since been amended several times to include monitoring and recovery programs and include penalties for corporations as well as individuals. The law aims to give extra federally protected status to certain species of animals and plants that are on the decline or facing extinction.

Since the law has passed, many species have recovered through the actions and protections of the law and the funding of conservation programs. Several of those species, such as the bald eagle and the peregrine falcon have even been taken off the list. It doesn't mean those species are no longer protected, only that they don't fall under the provisions for the extra protections that the law provides. They are still protected by other laws, such as the migratory bird treaty act, that prohibits killing or capturing the [birds](#) without permits.

San Diego has several plants and animals that are protected by the [Endangered Species Act](#). The most familiar of them are the light-footed clapper rail and the California least tern. The [western snowy plover](#), often seen on San Diego's beaches, is currently listed as “threatened” which provides them with some of the provisions and protections listed under the act. Another bird resident of San Diego county, though irregular, the mountain plover, is proposed to be listed as threatened, but has not been listed. Several plants are also listed as endangered in San Diego due to loss of habitat or introduction of invasive species. Insects are listed as well. A complete list of endangered and threatened species in California can be found at [EndangeredSpecie.com](#)



The Endangered Species Act Turns 40

Molly Samuel, [KQED Science](#) | December 27, 2013

Saturday is the 40th anniversary of the creation of the Endangered Species Act. President Richard Nixon signed it into law on December 28, 1973, [saying](#), “Nothing is more priceless and more worthy of preservation than the rich array of animal life with which our country has been blessed.”

There are now [2,145 plants and animals](#) on the list. There have been [58 de-listed](#): 30 that recovered, 10 that went extinct and the balance removed for data errors or changes. Its [supporters](#) credit it with protecting species like bald eagles, alligators and California condors. Its [detractors](#) criticize it for impinging on private property rights.

Here in California, 317 species are protected by the federal [Endangered Species Act](#). (We have [a state list](#), too.) That’s second only to Hawaii in number of species.

“California has a blessing and a curse in that we have an incredibly diverse set of ecosystems,” said [Kim Delfino](#), the California program director at the environmental group, Defenders of Wildlife. “But unfortunately California has also had a lot of activity. Farming and mining, urban development, forestry practices. We’ve impacted the landscape a lot.”

The ESA, though imperfect, has done a good job, according to Delfino. “I think that it will continue to be controversial,” she said, “but I don’t think people will walk away from the underlying idea of why we have an Endangered Species Act.”

That controversy isn’t necessarily over whether or not endangered species should be protected, but rather, what the best way is to protect them.

“I think the Endangered Species Act has been a disaster,” said [Brian Seasholes](#), a policy analyst with the Reason Foundation, a libertarian think tank. The ESA makes endangered species a financial liability, he explained, because it penalizes private property owners if they harm a protected species or its habitat. “Instead of punishing landowners, let’s work with them. Because there’s a lot of goodwill out there.”

Seasholes said he prefers the approach taken by the [Conservation Reserve Program](#) run by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, which pays farmers to conserve environmentally sensitive land.

The ESA was written in an era when Americans were coming to grips with the effect they had on their environment. [*Silent Spring*](#) had been published in 1962, 11 years earlier. The [Cuyahoga River caught fire](#) in 1969. Nixon created the Environmental Protection Agency and signed the Clean Air Act in 1970. The Clean Water Act passed in 1972.

Today, it's dawning on many Americans that despite our conservation efforts humans have created an age of extinction, that perhaps we've left the Holocene and entered the "[Anthropocene](#)," an epoch shaped by human beings.

"I think that for the most part we've done a pretty atrocious job (protecting species)," said [Jack Dumbacher](#), the curator of birds and mammals at the California Academy of Sciences. "It's a real challenge for us to live in harmony with nature. And I think without these kinds of laws we'd be in even worse trouble."

SOUTHWEST

http://www.currentargus.com/carlsbad-news/ci_24839022/landmark-federal-legislation-turns-40-years-old

CARLSBAD CURRENT-ARGUS

Landmark federal legislation turns 40 years old

Mexican grey wolves, Carlsbad zoo benefit from Endangered Species Act

By Zack Ponce

POSTED: 01/03/2014



CARLSBAD >> For decades, visitors have lined the fence at the Living Desert Zoo and Gardens State Park for the chance to lay eyes on the Mexican grey wolf.

One of the most popular exhibits has been made possible, in part, due to the Endangered Species Act. The landmark legislation, passed by the U.S. Congress on Dec. 28, 1973, turned 40 years old last week and has continued to impact Southeastern New Mexico.

Thirty-one species residing in New Mexico are currently listed on the Endangered Species Act as either threatened or endangered. The Mexican grey wolf is among the most famous species, and according to some it owes its livelihood to the ESA.

"I think it's a great tool," said Holly Payne, the general curator of the Living Desert Zoo. She believes the Mexican grey wolf would have been extinct today if not for the federal government's protection.

"I think we would have lost a lot of animals that are on the Endangered Species List, or have been in the past and maybe are off now," Payne said. "I think it's great that we cared. We actually cared."

The main goal of the ESA is to protect and recover imperiled species and the ecosystems upon which they depend. Once listed, all efforts are put forth to nurse a species population back to suitable levels so as to not let the animal become extinct.

When population of a certain animal fall to a level scientists agree is dangerous, a species can be listed under the ESA.

"Threatened" is the first designation and means a species is likely to become endangered within the foreseeable future. At the next level, "Endangered," a species is in danger of extinction throughout all or a significant portion of its range.

Payne and the rest of the staff at Living Desert make it their mission to educate the populace, young and old alike, about the importance of cohabitation between humans and wildlife.

"We are here to educate people, so displaying the Mexican grey wolf is a great thing," Payne said. "Everything in the wild is linked, so I think overall it has really helped, and hopefully helped to open people's eyes also."

Wildlife conservation started to gain major traction in the 1960s and led to the eventual passing of the ESA by a Democratic-held House and Senate. The bill was later signed into law by President Richard Nixon.

The United States' first attempt at some sort of species conservation effort was the Lacey Act of 1900, which was passed in response to growing public concern about the potential extinction of the passenger pigeon.

Conservationists waited nearly seven decades for the next major piece of legislation, the Endangered Species Preservation Act of 1966. The final precursor to the ESA was the Endangered Species Conservation Act passed in 1969.

Reporter Zack Ponce can be reached at 575-689-7402.

ARIZONA PUBLIC MEDIA®

Federal Endangered Species Act Turning 40 Years Old

Story by Zachary Ziegler

December 27, 2013

Listen:

The Endangered Species Act will be 40 years old Saturday, and in Arizona, its implementation has helped save seven animal species from extinction.

The law represents a time when America first realized the importance of balancing an ecosystem.

"The Endangered Species Act is the living embodiment of the phrase, 'The first precaution of intelligent tinkering is to save every cog and wheel,'" said U.S. Fish and Wildlife spokesman Gavin Shire.

The seven Arizona species protected under the law are among 110 animal species and subspecies that have seen improvement in since the law was enacted.

Two, the American peregrine falcon and the bald eagle, have been removed from the list after making significant improvement.

Two more, the Apache and Gila trout, have been downgraded from endangered to threatened.

Perhaps the most notable of recoveries in Arizona comes from animals still on the endangered list. The black-footed ferret, California condor and Mexican gray wolf. All were extinct in the wild as recently as the 1980s.

Breeding populations of each are now sustaining themselves in the state.

"The population of California condors has gone from strength to strength," said Fish and Wildlife's Schire, "and that's a really good example of how we have been able to use the Endangered Species Act to step in at the last moment and save a species from extinction."

The condor, ferret, and Mexican gray wolf will most likely stay on the endangered list for some years yet. The animal that is most recovered of the three is the ferret, and it is only halfway to its desired population level.

The other two have been the subject of recent debates on how to protect an endangered species.

The Mexican gray wolf will likely remain the only classified subspecies of gray wolf thanks to recovery efforts, but management of the animal's experimental population has caught the attention of environmentalist and ranchers whose livestock are being killed by the wolf.

California took the lead in protecting the California condor recently by banning lead ammunition in the condor's range. It also flies in Arizona and Utah, but neither has such a ban, although Arizona Game and Fish has started a voluntary lead ammo exchange program.

CENTRAL AND GREAT LAKES

http://www.midwestproducer.com/news/regional/back-from-the-brink-marks-th-anniversary-of-the-endangered/article_cee7b1b8-77d7-11e3-ad72-001a4bcf887a.html

Midwest Producer

Back from the Brink marks 40th anniversary of the Endangered Species Act

January 07, 2014

WASHINGTON - Forty years ago, Congress passed the Endangered Species Act - the nation's safety net for fish, plants and wildlife on the brink of extinction. The Endangered Species Coalition marks the anniversary with a new report highlighting a few of the wildlife conservation accomplishments since its passage in 1973. The report is entitled, Back from the Brink: Ten Success Stories Celebrating the Endangered Species Act at 40.

"Any law would be fortunate to have the kind of record that the Endangered Species Act does," said Leda Huta, executive director of the Endangered Species Coalition. "Turning 40 never looked so good. To bring species after species back from the very edge of extinction-that kind of success is a remarkable testament to what we Americans have accomplished."

The report highlights 10 species that - thanks to the act's protections - are either steadily improving or have been recovered and removed from the list of imperiled species. They include the n•n• goose, American peregrine falcon, El Segundo blue butterfly, Robbins' cinquefoil, bald eagle, southern sea otter, humpback whale, American alligator, brown pelican, and the green sea turtle. All of the species in the report were nominated by Coalition member groups from around the country. A panel of distinguished scientists then reviewed the nominations and decided which species to include in the report.

More than 1,300 imperiled species of plants, fish and wildlife in the United States have been protected by the Endangered Species Act, and only 10 have gone extinct, according to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Top success stories:

Nene Goose

Habitat protection and captive breeding programs have rebuilt Hawaii's nene goose population from the brink of extinction in the mid-1900s to approximately 1,300 individuals in 2013. Still listed under the Endangered Species Act, the nene is also protected by collaborative programs with landowners designed to bring the goose to full recovery.

American Peregrine Falcon

The U.S. population of peregrine falcons dropped from an estimated 3,900 in the mid-1940s to just 324 individuals in 1975, and the falcon was considered locally extinct in the eastern United States. Today, there are approximately 3,500 nesting pairs.

El Segundo Blue Butterfly

By 1984, only about 500 of these butterflies remained. The butterfly has rebounded significantly, with an astonishing 20,000 percent comeback recorded in 2012. The resurgence of the El Segundo blue butterfly is an inspiring story of the Endangered Species Act's ability to protect critical habitat.

Robbins' Cinquefoil

Although it was once close to extinction, today the original Robbins' cinquefoil population on a small, rugged site in New Hampshire's White Mountains numbers about 14,000 plants, with 1,500 to 2,000 flowering individuals. Robbins' cinquefoil was officially delisted in 2002.

Bald Eagle

By the early 1960s, the count of nesting bald eagles plummeted to about 480 in the lower 48 states. Today, with some 14,000 breeding pairs in the skies over North America, the bald eagle endures as a testament to the strength and undeniable moral correctness of the Endangered Species Act.

Southern Sea Otter

Sea otters once numbered in the thousands before the fur trade and other factors reduced their numbers to about 50 in 1914. Listed under the Endangered Species Act in 1977, the species rebounded to approximately 2,800 individuals between 2005 and 2010.

Humpback Whale

The whaling industry dramatically depleted humpback populations from a high of more than 125,000; by the mid-1960s, only 1,200 individuals swam in the North Pacific. That tiny population of humpbacks has swelled to more than 22,000 members today.

