

Endangered earth

FALL 2011



AND COUNTING

7 billion people now share Planet Earth
with more than **8 million** other species.

Is there room for us **all?** 2

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C E N T E R F O R B I O L O G I C A L D I V E R S I T Y

7 Billion and Counting

Just 12 years after world population hit 6 billion, the planet now tips the 7 billion mark. It's a startling milestone — and it's closely linked to a startling loss of the plants and animals that comprise Earth's biodiversity. We're taking action.

Back in October 1999, when the world population clicked over to 6 billion, the United Nations announced the birth of the six billionth baby (a poster child selected by the U.N., born in the city of Sarajevo). Yet the day went largely unremarked upon outside administrative culture. Now, over the span of a mere 12 years, global population has grown at a staggering rate — by another billion. The Center for Biological Diversity won't let that benchmark pass unnoticed.

We began integrating the issue of human population growth into our programs for the simple reason that every day, in our work, we encounter the impact caused by human appetites on other forms of life — and especially the animals, plants and wild places that are already on the brink of vanishing.

More and more often, research concludes that it's not just how much humans consume, but how many of us are doing that consuming. People absorb 50 percent of the world's fresh water

and have converted 40 percent of the land mass to food production. The service of these basic needs is causing cataclysmic loss of habitat, and of life, for the rest of the animal kingdom.

Species extinction is among the most severe and irreversible effects of the human population explosion, which is why the Center has elevated our efforts, at this pinnacle moment, into a campaign called 7 Billion and Counting — a platform for bringing the overpopulation issue to a larger audience.

As part of our campaign launch, we put up a video billboard ad in New York City's Times Square to bring the message home to millions of viewers over one of the most highly trafficked patches of turf on Earth. The ad led back to our new online hub, 7BillionAndCounting.org, where people could share the message about population growth and the extinction crisis with others and begin taking action.

We also posted an interactive species map: Users click on their part of the country to find out which threatened and endangered species share their home territory, making them familiar with the threat of species extinction in their own backyard.

Putting overpopulation back on the table as a social issue — lifting the taboo on talking about it — is central to our aims. Our

online activist toolkit also offers ideas for conversation-starter events and actions.

In October, we mobilized 1,200 activists to distribute more than 100,000 free condoms in their communities. Our Endangered Species Condoms project started about a year ago and has exceeded all our expectations for it, proving to be one of our most popular campaigns ever and a highly successful outreach tool for raising awareness of the link between population growth and the biodiversity crisis.

In the first 12 hours after we sent out an email asking for volunteers to sign up to distribute the condoms, we had more than 1,000 people fill out our online form to participate. In the days and weeks following that, thousands more signed up — far more people than we could supply. We've heard from those volunteer distributors that the fun, surprising moment of handing out a condom whose package bears the picture of a snail darter or polar bear allows people to break down the barrier of an often difficult topic.

So here we are at 7 billion, just 12 years after we hit 6. The familiar solutions for preserving diversity of life on our lonely planet — reducing our carbon emissions, ending fossil fuel dependency and preserving our remaining wildlands — remain priorities.

Amy Harwood works from our Tucson office as organizer for our human overpopulation campaign.



Expressing Ourselves: Center message meets creative media campaigns



But recognizing that population growth jeopardizes all this work, and the basic right of species to survive and thrive (humans included), is integral. At base, every essential human need depends on the diversity and integrity of the natural world.

The Center hopes to continue to lead the environmental community on this issue by advocating social and economic programs that empower women and ensure access to birth control and family planning. Globally, at least 200 million women who want access to family planning resources don't have it. By educating young people, particularly women, we can have a real shot at stabilizing our world's human population and saving the wild — both for the benefit of other species and for our own quality of life. •



On the Web: To find more about this campaign — including our Times Square video ad on overpopulation, a take-action toolbox and an interactive map that shows you which endangered species live where you do — visit 7BillionAndCounting.org or visit and share our 7 Billion and Counting page on Facebook.