American Alligator

By the 1950s, the American alligator had been hunted and traded to near-extinction. Captive breeding and strong enforcement of habitat protections and hunting regulations have contributed to its resurgence. Alligators now number around 5 million from North Carolina through Texas, with the largest populations in Louisiana and Florida.

Brown Pelican

Brown pelicans were dramatically impacted by habitat destruction and DDT. Driven to extinction in Louisiana, pelicans have made a comeback; in 2004, the population in Louisiana numbered 16,500 nesting pairs. The brown pelican was fully delisted in 2009.

Green Sea Turtle

In 1990, fewer than 50 green sea turtles were documented nesting at the Archie Carr National Wildlife Refuge on Florida's east coast. This 20-mile stretch of beach hosted more than 10,000 green sea turtle nests in 2013.



Endangered Species Act Turns 40

Posted: Dec 31, 2013

By Amber Schatz, Weekend News Anchor

The Endangered Species Act turns 40 this month.

It's responsible for saving hundreds of animals from becoming extinct.

Now, there are six animal and plant species in North Dakota still listed as endangered or threatened.

"We've got the Mexican wolves, the gray wolves..."

Mexican Wolves are one of the more rare species of animals in the world.

"Less than four hundred of them in the world, 75 to 100 in the wild."

There is a handful here at the Dakota Zoo in Bismarck, but there have also been endangered and threatened species here that are native to North Dakota.

"We have a variety of animals that are either threatened or endangered and some are local such as our black-footed ferrets." says Rod Fried, Dakota Zoo Assistant Director.

From the black-footed ferret to the majestic bald eagle, the Endangered Species Act is in place to protect all animals.

"It's helped protect a lot of species such as the bald eagles, there was pesticide to some of our birds, the chicks weren't able to hatch, corrected that, numbers are coming back." says Fried.

Since being placed on the Endangered list decades ago, the bald eagle was removed from the endangered or threatened list due to a rebound in its population.

"I think the bald eagle is a great story, we ran into really low numbers and with a lot of agencies and different groups working together, the numbers have come back, it's great to go along the river and see more bald eagles." says Fried.

He's hoping for more stories like that.

By working with a specie survival plan, zoos across the country are working together to protect our most beautiful inhabitants.

"When an animal becomes extinct, we are no longer able to see the animal, enjoy the animal and in the grand spectrum of things there's a link gone out of your chain so we can't lose too many of those before we have a bigger, greater effect on the whole population." says Fried.

The Endangered Species Act has helped fully recover 31 species.

Conservation Day at the Dakota Zoo is in May.

<http://listen.sdpb.org/post/40-years-endangered-species-act>



2:21 PM

FRI DECEMBER 27, 2013

40 Years Of The Endangered Species Act

BY [NATE WEK](#)

Bald Eagle

Saturday marks the 40th Anniversary of the Endangered Species Act, which was passed into law by President Richard Nixon in 1973. Studies show the Endangered Species Act has been successful over the time of its existence.

Listen 2:05

The Gray Wolf or the Black-Footed Ferret are just two species currently on the endangered species list in South Dakota. At one point the Black-Footed Ferret was thought to be extinct but now specialists believe hundreds live in the state. Dan Ashe is the Director of the US Fish and Wildlife Service. He says the Endangered Species Act is doing what it was designed to do.

"Well the Endangered Species Act is a commitment by the United States to conserve what we call biological diversity, to conserve a species for future generations," Ashe says.

Ashe says Wildlife biologists have learned from the history of species that once numbered in the millions have come close to extinction.

"We have seen species like the passenger pigeons; certainly one of the emblems of what goes wrong when we don't think about the consequences of our actions, a bird that once numbered in the millions and millions," Ashe says.

Ashe says the Endangered Species Act is successful to bring other species back from extinction.

"Then when you think today about great successes like the Bald Eagle, so the recovery of the bald eagle was made possible in large part because of the protections the Endangered Species Act afforded," Ashe says.

Ashe says as human population grows it uses more of the earth's resources causing the depletion of habitat for many species. He says people can support the endangered wildlife in the United States.

"There are things that everyday people can do, for instance we have safe vanishing species stamps that you can buy at the post office. These are regular postal stamps that cost a little bit more than your normal first class postage stamp," Ashe says. "But that difference in cost goes into our endangered species conservation funds."

Ashe says as long as people continue to care about wildlife and the environment, then many species can thrive for future generations.

<http://www.dnainfo.com/chicago/20131226/lincoln-park/endangered-species-act-celebrates-40th-anniversary>

Lincoln Park & Old Town

Urban Animals



Endangered Species Act Celebrates 40th Anniversary

By **Justin Breen** on December 26, 2013 http://twitter.com/dnainfo_breen

Endangered Species Act

LINCOLN PARK — [Rachel Santymire](#) sees the direct impact of the [Endangered Species Act](#) every day at work.

Santymire, who is director of the [Lincoln Park Zoo's Davee Center for Epidemiology and Endocrinology](#), monitors the population of one of North America's rarest mammals: the black-footed ferret.

The Endangered Species Act, which President Richard Nixon signed into law [40 years ago Saturday](#), was created to protect animals and plants on the verge of extinction — and the habitat on which they lived.

"It's one of the best things we've done for our environment," Santymire said. "We have to preserve the habitat to save the species." Santymire said without the ESA, the black-footed ferrets likely would be gone forever. The ferrets, which were once thought to be extinct before a [small group was discovered in Wyoming in 1979](#), number about 400 in the wild, Santymire said. About 200 born from captivity are reintroduced to their natural habitat each year at 20 sites in eight states, Canada and Mexico, she said. Santymire oversees the ferrets at the [Northern Cheyenne Reservation in Montana](#).

"I'm totally spoiled because I get to see these animals in the wild," she said.

Jim Robinett feels similar excitement toward his profession. Robinett, of Ravenswood Manor, has worked at the [Shedd Aquarium](#) for 36 years. For much of that time, he has overseen the aquarium's animal collection, which includes several that are endangered or threatened.

Robinett also sits on the [Illinois Endangered Species Protection Board](#), which reviews what plants and animals are on the endangered or threatened list. The term endangered indicates that the species might go extinct in the wild due to a variety of reasons, including habitat destruction. Threatened is a notch less serious than endangered, meaning if actions aren't taken, those species could wind up as endangered.

"We're trying to prevent them from disappearing," said Robinett, currently Shedd's senior vice president of external and regulatory affairs. "These species are part of the ecosystem. They have a role. I'm amazed how far we've come, but we still have a ways to go."

The ESA, whose key success stories include the rejuvenation of the [bald eagle, gray wolf and peregrine falcon](#), protects [some 2,140 species](#) across the country.

Shedd features 14 animals on the ESA's threatened or endangered list, including five — the [alligator snapping turtle](#); [lake sturgeon](#); [hellbender](#); [redspotted sunfish](#); and [Iowa darter](#) — that make their homes in Illinois.

Lincoln Park Zoo displays 29 animals on the list, while suburban Brookfield Zoo has 31.

"Hopefully by coming [to a zoo or aquarium], people will develop an awareness for these animals," Robinett said. "And I hope it's something we try to do at Shedd, that we give a feeling of respect or passion or caring that our plants and animals need to be protected."

"The natural world is what sustains us. The Endangered Species Act is critical for us to maintain that natural state. Anyone who ventures out West or to nature preserves can see that right away."

For Santymire, that notion is her daily reality.

"The black-footed ferret is the flagship species for the ESA," she said. "We've produced over 8,000 black-footed ferrets. This is a species that serves as an example of how successful the ESA can be."



Endangered Species Act turns 40

[The Daily Circuit](#) 10:06 AM · Jan 8, 2014

LISTEN

How we think about endangered species today

Guests

- **Kieran Suckling:** [Executive director](#) of the Center for Biological Diversity
- **Peter Alagona:** [Associate professor](#) of history, geography and environmental studies at the University of California, Santa Barbara, and author of "After the Grizzly: Endangered Species and the Politics of Place in California"

According to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 99 percent of all plants and animals ever protected under the Endangered Species Act have been saved from extinction. Critics, however, point out that only [1 percent](#) of the protected species have recovered enough to be removed from the list.

Forty years after President Richard Nixon signed the ESA into law, where do we stand? Why does the act still engender such controversy, and how have our views on conservation changed since 1973?

LEARN MORE ABOUT THE ENDANGERED SPECIES ACT:

- [An interactive map from the Center for Biological Diversity.](#)



Endangered Species Act at 40

Posted on December 28, 2013 by [James Bruggers](#)

“Nothing is more priceless and more worthy of preservation than the rich array of animal life with which our country has been blessed.”

That was President Richard Nixon, 40 years ago today, [upon signing](#) the [Endangered Species Act](#).

Today it's hard to imagine a Republican endorsing the ESA, which has become a lightning rod for criticism even as it has helped recover iconic species like the bald eagle, gray whale and gray wolf. But with rivers burning, pollution spewing unchecked from smokestacks, industries indiscriminately dumping toxic wastes, the environment was a bipartisan issue back then.

The power of the ESA is that it seeks to protect all threatened or endangered species, not just the biggest or the cutest ones. At least on paper, plain-looking freshwater mussels that have suffered from damming rivers like the Ohio are on par with large and fearsome grizzly bears that were pushed into the remote, high peaks of the Rocky Mountains from the Great Plains and much of the West.

The law has had successes and failures, and there have been far more species in trouble than the budget of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service can handle. Candidate species can wait years for actual listing and full protection. It can take an equally long time for the act's protections to kick in and be enforced.

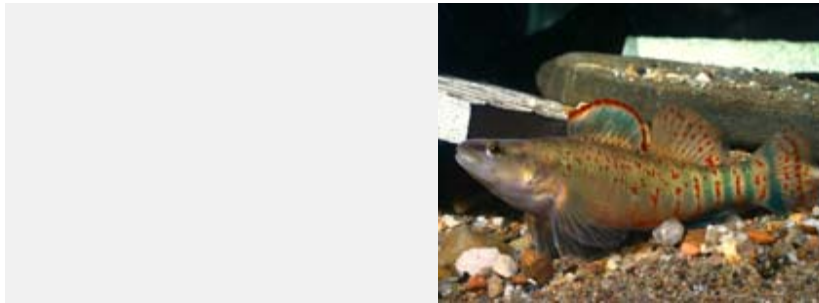
But often actions taken to protect one species can actually help protecting many more

Battles continue to play out over the law. One of the biggest has to do with grizzly bears and whether they have recovered enough to be taken off the ESA list. USA Today has a [story](#) about that current controversy, which the newspaper describes this way:

... wildlife officials in the northern Rockies are considering lifting protections for hundreds of grizzly bears in and around Yellowstone National Park, a move environmental groups decry as short-sighted. The grizzlies were first granted federal

protections in 1975 after they had been wiped out across much of their historical range. They have since made a slow comeback, prompting the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to advance plans on whether to take more than 700 bears across the Yellowstone region of Montana, Idaho and Wyoming off the threatened-species list. A decision is expected in January. It would open the door for limited sport hunting of the bears in the area, though protections for their habitat would remain in place.

Fights like these are to be expected, given that people and nature are competing directly for space and resources with wildlife, and that we live in a democracy. And like all laws, after four decades just about all sides say the EPA could stand some updating and improvement.



Kentucky arrow darter is a candidate for listing under the ESA. Credit: USFWS.

But the definition of “improvement” varies greatly. And with our sharply divided government, conservationists and their allies in Congress have not wanted to risk making any changes, fearing that would result in a weaker law with fewer protections.

Still, commercial interests and their supporters in Congress have been trying to weaken the act. [The U.S. Chamber of Commerce](#) is among them. It’s objective is to:

Ensure that the listing of endangered species and the designation of critical habitats are based upon sound science and balance the protection of endangered species with the costs of compliance and the rights of property owners.

A lot of people think the law prevents development. That’s just not true, but it can make development more expensive or require mitigation. Take the Indiana bat, for example. Developers can mow down forests where bats live part of the year, but just not when they are in those trees. They can be required to pay into a bat protection fund that helps protect or enhance bat habitat elsewhere.

So it is what it is, and it continues to be a lifeline for rare animals and plants, as development and other pressures mount amid population growth, and growing and changing energy demands.

No environmental group has pushed for enforcement of the act like the Center for Biological Diversity has, going to court time after time to get federal agencies to put rare species on threatened or endangered lists, and take required steps to protect them.

Critics will say that less than 1 percent of the species listed have been fully recovered. But the agency as well as the center, which have often been at odds, agree that the act has prevented hundreds of species from disappearing. According to the center:

Of the more than 1,400 plants and animals placed under the care of the Act over the past four decades, 99 percent have been saved from extinction. To date only 10 species protected under the Act have been declared extinct, and of these eight were very likely already extinct when they were granted protection.

The center has [created a list](#) of more than 100 species that the law has helped, large and small, including the American alligator and the American burying beetle, the peregrine falcon and the leatherback sea turtle.

In marking the anniversary, the Fish and Wildlife Service has [created a website](#) to mark the occasion, with information about endangered species in all 50 states. You can find Kentucky's page [here](#), and Indiana's [here](#).

In the end, it's laws like the ESA that help define who we are as a country, and where our priorities lie, and what natural treasures we want to leave to future generations.

As Richard Nixon said on this day 40 years ago:

I congratulate the 93d Congress for taking this important step toward protecting a heritage which we hold in trust to countless future generations of our fellow citizens. Their lives will be richer, and America will be more beautiful in the years ahead, thanks to the measure that I have the pleasure of signing into law today.

FLORIDA

<http://www.theledger.com/article/20131227/NEWS/131229328?p=1&tc=pg>

The Ledger.com

40-Year-Old Endangered Species Act Has Helped Species in Peril

Paul Crate | Ledger Media Group

By [Tom Palmer](#)
THE LEDGER

Published: Friday, December 27, 2013

LAKELAND | Forty years ago, hundreds of species of plants and animals were gradually disappearing from the American landscape and there wasn't any legal way to stop it.

That changed with the enactment of the federal Endangered Species Act, signed into law by President Richard Nixon on Dec. 28, 1973.

The law for the first time officially recognized that species in peril needed protection.

Then it went further, including provisions that part of the listing process must also include drafting a plan to improve the species' chances of avoiding extinction.

"This landmark law has helped to stop the slide toward extinction of hundreds of species. Along the way, we have strengthened partnerships among states, tribes, local communities, private landowners and other stakeholders to find conservation solutions that work for both listed species and economic development," said Secretary of the Interior Sally Jewell in connection with the observance of the law's 40th anniversary. Plants and animals in Polk County – 29 species found here are on the endangered species list and others have been proposed for listing – have certainly benefitted from the law.

In 1973, it was hard to find a bald eagle in Polk County.

Today, bald eagles are easy to find here. Participants in the recent Lake Region Audubon Society Christmas bird count reported seeing 186.

In 2007, the bald eagle became one of the best-known species to be removed from the endangered species list because its population had recovered.

Twenty years earlier, alligator populations had recovered enough to remove it from the list, too.

Today, they are so plentiful state wildlife officials allow annual hunts in local lakes.

But for most of the listed species found in Polk County, recovery will not come for many years, if ever.

Most are found in the remaining unaltered fragments of scrub habitat on the Lake Wales Ridge and surrounding ridge ecosystems.

These ridges were prehistoric islands that are home to species found nowhere else on the planet.

Central Florida's scrub habitat contains one of the highest concentrations of rare and endangered species in the country.

By the time the Endangered Species Act came around, more than 80 percent of the original habitat for these species had already been cleared for cities, suburban subdivisions, shopping centers and citrus groves.

Today, a network of preserves – many of them in Polk County – has been set aside to preserve the habitat of the more than 20 rare and endangered species that inhabit the remaining fragments on the ridges.

The list includes relatively well-known species such as the Florida scrub-jay, the only bird species found only in Florida.

But most of the species of plants and animals on the list are less well-known.

The plant species include attractive flowering plants such as McFarlin's lupine, a pink-blossomed legume named for a 1930s-era Polk County botanist, as well as scrub morning glory and scrub blazing star.

The list also includes less showy species such as Florida perforate cladonia, a rare species of lichen, and Florida jujube, a relatively nondescript shrub that was thought to have been extinct until its rediscovery about 25 years ago.

FIRST PLANT REFUGE

Lake Wales Ridge's importance under the Endangered Species Act was highlighted with the announcement in 1993 that the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service was creating the first national wildlife refuge in the United States primarily for the protection of rare plant species.

The refuge covers 1,857 acres in Polk and Highlands counties, but the mosaic of preserves protecting rare and endangered scrub species also includes thousands of additional acres of public and private conservation lands managed by the Florida Forest Service, Florida Park Service, Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, the Polk County Environmental

Lands Program, water management districts, The Nature Conservancy, Archbold Biological Station, Green Horizon Land Trust, Ridge Audubon Society and private mitigation banks.

Those lands protect much of what's left of these rare species' habitat, but not all.

The rest can often be developed, but that decision comes at a price of providing some kind of mitigation for habitat loss.

Government projects are not immune. In recent years, the cost of two major Polk County public work projects increased because of the cost of mitigating for the destruction of habitat occupied by sand skinks and blue-tailed mole skinks, two small, legless lizards that are listed as threatened species under the Endangered Species Act.

The bill for mitigation for these species on a Polk County Utility Department's \$3.3 million expansion in the Sun Ray near Frostproof came to \$377,982.

The \$27 million cost of building Ernie Caldwell Boulevard in the Four Corners area included \$595,000 so far for mitigation for these species and there may be additional costs for the final section, which has not been built.

TOO LATE FOR SOME

Despite the Endangered Species Act's successes, the law came too late for some species.

The Carolina parakeet, the only native parrot species in the Southeast, disappeared from Polk County's forests by the 1920s before modern wildlife laws that reined in the excesses of unrestricted hunting that decimated many species.

Other extinct American wildlife species include the passenger pigeon, Caribbean monk seal, the great auk, the heath hen and a number of fish, mollusks and insects.

The ivory-billed woodpecker, the largest American woodpecker and a species once found in Polk County, is probably gone forever, too, but has yet to be officially declared extinct.

[Tom Palmer can be reached at tom.palmer@theledger.com or 863-802-7535. Read more views on the environment at <http://environment.blogs.theledger.com> and more views on county government at <http://county.blogs.theledger.com/>. Follow on Twitter @LedgerTom.]



News

UNIVERSITY of FLORIDA

New UF/IFAS survey: Floridians strongly support endangered species protections

Published: September 16th, 2013

Category: [Agriculture](#), [Florida](#), [Research](#)

GAINESVILLE, Fla. — Floridians are ardent fans of endangered species and want to see them protected, even if it means fines for violators or restrictions on personal freedoms, a new [University of Florida Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences](#) survey finds.

In conjunction with the 40th anniversary of the Endangered Species Act, an online survey of 499 Floridians last month found that survey respondents ranked the importance of endangered species as 11th out of 15 public issues, well behind topics such as the economy, health care and food safety.

But they were solid in their support of legal protections for endangered species of all kinds, including fines, restrictions on residential and commercial development and buying habitat for endangered species to ensure their survival.

Florida is home to 47 endangered animal species, such as the Florida panther and the West Indian manatee, and another 44 plant species, including the Key tree-cactus and pondberry.

When it comes to actions and behaviors that could protect endangered species, the survey found Floridians are more inclined to take some steps than others, said Tracy Irani, director of the [UF/IFAS Center for Public Issues Education](#), or PIE Center, the research group that led the study.

“What we found, generally, is that people were most willing to avoid harmful activities such as avoiding buying invasive species or driving slower, than they were to do more active things, like supporting or belonging to an environmental group,” she said.

For instance, 55 percent of survey respondents reported they were “very likely” to avoid harmful activities, such as not releasing pets into the wild or taking care to not degrade endangered species’ habitat, while only 23 percent reported they would be similarly disposed to engage in environmental civic behavior, such as joining a conservation organization.

Other key findings from the survey of demographically representative Floridians:

- *Sixty-six percent of respondents felt the Endangered Species Act should be strengthened.

- *Seventy-eight percent agreed or strongly agreed that “the use and development of land should be restricted to protect endangered species.”

- *Respondents were more likely to consider plants, fish and mammals worthy of being conserved than microorganisms, invertebrates and reptiles.

- *Roughly twice as many respondents agreed or strongly agreed that agricultural and industrial chemicals and pollution pose a threat to endangered species than did those who cited legal fishing or hunting.

- *Florida residents considered themselves only slightly or fairly knowledgeable about issues affecting endangered species, but they’re interested: 85 percent said they are likely or very likely to pay attention to news stories dealing with issues related to endangered species.

Jack Payne, UF’s senior vice president for agriculture and natural resources, said it’s gratifying to see public support for the future welfare of the plants and animals in ecosystems.

And as the administrator who leads UF/IFAS, he said, there are many research and extension personnel dedicated to ensuring the preservation of biodiversity and that it’s good to see strong public support for that work.

“Florida is home to so many unique species of plants and animals, and it is incumbent upon us to do everything we can to protect them,” Payne said.

The August survey was the third of four surveys PIE Center officials hope to conduct every year, to track public opinion on important agriculture and natural resources issues over time. Previous topics have included water and immigration. The fourth survey, expected later this year, will cover perceptions about food and agricultural practices.



Species law has had strong local impact

After 40 years, federal act continues protection of endangered wildlife

By Carly Sharec csharec@gainesvilletimes.com

Today marks the 40th anniversary of the Endangered Species Act, a law that's had far-reaching impact including locally, notably for delaying projects.

The act, designed to protect endangered or threatened species from extinction, was signed in 1973 by President Richard Nixon and is enforced through both the United States Fish and Wildlife Service and the National Marine Fisheries Service.

An endangered species is defined as being under imminent threat of extinction, while a threatened species is likely to become endangered. As of January 2013, information from the Fish and Wildlife Service states there are more than 2,000 endangered or threatened species worldwide, with 1,436 of those in the United States.

Under the act, Georgia is home to 62 species of endangered and therefore protected plants and animals. Recently, the act has protected the Indiana bat, a federally threatened species that has been spotted in the North Georgia mountains, as well as in Hall County.

A bat sighting has led to bidding on three key parts of the planned Central Hall Multiuse Trail being postponed until April 2014.

The county is planning a multiuse trail to run parallel to Ga. 13/Atlanta Highway from Palmour Drive to the Georgia Department of Labor Office, 2756 Atlanta Highway. A second phase would have the trail running behind Lanier Technical College and the University of North Georgia's Gainesville campus, and also a pedestrian tunnel under Atlanta Highway.

Bidding on the trail was expected to take place in August, but was postponed so studies could be done on the bat. Jody Woodall with Hall County Public Works said at the time that all federally-funded projects are required to study the area for the bat.

The first Indiana bat in Georgia was found near Ellijay in 2012, according to the Fish and Wildlife Service. Prior to that, the bat had not been tracked in the state since the 1960s.

"Indiana bats are a huge issue right now," Fish and Wildlife Service Wildlife Biologist Jimmy Rickard said. "Specifically, Indiana bats are really being destroyed by a disease called white-nose syndrome. Most of our cave-dwelling bats are being destroyed by this disease on the East Coast."

No other Indiana bats have been found outside of Gilmer County, but due to the wide range the bats travel, the act requires all federally-funded projects to commence only after studies have been done.