The Center's Endangered Species Condoms project is big, and it's bold — but it's only one of our path-breaking creative-media campaigns that's helping to spread the word around the globe about why it's so crucial to save species, from the tiny Comal Springs riffle beetle to the great bowhead whale. We've taken stock of the cool (and free) creative-media projects we're doing on *all* fronts and collected them on a brand-new Web page you can visit at biologicaldiversity.org/creative_media. And here they are:



Endangered Species Condoms Project: Help spread the word about the link between human population growth and species extinction. Sign up at EndangeredSpeciesCondoms.com to distribute Endangered Species Condoms in your community.

Times Square Public Service Announcements: What better place than the heart of the most populous city in the country to broadcast our message? The Center has launched video ads in New York's Times Square not just on human population growth, but also on the extinction crisis and the scary dangers of toxic pesticides. View the current ad at extinctioncrisis.org.

Endangered Species Ringtones: Hear the call of the wild? Or want to, whenever your cell phone rings? At the Center's RareEarhtones.org, you can download free ringtones of the songs, roars, chirps and howls of nearly 100 imperiled animals — and wallpaper, too. (Check out LlamadasSalvajes.org for ringtones with descriptions in Spanish.)



Find Species Where You Are: Ever wonder which endangered species may be lurking nearby? Visit biologicaldiversity.org/speciesfinder to download our new free "Species Finder" app for the Android phone, and find out in the blink of an eye.

Bring the Wild to Your iPhone: Our free "Wild Calls" iPhone app fills your week with the wild, sending you species sound recordings, the Center's e-newsletter, recent press releases and opportunities to take action. Visit biologicaldiversity.org/wildcalls.

Bluefin Boycott: Help the Center save one of the world's most magnificent, unique and threatened fish by pledging not to eat bluefin tuna and spreading the word about its peril. Become part of our Bluefin Brigade at BluefinBoycott.org.



Species e-postcards: Make every day Endangered Species Day by sending free e-postcards featuring the Hawaiian monk seal, boreal toad, sage grouse, and piping plover at biologicaldiversity.org/e-postcards.



Community Climate Activism: Be a Clean Air Advocate by defending our best existing weapon against global warming — the Clean Air Act — from crippling attacks in Congress at biologicaldiversity.org/action/toolbox/clean_air_act/. Then get your entire city involved at biologicaldiversity.org/CleanAirCities.

Historic agreement moves nearly 500 imperiled animals and plants toward protection

The Center's landmark agreement with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in July — the culmination of a decade's work to save more than 750 of the nation's most imperiled but least protected species — is already seeing tremendous results, with hundreds of those plants and animals moving closer to Endangered Species Act protection. To date, the agency has issued protection decisions for 529 species with 93 percent of them positive, meaning that 493 species, including the Florida sandhill crane, Ozark hellbender, eastern small-footed bat and others, are one step closer to protection.

Of these 493 species, 15 so far have made it across the finish line and are now federally protected as endangered species, including the Miami blue butterfly, Casey's June beetle and parachute penstemon. And protection comes in the nick of time for these species. Indeed, the lovely and once common Miami blue butterfly has dwindled to scattered individuals in the Marquesas Keys in Key West National Wildlife Refuge — prompting the Center in January 2011 to petition the government for emergency protection of the species. Now, under our historic agreement this summer, this incredibly rare species has the safeguards it so desperately needs.

The agreement is also helping to address a dire but under-recognized freshwater extinction crisis — with scientists estimating a projected extinction rate for U.S. freshwater animals, including fish, frogs, birds and mussels, that is five times that of terrestrial animals, and is comparable to the extinction rate for tropical rainforests.

Under the settlement agreement, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has issued positive findings determining that Endangered Species Act protection of hundreds of freshwater species may be warranted, including 374 species dependent on the beleaguered rivers and streams of the southeastern United States. Those species — found in 12 states — include 43 fish; 89 crayfish and other crustaceans; 81 plants; 78 mollusks; and 51




Miami blue butterfly

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butterflies, moths, caddisflies and other insects. Final protection for these species will likely be years in the making, but in the meantime species like the Alabama map turtle, beautiful crayfish and Canoe Creek pigtoe will see increased research and protection from state agencies, private landowners and others wishing to forestall the need for federal protection.