Another impact of the act close to home is the influence it has over the water levels of Lake Lanier. Jim Ozier, program manager with the nongame conservation section of the Department of Natural Resources, there are two types of endangered mussels in Florida that require a certain level of water to survive.

“They live in the Chattahoochee system downstream and in order to keep from violating the Endangered Species Act by possibly reducing the habitat in the river where it’s not suitable for those mussels to survive, there’s a need to maintain certain water levels and certain water flows,” Ozier said. “Below the lake is not seeing enough water downstream. (If you) let the water levels drop too low, that could certainly have an impact.”

The fat threeridge and purple bankclimber mussels, along with Gulf sturgeon, all are protected by the act.

“The Flint System, and Spring Creek in particular, is heavily impacted by groundwater withdrawal,” Ozier explained. Spring Creek is a tributary of the Flint River in Southwest Georgia. “And so a combination of drought and a lot of groundwater withdrawal for agriculture tended to reduce those stream levels so low that some mussels had to be translocated just to ensure they did survive that (2007-09) drought.”

In Georgia, the act is attributed to some success stories in the area, notably the bald eagle, of which there are two known nests around Lake Lanier.

“There’s been a lot of effort to go towards recovering that species,” Ozier said. “And now it’s off the list and doing much better. That’s what we like to see.”

Being able to completely restore and remove the species from the act’s protection is the ultimate goal.

“Sometimes the Endangered Species Act sort of takes a bashing from some points of view,” Ozier said. “That it’s a terrible impact on private land owners and on industry and on jobs.

“We see these species as valuable components of our natural systems. It could be a detrimental impact to everybody if they disappeared.”

SOUTHEAST

<http://www.jdnews.com/news/local/landmark-endangered-species-act-to-turn-40-1.254440?page=0>



Landmark Endangered Species Act to turn 40

By [SUE BOOK Sun Journal Staff](#)

Published: Friday, December 27, 2013 at 12:00 PM.

Pelicans fly again over areas where the Venus flytrap survives in Eastern North Carolina and the red wolf still howls in the distance here as a result of the Endangered Species Act, which turns 40 on Saturday.

When President Richard Nixon signed the bipartisan legislation into law Dec. 28, 1973, he said, “Nothing is more priceless and more worthy of preservation than the rich array of animal life with which our country has been blessed. It is a many-faceted treasure, of value to scholars, scientists, and nature lovers alike, and it forms a vital part of the heritage we all share as Americans.”

The landmark Endangered Species Act has been a catalyst for fully recovering 31 species, including the bald eagle, American alligator, Lake Erie water snake, the Virginia northern flying squirrel, and most recently, the eastern population of Steller sea lion, the first species delisted since the 1990s.

Proof of its success often is obvious in Craven County with the presence of two species that sounded the early alarm — the bald eagle and American alligator. The alligator, on the brink of extinction in 1960, was pronounced fully recovered in June 1987 and taken off the endangered list.

The DDT-poisoned pelican in neighboring Carteret County that Rachel Carson described in Silent Spring, her early book documenting environmental concerns, no longer is considered threatened.

North Carolina has 29 animal species and 27 plant species on the endangered list, including the Carolina northern flying squirrel, swamp pink and roan Mountain bluet. The full list can be found online at: ecos.fws.gov/tess_public/pub/stateListingAndOccurrenceIndividual.jsp?state=NC.

In 40 years of effort to prevent species’ extinction and restore them to healthy populations, “there have been successes, but there is much more work to be done; we will continue to work with our partners to ensure recovery of other marine species,” said Mark Schaefer, deputy NOAA administrator and assistant commerce secretary for Conservation and Management.

The act continues to protect and recover more than 2,100 animals and plants — about 1,400 in the U.S. and more than 600 around the world.

Since the act's inception, its enforcement has prevented the extinction of 99 percent of the species it protects.

U.S. Sec. of Interior Sally Jewell said the law originated because of citizen alarm over the "precipitous decline of iconic species like the bald eagle, the whooping crane and the American alligator."

But it "has helped to stop the slide towards extinction of hundreds of species" and, she said, "along the way, strengthened partnerships among states, tribes, local communities, private landowners and other stakeholders to find conservation solutions that work for both listed species and economic development."

The act and that partnership, said Dan Ashe, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service director, has worked to "protect fragile habitat that supports both species and people. We face enormous challenges as we seek to sustain and build on this success."

The politics of delays in adding to the list of endangered species since the 1990s has resulted in criticism from environmental groups with members from all major parties.

The publication of Citizens Guild to the Endangered Species Act, which was published by groups Earth Justice and the Endangered Species Coalition a decade ago, notes that in 1990, an audit of Fish and Wildlife management of the act showed that it would take almost half a century to list all the endangered species at the rate then in place.

The report identified 34 species that went extinct between 1980 and 1990 with the act in place.

The guide quotes Kurt Vonnegut Jr. as saying: "The good Earth — we could have saved it, but we were too damn cheap and lazy."

As the anniversary neared, Kathryn Sullivan, acting Commerce under-secretary for NOAA, said "As we commemorate 40 years of conservation, there are certainly reasons to celebrate, but we also know that many species remain threatened and endangered. NOAA will continue our work to protect and recover these species so that future generations can experience the wonder of the natural world we live in today.

"Our nation's heritage is intertwined with our natural environment, from the lands we farm to the oceans we fish," she said. "This heritage, as the Act stated, is important not just from an ecological standpoint, but from an educational and scientific one as well."

Endangered Species Act Turns 40

WBOY-TV
updated 12/24/2013

The Endangered Species Act turns 40 on Friday, Dec. 27. Forty years of hard work and dedication by federal and state agencies, state and local governments, and the many conservation organizations have been very successful for helping threatened and endangered wildlife nationwide. Many of the endangered species have been fully recovered were the original species protected by the act. Unfortunately, many more species have been added to the list over the past 40 years.

West Virginia provides habitats to more that 20 endangered and threatened species. Some of the species include, the shale barren rock cress plant, the pink mucket mussel, the Virginia big-eared bat and many more species.

West Virginia is also a part of the [Central Appalachian Spruce Restoration Initiative](#). This initiative continues to restore the high elevation red spruce habitat needed by the threatened Cheat Mountain salamander and recovered West Virginia northern flying squirrel.

The ESA worked with the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation and other organizations on a bridge replacement to transplant the protected mussels in Illinois, Ohio and West Virginia waters. They included the endangered northern riffleshell into the list as well.

The West Virginia Division of Natural Resources installed a bat-friendly gate on Trout Cave, to provide more habitation for the Virginia big-eared bats.

For more information on the Endangered Species Act, West Virginia's participation in species conservation, and to see some photos of the endangered animals, click [here](#).

http://neighbornewspapers.com/view/full_story/24284701/article-Endangered-Species-Act-turns-40?instance=all



Endangered Species Act turns 40

by Staff Reports

December 24, 2013

Saturday will mark the 40th anniversary of the Endangered Species Act, the bipartisan legislation credited with saving hundreds of species from extinction. It was signed into law by President Richard Nixon Dec. 28, 1973.

This landmark law has been the catalyst for fully recovering 31 species, including the bald eagle, the eastern population of the Steller sea lion, the American alligator, the Lake Erie water snake and the Virginia northern flying squirrel. It continues to work today to protect and recover more than 2,100 animals and plants in the U.S. and around the world.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration have assembled a wide range of resources to enable media to celebrate this historic occasion.



Endangered Species Act Turns 40 On Dec. 28

Thursday, December 19, 2013

The Endangered Species Act, the bipartisan legislation that is credited with saving hundreds of species from extinction, was signed into law by President Nixon 40 years ago on Dec 28, 1973.

This landmark law has been the catalyst for fully recovering 31 species, including the bald eagle, eastern population of Steller sea lion, American alligator, Lake Erie water snake and the Virginia northern flying squirrel. It continues to work today to protect and recover more than 2,100 animals and plants in the U.S. and around the world.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration have assembled a wide range of resources to enable media to celebrate this historic occasion, including:

- [USFWS ESA 40th Anniversary Webpage](#) containing a decade-by-decade timeline; [state-by-state guide](#) with focal species, partnership stories, and additional resources; downloadable copies of the [Endangered Species Bulletin](#) newsletter; latest edition of Fish and Wildlife News magazine that focuses on the act; and a [full media kit](#) with b-roll, fact sheets and videos.
- [NOAA ESA 40th Anniversary Webpage](#), containing an [ESA overview](#) and [detailed species information](#) pages.
- [Quote sheet](#), including quotes from the Secretary of the Interior, FWS Director, NOAA leadership and others.



Back from the Brink': 40th anniversary of the Endangered Species Act

Bald eagle featured among top 10 conservation successes

By Staff Report

Published Friday, December 6th 2013

Forty years ago this month, Congress passed the Endangered Species Act—our nation's safety net for fish, plants and wildlife on the brink of extinction. Today, the Endangered Species Coalition marks the anniversary with a new report highlighting a few of the great wildlife conservation accomplishments since the act's passage in 1973, including the bald eagle. The report is titled "Back from the Brink: Ten Success Stories Celebrating the Endangered Species Act at 40."

The report highlights 10 species that—thanks to the Endangered Species Act's protections—are either steadily improving or have been recovered and removed from the list of imperiled species. They are the bald eagle, nēnē goose, American peregrine falcon, El Segundo blue butterfly, Robbins' cinquefoil, southern sea otter, humpback whale, American alligator, brown pelican and the green sea turtle. All of the species in the report were nominated by coalition member groups from around the country. A panel of distinguished scientists then reviewed the nominations and decided which species to include in the report.

The American Eagle Foundation, located at Dollywood in Pigeon Forge, nominated the bald eagle for the report because of the substantial recovery of bald eagles to date. This includes their removal from endangered status in 1995 and from threatened status in 2007.

At least 16 states have released fledgling bald eagles from their hack sites to stimulate renewed natural nesting (hacking). Funding was from both the federal and state Endangered Species Acts. In 1985, AEF began national fundraising to help support bald eagle recovery. In 1980, Tennessee was one of the first states to hack bald eagles. New York was first in 1976, with Georgia the first Southeast state in 1979. During 1980-2013, the Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency, AEF and their partners have led the nation with 353 such releases from seven Tennessee "hack sites." Of that total, AEF has directly released 128 on Douglas Lake in East Tennessee during 1992-2013, as well as financially supporting other hack releases.

More than 1,300 imperiled species of plants, fish and wildlife in the United States have been protected by the Endangered Species Act, and only 10 have gone extinct, according to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Additionally, a recent study found that 90 percent of protected species are recovering at the pace expected in their scientific recovery plans. Biologists have indicated that the task of recovering a species from near extinction is a decades long endeavor.

"Thanks to wisdom and the vision of Congress in 1973, our children will have the opportunity to witness the magnificent breaching of a humpback whale or hear the call of the peregrine falcon," Huta said. "We owe it to future generations to continue to protect our endangered species and the special habitats they call home."

When President Richard Nixon signed the Endangered Species Act into law Dec. 28, 1973, he said, "Nothing is more priceless and more worthy of preservation than the rich array of animal life with which our country has been blessed. It is a many-faceted treasure, of value to scholars, scientists and nature lovers alike, and it forms a vital part of the heritage we all share as Americans."

Previous years' reports and a slideshow of animals are also available on the coalition's website, www.endangered.org.

Click [here](#) to read the success stories of other animals that have either been removed from the list or have improved greatly.

<http://www.nbc29.com/story/24319923/wildlife-center-of-va-celebrates-40-years-of-endangered-species-act>



Wildlife Center of VA Celebrates 40 Years of Endangered Species Act

Posted: Dec 28, 2013 2:01 PM PST Updated: 12/28/2013 6:35:28 PM

Wildlife Center of Virginia

WAYNESBORO, Va (WVIR) -The Waynesboro-based Wildlife Center of Virginia is celebrating the 40th anniversary of the Endangered Species Act.

The act saved many animals from extinction, including the American bald eagle. One of those eagles is a permanent resident of the Wildlife Center.

Edward Clark, the center's president, says there have been many success stories with endangered animals in central Virginia and the Shenandoah Valley. That's why he believes it's critical to continue to support the act.

"Back in 1973 when the Endangered Species Act was just passed, we had about 30 to 35 nesting pairs in Virginia," Clark says. "Today, we have close to 1,500 bald eagles, somewhere around 50 to 75 times greater than it was when this act was passed."

Clark says though the act was passed 40 years ago, four decades is just a drop in the bucket, particularly when it comes to protecting rare animals from extinction.

<http://wvtf.org/post/growing-mussels>



4:41 PM

TUE JANUARY 7, 2014

Growing Mussels

BY [ROBBIE HARRIS](#)

Forty years on, the Endangered Species Act continues to demonstrate its effects on a species native to this area; the fresh water mussel.

You might say these shellfish do the heavy lifting when it comes to keeping waterways healthy. More strains of these living water filters grow in this region, than anywhere else in the world.

Listen

3:00

The small buildings at Virginia Tech's Freshwater Mollusk Conservation Center in Blacksburg seem more like a fishing village than a high tech research facility.

Inside, bright colored Kayaks hang on the wall in this state of the art nursery for shellfish. Fresh water mussels incubating in large tanks seem undisturbed by the loud lullaby of live water pumped in from a pond just outside. Clamshells the color of sandstone under the moving water.

Jess Jones is a restoration biologist with the Fish and Wildlife service and Virginia Tech. "What makes a mussel from a marine clam, one is that they live in fresh water. Typically, they live in rivers. And the main thing is that they have to use a fish as a host to complete their life cycle."

Like many who nurture the next generation, Jones is proud of the ingenious things these shellfish do, like how they snare their unsuspecting hosts, literally:

"So freshwater mussels have an amazing array of different ways they trick their fish host and basically go fishing for their fish host," says Jones.

Jones says one strain of fresh water mussel from this area has even evolved its own lure to trick bass into the arrangement. That's a lot work for these mussels that their salt-water cousins don't have to accomplish in order to procreate. But it's not only for humans that south western Virginia has been called one of the best places to raise children in the country.

"In the south east we're blessed. We have really rich aquatic biodiversity," says Eric Hallerman, professor of fish and wildlife conservation at Virginia Tech

"The mountains are ancient, the rivers are ancient, the area has never been glaciated we have a temperate zone that's unparalleled on earth. The only place that's even close is China. Now compare us to Europe they might have half a dozen mollusk species. We have 300. China has 100 so you can see why we have a large emphasis on conserving freshwater mussels here in the southeast. "

And so can the Chinese. Hallerman and a team from here has begun a collaboration with China's Freshwater Fisheries Research Center.

"A lot of their species are over exploited. It's pretty dire. It's about where we were in, say, 1960."

Without strong water and wildlife protection laws, Chinese scientists may be looking to fish hatcheries like the one here to help them rejuvenate their fishing industry and create new industries using this technology.

"Certainly, what we can teach them about managing their own environment ---we have a shared fate on the planet--- and if the Chinese can manage their air and water quality better, if they can produce food more sustainably, we all benefit," says Hallerman.

[HTTP://PUBLICRADIOEAST.ORG/POST/ENDANGERED-SPECIES-ACT-TURNS-40](http://PUBLICRADIOEAST.ORG/POST/ENDANGERED-SPECIES-ACT-TURNS-40)



10:49 AM

FRI JANUARY 3, 2014

Endangered Species Act Turns 40

BY [JARED BRUMBAUGH](#)

The Endangered Species Act is now 40 years old. We speak with an expert about how the ESA has helped animal populations like red wolves and red-cockaded woodpeckers make a comeback in eastern North Carolina.

Listen

7:22

The Endangered Species Act recently turned 40 years old. The law provides conservation of endangered and threatened species of fish, wildlife and plants. Dr. Joe Roman is a conservation biologist and a McCurdy Visiting Scholar at the Duke University Marine Lab in Beaufort. He'll be leading the discussion at the next Coastal Science Café in Atlantic Beach on Monday at 6pm. This week, I spoke with Dr. Roman about how the ESA has helped saved entire species from extinction and the events leading up to the law being put into effect.

<http://wvtf.org/post/endangered-species-act>



Taking Stock After 40 Years

10:55 AM

THU JANUARY 2, 2014

Endangered Species Act

BY ROBBIE HARRIS

The federal law protecting endangered species turned forty in 2013. And that calls for taking stock of how it's been working.

Listen

1:17

Robbie Harris reports.

Fresh Water mussels are at the foundation of aquatic life in inland waterways. At different times in their life cycle, the burrow into river bottoms, keeping soil substrates aerated, and they act as powerful filtering systems that help keep the water clean. But they're on the endangered species list, and anything that threatens them, also threatens our fresh surface water.

"If all of these threatened species are taken care of, we're taking care of ourselves too. It's basically at the end of the day it's life support for humans too," says Eric Hallerman, professor of Fish and Wildlife Conservation at Virginia Tech.

Hallerman is part of a team, which grows mussels in a hatchery in Blacksburg. The stock came from the wide variety of mussel species native to this region –the largest diversity of the mussel species in the world. Offspring grown indoors from this stock are tagged so they can be studied and put into area waterways each year at the end of summer to spawn.

"We've shown that some of mussels that we've out planted have survived. Now we're looking for evidence that they've reproduced at that the young they produced have survived. We're looking to put ourselves out of biz over a period of time," he said.

And that too, is the mission of the 40-year-old federal Endangered Species Act. Come early middle age, it's time to reflect on your accomplishments and celebrate them.

ALASKA

http://www.thearcticsounder.com/article/1402endangered_species_act_turns_40



Endangered Species Act turns 40

January 10th | Jillian Rogers

Last month, the Endangered Species Act turned 40 to much fanfare and publicity. But not everyone is celebrating.

Four decades ago, President Richard Nixon sealed the deal with the aim of protecting and saving threatened and endangered plants and animals.

To its credit, it has done just that. Of the 2,000 or so species that have been listed, just 10 species have gone extinct.

"From my perspective as a scientist, conservationist and a hunter, this is a powerful and important piece of legislation to help recover plants and animals at risk of extinction," said Robert Suydam, senior wildlife biologist with the North Slope Borough.

But the ESA has additional very different implications for those living in the Arctic. Scientists and hunters alike, while they can appreciate what the Act stands for, have grown somewhat uneasy over the years with the ever-present possibility of more listings and thus, more red tape.

Suydam cited the bowhead whale as an example of a species that was on the list and marked as endangered, but has made a comeback. Alaska Natives have been hunting bowhead for centuries; it is an important part of subsistence culture and a main food staple.

The ESA provides an exemption for Alaska Natives when it comes to marine mammals, Suydam said. In the past 40 years, bowhead populations have rebounded and done incredibly well, Suydam said. The most recent population count, he added, done in 2011, was about 17,000.

They were able to recover with well-managed hunting practices, he said, and with good management and mitigation of oil and gas exploration.

The success of bowhead populations is one triumph for the Act and a result of sound management practices.

But more recently, the boundaries of the Act have been getting a little muddy.

With each potential new recruit to the ESA, additional pressure is put on hunters in Alaska and specifically the North Slope. The various groups and individuals involved in the process, as well as in the inevitable lawsuits that follow, are consumed with red tape and paperwork.

"One of the downsides of all this activity to petition new species has meant that the agencies have had to put more of their resources, including people's time, into addressing these petitions for listing, and the legal action associated with them," Suydam said. "Less and less resources (are being used) for collecting information and implementing management strategies that are meaningful. It seems like the ESA is being used to try and regulate greenhouse gases."

For example, polar bears are listed as vulnerable on the Act's list, but it's not necessarily due to declining populations. Instead, it's due to the possible threat to the bears' habitat — sea ice.

The changing criteria for deciphering an animal's fate is becoming more and more counterproductive, and causing concern among hunters, Suydam said.

"There's an increasing burden on North Slope communities because of all these listings," he said.

Polar bears were listed as a threatened species in 2008 under the Endangered Species Act due to rapid demise of sea ice habitat. Then, in November 2010, officials designated 120 million acres of coastal areas, sea ice and barrier islands as critical habitat for polar bears.

Most species have been listed as a direct result of population decline or disappearing habitat. "(But) the listing of polar bears and ring seals and bearded seals are based on projections, rather than numbers actually dropping," Suydam said.

"We've moved into a new era with the ESA, where the scientific models that are looking at potential effects are being used to make the decision," Suydam said. "Sometimes scientists don't always get it right, not because of any ill intent. This new approach is a concern as well."

Addressing the problem at hand — greenhouse gases — would perhaps better serve those directly affected by the Act than simply adding more species to it.

Working closely with subsistence hunters and the communities in the areas that depend on these species would be a better use of resources, Suydam said.

"The world is changing in many different ways, in ways that we all need to be concerned about," he said. "There are some well-intentioned groups that are trying to use the ESA, but I don't know if that's the best approach."

In Kotzebue, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service scientists at the Selawik National Wildlife Refuge continually work to clarify the legislation for locals, said Brittany Sweeney, the refuge's environmental education specialist.

"We just make sure that people have the best information," Sweeney said. "We don't make the regulations but we do have a lot of local contacts, so we always try to share information."

To date, 99 percent of the species protected by the ESA have avoided extinction. Implemented by both the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, 1,400 domestic species of plants and animals and 600 foreign species are currently protected under this law. The ESA is responsible for the successful recovery of the bald eagle, the black-footed ferret and the California condor, among others.

The Endangered Species Act has played an integral role in wildlife conservation for four decades, giving us the ability to work with partners across the nation to prevent the extinction of hundreds of species, recover many others, and protect fragile habitat that supports both species and people," U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Director Dan Ashe said in a press release. "We face enormous challenges as we seek to sustain and build on this success, which is why we're committed to improving our ability to work collaboratively with landowners and other key stakeholders at a landscape scale."

Species, both flora and fauna, can receive protection under this law by gaining a listing of "endangered" or "threatened." According to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, there are five factors in determining a species' fate: damage to habitat, over-utilization of the species, disease or predation, lack of existing protection or other factors affecting the species. Garnering a spot under the law means advanced habitat protection, extensive monitoring and restrictions or a ban on removal.

"The ESA has done some really good things," Suydam said.

And while it's important to keep the Act strong, he said, it's important to "address the real reason why species are having a hard time."

<http://homernews.com/homer-news/business/2013-12-31/endangered-species-act-at-work-for-40-years>



Endangered Species Act at work for 40 years

Posted: December 31, 2013

NOAA is celebrating the 40th anniversary of the Endangered Species Act.

President Nixon signed the ESA into law on Dec. 28, 1973. Congress understood that, without protection from human actions, many of our nation's living resources would become extinct, according to NOAA.

There are approximately 2,100 species listed under the ESA. Of these species, approximately 1,480 are found in part or entirely in the United States and its waters; the remainder are foreign species.

NOAA asserts that today the ocean is a very different place than it was 40 years ago.

"Thanks to the ESA, we now understand many of the threats faced by marine and anadromous species and are bringing them under control," NOAA writes on its website. "The populations of many listed species are increasing, aided by our recovery efforts and time.

"Still, the populations of many species continue to decline and many more species are being listed. NOAA Fisheries scientists are developing the next generation of ocean observing systems, which will give us increased awareness of what's going on in the ocean, adapt our management, and respond to challenges of a changing climate. We will continue developing new technologies and management approaches, and our work with national and international partners, to ensure the ESA remains effective in an interdependent, rapidly-changing world."