The list also includes 35 unique Great Basin springsnail species that are threatened by plans by the Southern Nevada Water Authority to pump groundwater from the desert to send to Las Vegas, thereby drying springs that are home to these springsnails and a source of water for hundreds of other wildlife species.

In the coming months and years, we are likely to see protection of hundreds more species, including many like the dunes sagebrush lizard and yellow-billed cuckoo that the Center has worked for many years to protect. The road to protection for these species has been long, and while we haven't reached the end, the safeguards of the Endangered Species Act — and the Center's continued vigilance against the many threats to these species' survival — stand to start them on a surer road to recovery. •

 **On the Web:** Read more about the Center's historic agreement struck in July — and use our interactive map to find lists by every state of all the plants and animals affected. Visit biologicaldiversity.org/species_agreement.



Noah Greenwald directs the Center's endangered species program from Portland, Ore.

Watchdogs for Wolves

From Alaska to the northern Rockies to the Southwest, the Center is standing firm to bring America's beleaguered wolves the strongest protections possible.

Wolves across the West have had another tough year but we've also made important strides in making sure they're protected.

One of the most important victories was in Oregon, where in early October we and our allies filed emergency paperwork in court and stayed the imminent execution of two members of the state's Imnaha pack. The alpha male and another wolf were scheduled to be killed by the state's Department of Fish and Wildlife. The loss would likely have been the nail in the coffin for the state's first wolf pack since wolves were exterminated there nearly 65 years ago.

In the northern Rockies, hunting seasons opened this fall to a *carte blanche* for mowing down the social canines. Idaho's season stretches from August to March, with no limit on how many wolves can be killed, and only commits to maintaining 150 wolves out of an estimated population of at least 1,000. And its Fish and Game Department has allowed aerial gunning of several wolves in the name of defending elk — a move that wouldn't have been possible before congressional meddling took away wolves' federal protections.

In Montana archery season has begun, and wolves are already falling to the arrow. More than 8,000 hunting licenses were sold in Montana, where wildlife officials have agreed to let up to 220 wolves be hunted.

And in early October the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service proposed to delist Wyoming's wolves, removing their federal protection and giving the state a green light to kill them. Wyoming's management plan requires keeping only 150 wolves alive, including those roaming Yellowstone National Park, out of a statewide total of about 350.

The floodgates were opened this spring when Congress passed a rider attached to the federal budget bill, removing Endangered Species Act protections from gray wolves in the



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On the Web: To learn more about Alaska's Alexander Archipelago wolf, the lobo the Center recently petitioned to protect under the Endangered Species Act, visit biologicaldiversity.org/Alexander_Archipelago_wolf.

northern Rocky Mountains. The wolf-killing rider marked the first time an animal or plant was removed from the endangered species list by Congress, rather than by federal wildlife agencies.

That unprecedented act prompted the Center and our allies to challenge the rider's constitutionality in court, a case that delivered a ruling in August from U.S. District Judge Donald Molloy. While Judge Molloy reluctantly upheld the rider's constitutionality based on existing case law, he also made clear his disapproval of the rider for its apparent violation of the constitution's Separation of Powers doctrine.

Molloy described the rider as "a tearing away, an undermining, and a disrespect for the fundamental idea of the rule of law." The Center appealed in the case, seeking a reversal of the damaging precedent that bound the court.

In Alaska, along with our allies at Greenpeace, we filed a petition in late summer to protect the rare Alexander Archipelago wolf, a small, black wolf that lives on island and mainland southeastern Alaska — mostly within the Tongass National Forest, where old-growth trees are critical to its survival.

In the Southwest, we notified the state of New Mexico of our intent to sue over its plan to allow trapping in the Gila National Forest, home to endangered Mexican gray wolves.