In its 40 year history, the ESA has helped recover more than 30 species, and saved many more from extinction.

NOAA invites readers to share what the ESA means to them on Twitter, using #myESA.

Many fishermen in Alaska have ambivalent feelings or worse about the act, mainly due to protections in place for Stellar sea lions that restrict fishing and vessel travel.

[HTTP://WYOMINGPUBLICMEDIA.ORG/POST/SUCCESSSES-SEEN-WYOMING-40TH-ANNIVERSARY-ENDANGERED-SPECIES-ACT](http://WYOMINGPUBLICMEDIA.ORG/POST/SUCCESSSES-SEEN-WYOMING-40TH-ANNIVERSARY-ENDANGERED-SPECIES-ACT)

THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS



6:38 PM

TUE DECEMBER 31, 2013

Successes seen in Wyoming on 40th anniversary of Endangered Species Act

BY [BOB BECK](#)

The Endangered Species Act turned 40 this week, and two birds from Wyoming are ranked among the biggest successes of the law. The Endangered Species Coalition says the peregrine falcon and bald eagle made their top-ten list. Derek Goldman of the Coalition says bald eagles can be seen regularly in some parts of Wyoming, but he adds that it didn't happen by accident.

"We can see bald eagles almost everywhere now, but at one point 30 years ago, DDT and killing of eagles had really dwindled their numbers."

Goldman says that 90 percent of listed species are recovering, and that the ESA should be viewed positively by all citizens.

"Those habitats are also important to us. They're sources of clean water, sources of food. So when we protect endangered species, we're also protecting places that are really important to human survival."

More than 1300 species of plants, animals, and fish have been protected by the ESA since it was passed in 1973.

Idaho Statesman

Rocky Barker: The Endangered Species Act survives, but not all species will

BY ROCKY BARKER

Idaho Statesman December 30, 2013

CORRECTION: Jim McClure was in the Senate, not the House, at the time the Endangered Species Act passed.

Aldo Leopold's seed of wisdom grew into the law that has become the foundation of ecosystem protection for 40 years.

President Richard Nixon signed the Endangered Species Act into law Dec. 28, 1973. It put into U.S. statutes what Leopold's classic 1940s essay, "Round River," called for — saving all the parts of the natural world.

"To keep every cog and wheel is the first precaution of intelligent tinkering," Leopold wrote.

The law remains widely supported today, protecting more than 2,100 plants and animals in the U.S. and around the world. It has brought back from the brink of extinction the likes of the bald eagle and the peregrine falcon, due to its restrictions and its support of private conservation efforts by groups like Boise's Peregrine Fund.

But its limitations on development and private property rights have made it a target for many who wonder whether biodiversity deserves the priority that the law gives it.

Today, nearly every side acknowledges that Leopold's lofty goal is no longer possible, if it ever was. Rapid climate change, caused by greenhouse gases in the atmosphere from the burning of fossil fuels, is expected to send 20 to 40 percent of all of Earth's species into extinction in the next century.

The last time the law was reauthorized was in 1982. Congress has been unable to find common ground on how to reform or update the law that has become one of the most polarizing in the nation. That has meant changes are made piecemeal, through court decisions, settlements and rule changes often written in the middle of dramatic economic conflicts. Here in Idaho, for instance, Congress voted to delist the wolf in 2011 after a bitter court battle.

The legal fight over how to protect 12 stocks of salmon and steelhead in the Pacific Northwest has gone on for more than 20 years, with some improvement for the wild stocks, but no recovery.

Idaho and nine other Western states are struggling with the Bureau of Land Management to come up with plans that will keep sage grouse off the endangered species list by the 2015 deadline set by U.S. District Judge B. Lynn Winmill of Boise.

Congress passed the law four decades ago by a wide majority. Idaho conservative Republican Sen. Jim McClure told me years later he never would have voted for the Endangered Species Act had he known how it would be used.

Lawmakers in 1973 created the clearest, most unequivocal environmental law ever written. In other laws, federal agencies are required to provide protection “where practicable.” It was those two words that had prevented the Endangered Species Act of 1966 from stopping the decline of eagles, whales and whooping cranes.

Four men made sure “where practicable” was purged from the final version of the 1973 law. They were Interior Undersecretary E.U. Curtis “Buff” Bohlen; House Merchant Marine and Fisheries Committee counsel Frank M. Potter Jr.; Lee M. Talbot, a senior scientist at the Council on Environmental Quality; and Earl Basinger, a U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service biologist.

Their work made protecting endangered species the highest legal priority of government. The law handed the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the National Marine Fisheries Service (now NOAA Fisheries) ultimate veto power over all other federal agencies and other activities funded or regulated by the federal government.

“It was only some time after its passage that people realized its implications,” Bohlen is quoted saying in “Noah's Choice,” by Charles Mann and Mark Plummer. “We certainly didn’t advertise it. Why should we have? It was not our intent to ring alarm bells.”

But the four were not trying to mislead anyone, Talbot told me in 1995.

“It wasn’t a matter of skulking around in the back hall putting in words that nobody read, but rather to openly strengthen it to the maximum,” Talbot said.

The one minor exception was initiated in 1976, after the Supreme Court ruled that Tellico Dam on the Tennessee River had to be halted to protect the snail darter, a small fish. Congress established an exemption process, under which species protection could be waived by the Endangered Species Committee, frequently called the “God Squad.”

The God Squad has not chosen to act, when faced with making Noah’s choice. But the reality of climate change means society is going to be forced to make those choices, either by default or on purpose.

http://www.dailyinterlake.com/news/local_montana/article_cbbfabf8-6f58-11e3-a994-0019bb2963f4.html?mode=story

Daily Inter Lake.com

NORTHWEST MONTANA'S NEWS SOURCE

Endangered Species Act hits a milestone

Spawning bull trout settle into a hole in the Swan River drainage.

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Posted: Friday, December 27, 2013

By JIM MANN/The Daily Inter Lake

Grizzly bears, bull trout, lynx, gray wolves and white sturgeon have been among the beneficiaries of the Endangered Species Act with profound impacts on the Montana landscape over the last 40 years.

The law, enacted on this date in 1973, is at once celebrated by many for its successes but viewed with derision by others because every endangered-species listing has come with varying degrees of costs, consequences and controversy.

The law is credited by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for fully recovering 31 species nationwide. There currently are nine listed species in Montana, including the charismatic grizzly bear that is on the cusp of delisting in and around Yellowstone National Park and in the Northern Continental Divide Ecosystem.

"I think the recovery of grizzly bears is one of the greatest success stories of the Endangered Species Act," said Chris Servheen, grizzly bear recovery coordinator for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. "It has been a great benefit to the grizzly bear. There's three times as many grizzly bears today than when we started in 1981. They occupy places they had been extinct from for 100 years. The only reason that happened was because of the cooperative efforts under the ESA."

Servheen said the listing of grizzly bears mobilized government agencies and the public over time to bring about significant changes that have made recovery possible.

Prior to listing, Servheen said, there was a certain blindness and disregard among agency officials and the public to the plight of grizzly bears in the northern Rockies.

"There was a general feeling that it was no big deal, that the grizzly bear was doing fine," Servheen said. "When the bears were listed, they weren't fine at all."

For starters, "there were sanitation problems everywhere," Servheen said. Even in places such as Glacier National Park and Yellowstone, there were dumps attracting bears, and no food or garbage storage rules. "There were lots of roads in bear habitat and road building was ongoing without any consideration for the impacts on bears and other species," Servheen said. "Everyone just did what they wanted to do, and they just got rid of bears when they were problems."

The endangered-species listing changed the way bears were regarded. Human-caused bear mortalities dropped sharply and over time there was a significant increase in habitat security and perhaps most significantly, "we've developed more public understanding on how to live with grizzly bears," said Servheen, who credits bear management specialists with a major role in reducing bear-human conflicts. Whether that involves working with rural residents to secure garbage and other attractants, providing electric fencing to protect livestock, cleaning up grain spills on train tracks or educating the public about the use of pepper spray, grizzly bears have benefited greatly.

"The bear managers are where the rubber meets the road," Servheen said. "They are on the front edge of the human-bear interface. They've done a tremendous amount of work."

While grizzly bears are still protected, legal and procedural work is underway to bring about delisting in Yellowstone and the Northern Continental Divide Ecosystem. Populations in the Cabinet-Yaak region, the Selkirk Mountains and the Northern Cascades still require recovery efforts, Servheen said, "but we've come a long way."

In Montana, Endangered Species Act listings have come with heavy costs well outside the billions of dollars that have been spent by government agencies to bring about species recovery. Hundreds of miles of forest roads have been closed on the Flathead National Forest alone to improve habitat security for the grizzly bear.

Logging projects have been blocked by courts, sawmills have closed, jobs have been lost and recreational access has been diminished on public lands — all with connections to the protection of the grizzly bear alone.

The more recent listing of the Canada lynx is beginning to have similar influences. Gray wolves were delisted in Montana in 2011, but even now they continue to have impacts on big-game wildlife as well as domestic livestock.

"If there is ever a study on the ranching business, and of course timber, mining, oil and gas, all resource extraction, the value of the costs [associated with Endangered Species Act listings] would be staggering," said Fred Hodgeboom, a member and past president of Montanans for Multiple Use, a group that has staunchly opposed forest road closures.

Like other critics of the wildlife law, Hodgeboom is disenchanted by the way the law has evolved through case law and the way it has been applied over time by the Fish and Wildlife Service.

"I think a lot of people thought it was a good idea when it was passed but the implementation over the years hasn't turned out how a lot of people thought it would," Hodgeboom said. "It has been used as a fundraiser for a lot of nonprofits that continually litigate over endangered species. They litigate over everything."

Hodgeboom contends that the original vision for the federal law was to save easily identifiable species, "but now they are litigating over bugs and flowers and tiny little bait fish."

To the average person, many protected species are indistinguishable from other nonprotected species, but they are genetically distinct, creating a nearly endless potential for petitions to protect obscure species, Hodgeboom maintains.

"It goes on and on. It's just totally bankrupting many of our natural resource industries, including ranching and farming," he added.

Another big problem with endangered-species listings for Hodgeboom is that many of them seem to be perpetual. Some species are so difficult to inventory that the goalpost for recovery can never be reached. In other cases, there are no signs of recovery despite costly efforts.

That is the case for the Kootenai River white sturgeon, a species that has been almost entirely unable to reproduce in the wild since the construction of Libby Dam in the early 1970s. While the wild population of the ancient species continues to age and die off, the Kootenai River population has been sustained by hatchery reproduction.

Libby Dam operations have been altered and habitat improvements have been made, all with a price tag, in hopes of improving sturgeon spawning conditions in the Kootenai River.

But those expenditures could pale in comparison to the overall economic impacts of the bull trout being listed as a threatened species.

Most recently, the Confederated Salish-Kootenai Tribes have proposed gill netting lake trout, a bull trout competitor, from Flathead Lake in an effort to accelerate bull trout recovery.

Opponents fear the effort will decimate lake trout — the only recreational fishery in the lake — with far-reaching economic impacts.

Arlene Montgomery played a leading role in the listing of bull trout, with her organization, Friends of the Wild Swan, petitioning for a listing in 1992 and being involved in litigation until a formal listing came about in 1998.

"I do think that the law is a success and I think that is due in part to the fact that citizens can be involved in protecting species," said Montgomery, who lives in the Swan Lake area. "I think that is a key part in how species have either been recovered or they have been listed."

Citizen advocacy for an imperiled species is actually necessary in many cases, Montgomery asserts, because agencies charged with recovery often aren't active or effective enough in their recovery efforts. Recovery, she said, "doesn't just happen. It requires some pressure."