The Center is leading the charge nationwide against government killings of wolves. Our work has spared Mexican wolves from government shooting and trapping for four years now — a national, probably global first in creating official tolerance of depredate wolves. •

Sea Turtle Tales

Center campaigns make oceans safer for ancient, rare and revered reptiles

This year, record-setting numbers of sea turtles have washed ashore or been found floating stranded in the waters of the Gulf of Mexico. Still reeling from the Deepwater Horizon oil spill, turtles in the Gulf also face the chronic threat of drowning in fishing gear. In 2011, federal data report more than 2,000 stranded sea turtles in the Gulf only partway through the year — a startling call to action for the Center to ramp up efforts to protect these ancient animals and the oceans they call home.

Ancient Sea Dwellers

If you remember nothing else, note that sea turtles are magnificent animals. They've swum the oceans since before the dinosaurs, but now nearly all of them are at risk of extinction.

And consider the leatherback, which can grow large enough to rival a Volkswagen Beetle. Leatherbacks undertake a massive journey of about 12,000 miles crossing the entire Pacific from nesting grounds in Asia to foraging areas off the California coast. Imagine driving across the country four times; now try swimming it.

In contrast, Kemp's ridley sea turtles are the smallest of the turtles, at 90 pounds, and are considered the most in danger of disappearing. Kemp's ridleys are the only turtles that nest during the day. And green sea turtles are what they eat: Feasting on algae and sea grasses, they're named not for their shell color but for the color of their skin.

What do all these turtles have in common? Their survival hinges on reforming dangerous activities — from fishing to polluting — that threaten them.

Death by a Thousand Hooks

Many of us have only a vague knowledge of fishing gear — in many cases based on movies or TV portrayals, such as reality TV shows featuring Alaskan crab fleets. But today's fishing fleets are massive industrial operations capable of harvesting vast quantities of fish and, regrettably, many other animals as well, including turtles, marine mammals and seabirds. Fishing is the single greatest threat to sea turtle survival because turtles become entangled and drown in the gear.

In one year alone — 2000 — scientists reported that more than 200,000 loggerheads were caught in longline fishing gear. This fishing method uses thousands of baited hooks dangling from more than 50 miles of fishing line, which is set in the water for several hours to catch fish. In 2009, the Center and allies sued and prompted a partial closure of the Gulf of Mexico bottom longline fishery because it was killing too many turtles.

The emergency measure kept the fishery from imperiling loggerheads, but after the Fisheries Service reopened the fishery, instead of requiring measures protecting sea turtles the agency upped the number of turtles that could be caught. We sued again and scored a victory; a federal court decided the fishery's impacts on sea turtles should be reexamined in light of the Deepwater Horizon oil spill.



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Thanks to a long effort by the Center, five populations of loggerhead sea turtles now have stronger protections under the Endangered Species Act.

Loggerhead sea turtles, for example, migrate throughout the seas but return to the exact beaches where they were born to nest, and about 80 percent of western North Atlantic loggerheads nest on Florida's beaches. This means lights out for Florida's coastal residents, because lights can confuse hatchlings and steer them away from the sea.

Trawling for Trouble

As you recall, over the past year a surge in sea turtle strandings has littered the Gulf Coast with dying or dead turtles. Potentially weakened and vulnerable from oil contamination, many of the turtles that washed ashore had died in a way the government reports as consistent with drowning in shrimp nets.

Shrimp trawling was once considered the deadliest catch for sea turtles, killing as many as 50,000 loggerheads and 5,000 Kemp's ridleys every year. Now shrimp trawls are supposed to use devices that allow turtles to escape, but loopholes and disregard for the law have once again elevated the chronic threat.



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Record numbers of sea turtles — including the critically endangered Kemp's ridley — have turned up dead or dying in the Gulf of Mexico this year. Evidence suggests many of those turtles drowned in shrimp nets, adding to turtle losses caused by last year's Gulf oil spill.

After the Center and allies threatened to sue, the Fisheries Service committed to evaluating several measures to better protect sea turtles in the Gulf. But the turtles can't afford to wait indefinitely while the problem is studied. So in October, we filed a lawsuit to prompt rapid action to close the loopholes.