Montgomery said obtaining a listing for an imperiled species is important because it raises attention and attracts resources for recovery, including enhanced scientific research.

That needs to be followed by a critical habitat designation for the species that "hones in on where the important places are that need to be protected in order to achieve recovery," she said.

In the case of bull trout, a critical habitat designation didn't happen until 2010 after another series of lawsuits that involved Friends of the Wild Swan.

Finally, a threatened and endangered species needs a recovery plan that is actually implemented, she said. It's a process that can take years.

"Sometimes you're facing decades of declines from when the alarm bells started ringing," she said. Montgomery rejects any suggestion that her group's involvement with litigation is motivated by financial reasons.

"We can certainly say that we haven't gotten rich off it," she said. "Our mission is to protect wildlife and habitat. If that means having to use our laws that aren't being properly applied, then that's what it takes." On a final reflection on the Endangered Species Act, Montgomery said the protection of one imperiled species can benefit many other species. Bull trout recovery, for instance, is tied to maintaining water quality that other fish species depend on as well.

"Some species are the canary in the coal mine," she said. "If it's good for bull trout, it's good for other fish, and it can be good for people, too."

Reporter Jim Mann may be reached at 758-4407 or by email at jmann@dailyinterlake.com.

<http://www.nbcmontana.com/news/endangered-species-act-is-40-years-old/-/14594602/23675310/-/15micllz/-/index.html>



Endangered Species Act is 40 years old

MISSOULA COUNTY

By [Kevin Maki](#), KECI Reporter, kmaki@keci.com

POSTED: 6:29 PM Dec 27 2013

MISSOULA, Mont. -

The Endangered Species Act is 40 years old.

President Nixon signed the landmark law designed to protect at risk species from extinction.

Now, four decades later, we can physically see its effects.

Scientists say Grizzly Bear numbers have recovered in the Yellowstone and Northern Continental Divide ecosystems.

There used to be only a dozen or so Bald Eagles nests in the entire state of Montana. Now, our national symbol is a common sight.

"Look at the great successes we've had under this act," said USFWS Grizzly Bear Recovery coordinator, Chris Servheen. "We need to celebrate those successes so we can move on and continue to help many other species that desperately need the support of the act."



Endangered Species Act Celebrates 40 Years

Posted: Dec 27, 2013 3:39 PM PST Updated: Dec 27, 2013 4:42 PM PST

By Kyle Benton

BILLINGS -

An important piece of legislation will mark its 40th anniversary on Saturday.

The Endangered Species Act, was signed into law by President Nixon on December 28th, 1973.

The bipartisan legislation has been credited with saving hundreds of species from extinction and also has been the catalyst for fully recovering 31 species.

Since its inception, the law has helped protect the Bald Eagle, Stellar Sea Lion, American Alligator and the Lake Erie water snake.



December 26, 2013

Conservation

The ESA turns 40

by Jimmy Tobias

"How old are we?" John Melcher calls to his wife. She yells back an answer.

"I am 89 years old," he says, chuckling quietly over the phone. "I just needed to make sure."

Melcher was exactly 49 years old when, as Montana's congressman from the now-defunct second district, he was one of 355 U.S. representatives to vote for the Endangered Species Act, or ESA. Only four voted against it. In the Senate, the support was even more pronounced, as not a single senator said "nay." On Dec. 28, 1973, President Richard Nixon signed the ESA into law, calling America's wildlife "priceless" and "worthy of preservation."

From his home in Missoula, Melcher has been witness to the success of this historic bipartisan achievement.

"When the bald eagle gained ESA protection in 1978, believe it or not, we only had 12 pairs in Montana," says Derek Goldman, field representative of the Endangered Species Coalition. "Now you can see a bald eagle on practically every river or creek in the state."

Species like the American peregrine falcon, the American alligator, the black-footed ferret and the brown pelican saw similar population rebounds over the past 40 years.

"But the biggest success in Montana and the Northern Rockies, really, is the restoration of the gray wolf from near extinction in this region," says Goldman. "I think that recovery gets lost in a lot of the conflict, but when you think about it we have taken a large carnivore and brought it back from the edge. It is a great testament to the ESA and to American wildlife conservation generally."

Today, the ESA remains a major force in protecting such species as the fluvial arctic grayling and the greater sage grouse in Montana. Melcher thinks the bill is doing exactly what it is supposed to do.

"Back then it was part of the business of being in Congress to pass far-reaching bills," he says. "Passing the Endangered Species Act got everybody talking about the issue. It was important when we passed it, and it will have importance today, tomorrow and all the years forward."



Endangered Species Act's 40th anniversary draws celebration, critics

December 23, 2013 • By [Rob Chaney](#)

Last Thursday, a bald eagle devoured a goldeneye duck on the ice beside Brennan's Wave, just downstream of Missoula's Higgins Avenue Bridge.

Such a sight was inconceivable 40 years ago, when the nation's mascot was disappearing from its skies and just 12 breeding pairs were known in Montana. The bald eagle was one of the "charismatic megafauna" that helped pass the Endangered Species Act, which soon had more than 1,200 plants and animals under its protection.

In the next few months, people in 10 states will be gathering for bus tours and field trips arranged by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to see bald eagles in celebration of the act's anniversary. Missoulians living, working or studying along the Clark Fork River need only look out their windows. The threatened grizzly bear is the University of Montana's mascot, and recent GPS data confirm at least two grizzlies have tiptoed right up to the northern edge of the city limits. The confluence of the Clark Fork and Blackfoot rivers east of the city was historically known to the Salish Indians as the "Place of the Big Bull Trout" – another species enjoying ESA protection.

President Richard Nixon signed the Endangered Species Act into law on Dec. 28, 1973, he noted "Nothing is more priceless and more worthy of preservation than the rich array of animal life with which our country has been blessed. It is a many-faceted treasure, of value to scholars, scientists and nature lovers alike, and it forms a vital part of the heritage we all share as Americans."

The bald eagle came off the ESA list on July 9, 2007. So have the American alligator, two kinds

of peregrine falcon, the brown pelican and 31 other species. Seven species, including the Santa Barbara song sparrow, blue pike and dusky seaside sparrow, have gone extinct since they were given ESA listings.

John Melcher was a member of the U.S. House of Representatives when the ESA passed Congress. He was one of 355 votes in favor to four against in the House. In the Senate, the bill passed 92-0. “It was something that turned out right,” Melcher, who also represented Montana in the U.S. Senate, said from his Rattlesnake home last week. “Nixon signed it – it was one of his better sides. I think he felt good that day. He knew the rationale was right.”

Melcher said the act won such overwhelming support because people understood it provided balance in the natural world.

Threatened and endangered in Montana

Threatened species in Montana:

- Grizzly bear
- Canada lynx
- Piping plover
- Bull trout

Endangered species in Montana:

- Whooping crane
- Black-footed ferret
- Pallid sturgeon
- White sturgeon
- Least tern

Threatened plant species in Montana:

- Spalding’s catchfly
- Water howellia
- Ute ladies-tresses

Source: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

“I know some people want to get rid of wolverines – it’s not a pleasant animal, but it balances out the rest of the animals,” he said. “It’s a mean son-of-a-gun. It’s not easily liked, but we have to have them. And if you’re not careful, you get out of balance and lose the species.”

We knew so little about that mean son-of-a-gun that the wolverine spent years in the limbo of “warranted but precluded” from ESA protection. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service last week announced it is six months away from making a final decision on a wolverine listing. The best available science estimates there are between 250 and 650 wolverines in the continental United States. The biggest slice of that population lives in Montana.

Grizzly bears have grown numerous enough to rattle the ground along the political fault line that runs through the Endangered Species Act. Two weeks ago, a roundtable of state and federal wildlife officials that share grizzly recovery duties formally recommended delisting the bear in the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem around Yellowstone National Park.

Federal estimates put the Greater Yellowstone grizzly population somewhere between 629 and 740 bears. FWS grizzly recovery coordinator Chris Servheen argued before the Interagency Grizzly Bear Committee that for both biological and political reasons, the grizzly was ready to stand on its own.

“If we don’t delist when the bears are recovered, that public and political support will evaporate,” Servheen told the committee. “We have to signal a touchdown has been made.”

FWS also is working on a draft delisting rule for grizzlies in the Northern Continental Divide Ecosystem between Glacier National Park and Missoula, where an estimated 930 bears live. Work on that project stalled after independent grizzly advocates blocked the Greater Yellowstone delisting in court in 2009.

Meanwhile, a couple of critters not currently on the Endangered Species Act demonstrate another facet of its influence. Arctic grayling fish and sage grouse are both going through the FWS review process to decide if they should join the list. Making the ESA triggers lots of impacts, including critical habitat designations, required interagency consultations before projects can happen on public land, and prohibitions of the deliberate or accidental taking of the listed species.

The potential for a grayling listing encouraged farmers and ranchers along the Big Hole River in Montana to work together on a water-sharing system that keeps more in-stream flow in tributary creeks where the grayling lives. Landowners who participated in the program earn exemptions from further obligations if the fish receives federal protection.

A similar drama may play out with landowners in sage grouse country. As the bird populations have collapsed through loss of habitat and West Nile virus infection, several states and conservation groups have started recovery programs on their own. They've used tactics such as encouraging energy companies to forego leasing for exploration in sage grouse country and buying up underused grazing allotments on public land.

"It's a good incentive for people to come to the table and craft solutions to keep species from disappearing," said Derek Goldman of the Endangered Species Coalition in Missoula. "The threat of listing brought all those livestock producers to the table. Sometimes these efforts work. Sometimes it's too little, too late."

Or too much, too soon. Kerry White of Citizens for Balanced Use argues the Endangered Species Act does more harm than good.

"I see it more being used to stop resource development, stop agriculture and take private property rights by environmental groups," White said from his office in Bozeman. "Take sage grouse. They want to list those, but they have absolutely no idea how many sage grouse are in the state of Montana. If you don't know how many there are, you don't know how many you need to hit that target."

White said the ESA's limited track record for getting animals and plants restored didn't give him confidence the sacrifices made to save something would ever be repaid.

"I think it's well overdue to be repealed, done away with or revamped," White said. "It's really having an effect on people's lives and the economics of small communities."

Both White and Goldman pointed to the 2010 delisting of the Rocky Mountain gray wolf to make their points. For White, it was how the wolf stayed on the Endangered Species List for years after reaching its recovery threshold of 30 breeding pairs in both Idaho and Montana, because of lawsuits blocking the delisting.

"It finally took an act of Congress to legislatively remove wolves from the ESA," he said, recalling the rider by Sen. Jon Tester, D-Mont. that exempted Montana and Idaho wolves from further judicial review in 2011.

Goldman agreed congressional intervention was a poor precedent.

"But a big piece of the story that's lost in the hoopla is the amazing success – we recovered a large carnivore that's difficult to live with," Goldman said. "It's too bad that story is kind of lost in the controversy between wolf lovers and wolf haters."



AG WEEKLY

Back from the Brink marks 40th anniversary of the Endangered Species Act

REPORT HIGHLIGHTS TOP 10 CONSERVATION SUCCESS STORIES

December 11, 2013

Washington, D.C. – Forty years ago this month, Congress passed the Endangered Species Act—our nation’s safety net for fish, plants and wildlife on the brink of extinction. Today the Endangered Species Coalition marks the anniversary with a new report highlighting a few of the great wildlife conservation accomplishments since the Act’s passage in 1973. The report is entitled, *Back from the Brink: Ten Success Stories Celebrating the Endangered Species Act at 40*.

“Any law would be fortunate to have the kind of record that the Endangered Species Act does,” said Leda Huta, Executive Director of the Endangered Species Coalition. “Turning 40 never looked so good. To bring species after species back from the very edge of extinction—that kind of success is a remarkable testament to what we Americans have accomplished.”