Fighting for a Future

Increased protections under the Endangered Species Act could also afford sea turtles greater defenses against threats and promote their recovery. Accordingly, the Center sought to reclassify threatened loggerheads as endangered, and recognizing that loggerheads are still in trouble, in September the federal government announced that five loggerhead populations would be protected as endangered species. We're also working to protect loggerhead nesting habitat in Florida and secure protected marine areas for leatherbacks off the West Coast. Our efforts have the potential to enhance protections from fishing gear as well as guard against habitat destruction — whether from rising seas, coastal development or pollution. •



Miyoko Sakashita, senior attorney, directs the Center's oceans program from San Francisco.

Your support saves species great and small.

A decade ago, the Center for Biological Diversity launched a campaign to protect 1,000 of the country's most imperiled but least protected plants and animals — such as the wolverine and walrus, as well as lesser-known species like the Oregon spotted frog and Miami blue butterfly.

That's because when it comes to protecting imperiled species and stopping the extinction crisis, the Center works for all species great and small. We don't discriminate.

In 2011, we brought that campaign to a historic conclusion, moving 757 highly imperiled species closer to protection. This high-stakes campaign only worked because we had the strong backing of our members and the staff expertise we've built up over the past 22 years.

The result was a landmark agreement to revive the endangered species protection program and ramp up safeguards to a level never seen in the 40-year history of the Endangered Species Act. But now we're facing an avalanche of attacks. Industry groups and conservative congressmen are howling in protest, threatening to undermine the entire agreement. The Center's now in a life-or-death fight for these species.

A generous board member is offering a special matching gift of \$150,000 for all gifts received by Dec. 31 to our Save the Endangered Species Act Fund. Help us make the most of this unique opportunity. You can make your special year-end gift to the Center by mailing the enclosed envelope. Or you can give online at 2011gift.biologicaldiversity.org or call us toll-free at 866-357-3349. All our staff and the species we protect are counting on your generous support. Thank you. •

YOUR YEAR-END GIFT CAN MAKE THE DIFFERENCE

Center guards Endangered Species Act against hits from Congress and Obama

The Endangered Species Act is uniquely effective at protecting vulnerable animals and plants from extinction. In fact, it's the basis of the historic agreement we reached this summer to push 757 imperiled but unprotected species — from the wolverine to the sage grouse to the Pacific walrus — toward protections.

But lately, it's been under heavy attack in Congress.

In April, Congress attached a back-door rider to a spending bill, stripping Endangered Species Act protections from northern Rockies wolves. The Center and our allies are still in court working to have this anti-wolf rider — which set the devastating precedent of letting politicians rather than scientists decide when to take away protections from species — declared unconstitutional.



USFWS

The greater sage grouse has a new shot at survival thanks to the Center's historic agreement to move hundreds of plants and animals closer to protection — but in order to secure Endangered Species Act safeguards for the grouse and other species, we're also fighting attempts in Congress to chip away at the Act's strongest provisions.

In better news, in July the Center and other conservationists won an important victory by defeating an “extinction rider” that would have defunded programs to protect new species and their critical habitat. But plenty of threats remain. Members of Congress are pushing bills to stop the EPA from keeping

pesticides from harming endangered species, prohibit the Fish and Wildlife Service from protecting and recovering several species, block a manatee refuge in Florida and sacrifice bighorn sheep to livestock on public lands.

Rep. Steve Pearce (R-N.M.) is leading the charge to keep the rare dunes sagebrush lizard in Texas and New Mexico from getting protection it badly needs, and others have taken a hostile stance toward our landmark agreement on the 757 species.

Efforts are also afoot to chip away at the strongest provisions of the Endangered Species Act — including listing, critical habitat, consultation between Fish and Wildlife and other federal agencies, and recovery planning and funding.

As if that weren't enough, in May the Obama administration announced its plans to alter Endangered Species Act regulations. Targets include revising the critical habitat process that is so crucial to preserving the places where species live; determining what constitutes “adverse modification” of critical habitat; expanding the role of states; and speeding approval of conservation agreements with landowners.

The problem is, while certain adjustments of the Act's regulations could indeed help species recover, the risk of damage is great. Buzzwords used by the administration — “efficiency,” “predictability” and “economic growth” — sound suspiciously like code for weakening protections.

To counter attempts to diminish the Act, the Center recently published a report outlining the 20 best ways to strengthen the law to benefit species and keep the scales tipped in favor of protections rather than corporate profits.

Some of the changes we support include requiring comprehensive recovery plans to be developed within three years of listing, explicitly requiring that agencies consider recovery plans when downlisting or delisting species, and designating critical habitat beyond areas a species currently occupies to help the species recover.

The Endangered Species Act works: It's helping more than 1,000 imperiled plants and animals and protecting more than 200 million acres of habitat. The future of those species and the wild places they live, though, depends on keeping politicians from weakening a law that has had such storied success. •

Marty Bergoffen, endangered species organizer, works from the Center's Tucson office on national campaigns to protect imperiled plants and animals and environmental laws.




Ambitious anti-toxics campaign launches

The industrial age has brought millions of pounds of toxic contaminants into the world, poisoning both wildlife and people. Pollution, pharmaceuticals, pesticides, heavy metals and even synthetic chemicals from household products are now pervasive in our water, air and soil.

A 10-year government study has revealed that more than 90 percent of the waters and fish tested across the country are contaminated with pesticides. Chemicals in our water supplies and food webs taint the environment and endanger human health. Independent research has found more than 200 chemicals, many of them toxins, in the blood of newborns.

To reduce the toxic load we all bear, with a special focus on removing toxins from wild places and wild creatures, the Center is redoubling its work to keep harmful chemicals out of ecosystems, plants and animals. This summer we launched a new Toxics and Endangered Species campaign that relies on a broad range of tools and strategies — coordinated across our different programs — to reduce harmful contamination from pesticides, endocrine-disrupting chemicals, lead, mercury, fossil-fuel production and uranium mining.

Our groundbreaking nationwide pesticides campaign seeks to hold the Environmental Protection Agency accountable for protecting species from pesticide use. We've also placed the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service on notice that it must take steps now to protect the California red-legged frog from pesticides.

 **On the Web:** Tell Congress and the EPA to stand up for the Clean Water Act against industry lobbyists and to give our wildlife and waterways stronger protections from pesticides. Send your letter today and view our pesticides-fighting PSA, aired in New York's Times Square, at extinctioncrisis.org.

(Red-legged frogs — Mark Twain's famous "Celebrated Jumping Frog of Calaveras County" — have disappeared from 70 percent of their former range and were listed as threatened under the Endangered Species Act in 1996.)

The Center's Bluefin Boycott campaign continues to build steam as we push the Food and Drug Administration to put in place stricter rules protecting consumers from mercury in fish. Consumption of mercury-contaminated seafood is a widespread public-health problem — not to mention that bluefin tuna in particular are threatened with extinction due to overfishing.

Our Get the Lead Out campaign has gone national, with a big media focus on highlighting the threat posed by lead ammo, as well as action pressing the government to require less-toxic alternatives. Lead poisoning from ingestion of bullets and lead shot found in carrion is the number-one threat to critically endangered California condors and a major threat to a host of other rare and vulnerable animals, killing tens of millions of them every year.



FLICKR COMMONS/KEN-ICHI

The threatened California red-legged frog has disappeared from 70 percent of its historic range. We'll go to court if necessary to keep deadly pesticides out of the frog's remaining habitat.

We're also working to get the lead out of the environment by forcing the federal government to clean up the military's toxic legacy on the Midway Atoll in the northwestern Hawaiian Islands, to stop the annual lead-poisoning slaughter of up to 10,000 albatross chicks.