The report highlights ten species that – thanks to the Endangered Species Act’s protections – are either steadily improving or have been recovered and removed from the list of imperiled species. They include the nēnē goose, American peregrine falcon, El Segundo blue butterfly, Robbins’ cinquefoil, bald eagle, southern sea otter, humpback whale, American alligator, brown pelican, and the green sea turtle. All of the species in the report were nominated by Coalition member groups from around the country. A panel of distinguished scientists then reviewed the nominations and decided which species to include in the report.

More than 1,300 imperiled species of plants, fish and wildlife in the United States have been protected by the Endangered Species Act, and only ten have gone extinct, according to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Additionally, a recent study found that 90 percent of protected species are recovering at the pace expected in their scientific recovery plans. Biologists have indicated that the task of recovering a species from near-extinction is a decades-long endeavor.

“Thanks to wisdom and the vision of Congress in 1973, our children will have the opportunity to witness the magnificent breaching of a humpback whale, or hear the call of the peregrine falcon,” said Huta. “We owe it to future generations to continue to protect our endangered species and the special habitats they call home.”

When President Richard Nixon signed the Endangered Species Act into law on December 28, 1973, he announced, “Nothing is more priceless and more worthy of preservation than the rich array of animal life with which our country has been blessed. It is a many-faceted treasure, of value to scholars, scientists, and nature lovers alike, and it forms a vital part of the heritage we all share as Americans.”

The Endangered Species Coalition has also produced a slide show to accompany the report, featuring stunning photos of each of the ten species in the report. The Coalition produces a “Top 10” report annually. Previous years’ reports are also available here.

Ten Success Stories Celebrating the Endangered Species Act at 40:

Nēnē Goose

Habitat protection and captive breeding programs have rebuilt Hawaii’s nēnē goose population from the brink of extinction in the mid-1900s to approximately 1,300 individuals in 2013. Still listed under the Endangered Species Act, the nēnē is also protected by collaborative programs with landowners designed to bring the goose to full recovery.

American Peregrine Falcon

The U.S. population of peregrine falcons dropped from an estimated 3,900 in the mid-1940s to just 324 individuals in 1975, and the falcon was considered locally extinct in the eastern United States. Their comeback has been truly remarkable—today, there are approximately 3,500 nesting pairs.

El Segundo Blue Butterfly

By 1984, only about 500 of these butterflies remained. The butterfly has rebounded significantly, with an astonishing 20,000 percent comeback recorded in 2012. The resurgence of the El Segundo blue butterfly is an inspiring story of the Endangered Species Act’s ability to protect critical habitat.

Robbins’ Cinquefoil

Although it was once close to extinction, today the original Robbins’ cinquefoil population on a small, rugged site in New Hampshire’s White Mountains numbers about 14,000 plants, with 1,500 to 2,000 flowering individuals. In a remarkable win for the Endangered Species Act, Robbins’ cinquefoil was officially delisted in 2002.

Bald Eagle

By the early 1960s, the count of nesting bald eagles plummeted to about 480 in the lower 48 states. Today, with some 14,000 breeding pairs in the skies over North America, the bald eagle endures as a testament to the strength and undeniable moral correctness of the Endangered Species Act.

Southern Sea Otter

Sea otters once numbered in the thousands before the fur trade and other factors reduced their numbers to about 50 in 1914. Listed under the Endangered Species Act in 1977, this remarkable species rebounded to approximately 2,800 individuals between 2005 and 2010.

Humpback Whale

The whaling industry dramatically depleted humpback populations from a high of more than 125,000; by the mid-1960s, only 1,200 individuals swam in the North Pacific. That tiny population of humpbacks has swelled to more than 22,000 members today due to a strong recovery program implemented under the Endangered Species Act.

American Alligator

By the 1950s, the American alligator had been hunted and traded to near-extinction. Captive breeding and strong enforcement of habitat protections and hunting regulations have contributed to its resurgence. Alligators now number around 5 million from North Carolina through Texas, with the largest populations in Louisiana and Florida.

Brown Pelican

Brown pelicans were dramatically impacted by habitat destruction and DDT. Driven to extinction in Louisiana, pelicans have made a dramatic comeback under the Endangered Species Act; in 2004, the population in Louisiana numbered 16,500 nesting pairs. Thanks to ambitious reintroduction programs, the brown pelican was fully delisted in 2009.

Green Sea Turtle

In 1990, fewer than fifty green sea turtles were documented nesting at the Archie Carr National Wildlife Refuge on Florida's east coast. This 20-mile stretch of beach hosted more than 10,000 green sea turtle nests in 2013, making this one of the greatest conservation success stories of our time.

THE Durango HERALD

By **Shane Benjamin** Herald staff writer

Today marks the 40th anniversary of the Endangered Species Act, which lists several creatures found in Southwest Colorado, including a rare high-elevation butterfly and the tufted-eared Canada lynx.

The act, which was signed into law by President Richard Nixon on Dec. 28, 1973, is credited with saving hundreds of species from extinction, including the bald eagle and peregrine falcon, both of which are now thriving in the Durango area.

“It’s a very strong piece of legislation that has done a lot of good for species in the past and hopefully into the future,” said Mark Ball, wildlife program leader with the San Juan National Forest. “It’s stated very plainly, and there’s not a not a lot of wiggle room, in some areas, for interpretation.”

The law has been the catalyst for the full recovery of 31 species, from the Steller sea lion to the Virginia northern flying squirrel, according to a news release issued this week by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

More than 2,100 animals and plants found in the U.S. and around the world remain on the list, the release says.

The Fish and Wildlife Service is considering adding another bird to the threatened species list – the yellow-billed cuckoo, another animal that has been seen in this area.

The bird, also called a rain crow, is secretive and hangs out in riparian areas, said Kip Stransky, a longtime bird watcher in Durango and former properties technician with the Colorado Parks and Wildlife.

“They make a distinctive sound,” Stransky said. “Once you’ve heard it, you never forget it.”

The San Juan National Forest doesn’t host a lot of endangered species, but there are a few, including:

The Uncompahgre fritillary butterfly, which could be one of the first species to succumb to climate change, because it lives above 12,500 feet in elevation. The butterfly was discovered in 1978 on Uncompahgre Peak in Hinsdale County and was subsequently described as a new species. The butterfly is not an especially agile flyer, and there is only one known colony on the San Juan National Forest, Ball said.

The Canada lynx, which were reintroduced into Colorado in 1999. The last known Colorado lynx was taken near Vail by a trapper in 1973 – 40 years ago. Many of the cats are outfitted with radio

collars that allow biologists to track their location and monitor their progress. Lynx thrive in areas above 8,500 feet in elevation. They eat feed on beaver, mice, red squirrels and snowshoe hare. They have large paws good for moving through the snow and are recognizable by their pointy ears.

The Southwest willow flycatcher, a species of bird placed on the list in 1995. The little thing weighs about 0.4 ounces, has grayish-green wings, a whitish throat, light gray breast and a pale yellowish belly. Ball said there is only one known area on San Juan National Forest where the bird has been spotted, but he declined to say where.

The Mexican spotted owl, one of three subspecies of spotted owl that lives in old-growth forests. The bird weighs about 1.3 pounds and has a 45-inch wingspan. There is only marginal habitat for the Mexican spotted owl in this area, Ball said. There have been a few sightings over the years, but no reported breeding, he said.

In addition to the yellow-billed cuckoo, several other species have been proposed for protection under the act, including the New Mexico meadow jumping mouse, wolverine and the Gunnison sage grouse, Ball said.

A “protected” or “endangered” designation can often carry a critical habitat designation, which can carry restrictions depending on the species, however, there are no critical habitat areas within the San Juan National Forest and surrounding areas, Ball said.

If the Gunnison sage grouse were placed on the protected or endangered list, it could include critical habitat designations on local Bureau of Land Management lands, he said.

The Endangered Species Act has come under attack on occasion, but by and large, it has withstood the test of time, Ball said.

“Of course, the main goal is the continuation of the species,” he said. “I hope we continue forward with the Endangered Species Act with the way it is written. It is just a dynamic document.”

shane@durangoherald.com

<http://www.publicnewsservice.org/2013-12-09/endangered-species-and-wildlife/report-looks-at-esas-40th-anniversary/a36128-1>



Report Looks at ESA's 40th Anniversary

Public News Service - MT | December 2013 | Download audio

December 9, 2013

HELENA, Mont. - This month includes a milestone anniversary for the Endangered Species Act. It was passed by Congress 40 years ago, and a new report from the Endangered Species Coalition marks 10 of the Act's biggest success stories.

According to the group's Northern Rockies field representative, Derek Goldman, two birds seen in Montana are on that list: the peregrine falcon and the bald eagle. Goldman admitted that bald eagles now seem common, but it didn't happen by accident.

"The biologists say it takes decades and decades, and what we're seeing is that once these species gain protections by the Endangered Species Act and protections of their habitat, we're seeing a lot of the numbers starting to improve."

In 1978, it was estimated there were only 12 pairs of bald eagles in Montana.

Goldman said more than 1,300 species of plants, animals and fish have been protected by the ESA, and only 10 have gone extinct.

The report shows that 90 percent of species covered by the ESA are recovering at the pace expected in their scientific recovery plans. Goldman explained that the human connection isn't just the joy of seeing a wide array of species in the wild.

"Those habitats are also important to us," he said. "They're sources of clean water, sources of food. So, when we protect endangered species, we're also protecting places that are really important to human survival."

The southern sea otter, humpback whale, El Segundo blue butterfly and green sea turtle are also featured as success stories.

The full report, "Back from the Brink," is at Endangered.org.

Deborah Courson Smith/Deb Courson Smith, Public News Service - MT

40th Anniversary of the Endangered Species Act (ESA)

February 10, 2013

To celebrate the 40th Anniversary of the Endangered Species Act, members of the William Smith Livingston Society gathered at Rocky Mountain National Park where Ms. Diane Harpold presented a very educational program. The purpose of the ESA is to protect and recover imperiled species and the ecosystems upon which they depend. It is administered by the Interior Department's U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS, Secretary Ken Salazar of Colorado) and the Commerce

Department's National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS). Under the ESA, species may be listed as either endangered or threatened. "Endangered" means a species is in danger of extinction throughout all or a significant portion of its range. "Threatened" means a species is likely to become endangered within the foreseeable future. As of September 2012, there are approximately 1,990 total species listed under the ESA. The most interesting part of the program was learning about the specific species affected here in Colorado. For example, the Greenback Cutthroat Trout was presumed to be extinct in 1937. Numerous wild greenback cutthroat populations were discovered starting in the late 1950s. Only five naturally occurring pure populations are known to have survived to recent times. Population has increased in recent decades due to successful reintroduction efforts. 21 out of 55 populations were considered to be stable and more than half of these were within Rocky Mountain National Park. The greenback was named Colorado's state fish in 1994. Other Colorado species listed under the ESA include the Canada Lynx which was reintroduced in 2000 and the Boreal Toad. For a complete list of Colorado's species of concern, please visit:

<http://wildlife.state.co.us/WildlifeSpecies/SpeciesOfConcern/Pages/...>

Examples of two species that have made great comebacks are the Bald Eagle and Elk. Eagle populations continue to increase and the breeding population has doubled every 6-7 years since the late 1970s. Elk were hunted extensively in the Estes Valley and much of the meat was sent to market in Denver. By 1890 very few remained. In 1913 and 1914, 49 elk from Yellowstone were transplanted into the area what was to become Rocky Mountain Nation Park. Reducing predators such as the grizzly bear and gray wolf hastened the elk's recovery. Recently, over-population has become a concern. The three last years, culling was necessary to thin the herd. 131 elk were removed. The goal is to maintain the population of 600 to 800 elk.