Uranium mining has left a toxic and radioactive footprint across many areas of the West. The Center's advocacy to block uranium mining on public land saw two key victories this fall. First, the Obama administration proposed enacting a long-sought 20-year ban on new uranium mining on 1 million acres around Grand Canyon National Park. The decision follows years of hard advocacy by the Center and our partners to protect waterways and imperiled species like the humpback chub from uranium mining. We won another key victory in October when a federal judge, acting on a suit filed by the Center and others, halted uranium leasing on a 42-square-mile area in Colorado.

Already, hurdles await our new toxics campaign; both a permanent uranium ban near the Grand Canyon and the Clean Water Act, which helps regulate pesticide use in our wetlands and waterways, are presently under threat in Congress. But we'll bring full-court pressure, now more than ever, to keep toxics away of our water sources, wild places and wildlife.



Jonathan Evans, staff attorney, heads up the Center's Toxics and Endangered Species campaign from San Francisco.

DOUG BACKLUND/SOUTH DAKOTA GAME, FISH AND PARKS



The American burying beetle, a stunning scavenger that drags carrion underground to feed its young, is one of scores of endangered plants and animals in the path of the proposed Keystone XL pipeline. After the government allowed mowing down of native prairie grasslands in the beetle's Nebraska habitat — before the controversial pipeline project has even been approved — the Center filed suit in federal court.

Habitat victories set to preserve 72,000 acres for desert plant and salamander, 2,000 stream miles for Southwest songbird

XL pipeline runs through it? We don't think so.

Any way you look at it, the proposed Keystone XL pipeline is bad news: bad for the climate, endangered species, clean air, clean water and the list goes on.

In late September, the Center for Biological Diversity and partners stepped in to halt work in Nebraska that had begun even before the pipeline had been approved. Specifically, our lawsuit challenged decisions by the State Department and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to allow mowing of native prairie grasslands along 100 miles of the pipeline corridor — even though the controversial project hadn't been approved and was still the focus of public hearings.

If approved, TransCanada's 1,700-mile Keystone XL pipeline would carry up to 830,000 barrels of oil a day from the tar sands in Canada to refineries in Texas.

Along the way, it would cut across Nebraska's legendary Sand Hills, hundreds of rivers and

streams, and directly over the Ogallala Aquifer, which provides drinking water for millions of people. TransCanada's existing pipeline, called Keystone 1, has reportedly leaked 14 times since it started operating in June 2010.

Opposition to this project has been fierce and outspoken. More than 1,000 peaceful protestors were arrested outside the White House this summer as part of a massive demonstration to get President Obama to reject the pipeline.

The State Department has already strongly hinted that it supports the Keystone XL project, a troubling development particularly because the pipeline would not only be transporting oil extracted from Canada's environmentally destructive tar sands projects, but also because it would only serve to deepen the global climate crisis by relying on fossil fuels and the greenhouse pollution they produce.

Aside from detrimental effects on our climate, the pipeline threatens scores of endangered plants and animals in its path, including the interior least tern, whooping crane, piping plover, woodland caribou, American burying beetle and western prairie fringed orchid. •

Saving rare plants and animals isn't just about getting them on the endangered species list. It's also about saving the places they need to survive and thrive.

Studies have shown that species with "critical habitat" — a federal designation that provides enhanced protection — are twice as likely to be recovering as species without it. That's why the Center for Biological Diversity pushes so hard for those designations. There's been a string of successes lately.

After more than a decade of Center work on its behalf, this August the California tiger salamander received a final designation of 47,000-plus acres of protected critical habitat in Sonoma County, which will protect the most crucial parts of its habitat there.

The decision reversed a Bush-era decision not to protect any habitat at all for the rare and lovely black-and-yellow amphibian, which once occupied all of the Santa Rosa Plain but today is found in only a few scattered locations, driven to the brink by urban sprawl, roads and pesticides.

Also in August, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service proposed to set aside 25,000 acres of critical

habitat near Palm Springs, Calif., for the Coachella Valley milk vetch, a gorgeous, purple-flowered plant that the Center has been fighting for since we first filed to protect the species, along with our partners at the California Native Plant Society, in 1998.

The Obama administration also came in with a proposal to protect 2,000 miles of desert streams as habitat for the endangered southwestern willow flycatcher — a delicate, river-dependent bird that was one of the



JIM RORABAUGH/USFWS

The Center recently secured a proposal from the Obama administration to protect 2,000 miles of desert-stream habitat for the endangered southwestern willow flycatcher, a species the Center has worked to protect for nearly 20 years.

very first species the Center ever championed and that has been the subject of intense legal wrangling over the ensuing 20 years, as well as the linchpin of an ambitious strategy for protecting vulnerable Southwest rivers. We first filed to protect flycatchers back in 1992. •

New campaign mobilizes citizens, cities to support Clean Air Act

When it comes to pushing national policy through Congress, sometimes the most effective pressure comes from local cities back home.

That's why in September the Center launched a new campaign to get cities around the country to urge President Obama and the Environmental Protection Agency to finally take significant action on the global climate crisis.

Through our new Clean Air Cities campaign, volunteers around the United States are going to their local city councils with a simple resolution to approve: We support and need our leaders in Washington to harness the full power of the Clean Air Act to reduce greenhouse pollution.

"Dirty air is bad for people, wildlife and the future of our climate," said Rose Braz, the Center's climate campaign director. "Cities can play a crucial role in ensuring that we quickly and ambitiously use the Clean Air Act, the best tool we have for curbing pollution and averting the worst effects of global warming. The Clean Air Act saves lives and money, but it only works if it's used."

Already, several cities have put the resolution up for consideration, including Cincinnati, Ohio; Albany, N.Y.; and Richmond, Calif., home to the largest greenhouse gas emitter in the state.

We launched the campaign in the wake of two bad decisions from the Obama administration, bowing to industry pressure. The first was President Obama's decision to delay long-anticipated rules to tighten smog standards across the country. Two weeks later the EPA, despite a court-ordered deadline, delayed plans to regulate greenhouse pollution at power plants.

There's no reason to delay action; the effects of climate change are already setting in. This year has been a disastrous one with extreme weather, wildfires, record warm temperatures and disappearing sea ice in the Arctic.

The Clean Air Cities campaign aims to reverse the tide of inaction on climate change — one city at a time. •



MIRI TSALYUK

On the Web: Center spokesbear Frostpaw took to the streets with San Francisco staff and volunteers as part of the Moving Planet worldwide climate-change awareness action Sept. 24. Our contingent called upon urbanites to join our Clean Air Cities campaign — a nationwide effort to spur cities to support the Clean Air Act. To learn how you can join the effort in your own city, visit biologicaldiversity.org/CleanAirCities.

DON'T WANT TO MISS A BEAT?



Stay up to date with each week's Center news online

Our work on these and dozens of other campaigns unfolds at a fast and furious pace throughout the year. Fortunately, there's a way you can get the most up-to-date news on our most recent wins for wildlife and opportunities to take action, delivered straight to your inbox: Join the ranks of more than a quarter-million readers who subscribe to *Endangered Earth Online*, the Center's weekly e-newsletter, at biologicaldiversity.org/EEO.



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Hopeful Steps for Rare Species

From the Director

Kierán Suckling

HOW CAN YOU NOT LOVE SOMETHING CALLED a Waccamaw fatmucket? Or the Ozark hellbender?

Aside from their captivating names (one's a mussel, the other's a salamander), these two species have something else in common: They're among nearly 500 species around the country that have recently taken important new steps toward protection under the Endangered Species Act.

Others on that list may have more pedestrian names, like the Alabama map turtle and the eastern small-footed bat, but are no less important.

All are on the fast track toward protection as a result of the Center's landmark agreement reached in July to push 757 species closer to protection under the Endangered Species Act.

The agreement, the largest of its kind, is one of the most important accomplishments in the Center's 22-year history — the culmination of a decade's work to save hundreds of the country's most imperiled but least protected species.

Among the species that have cleared the first hurdles: 374 freshwater species in the Southeast (fish, birds, mussels, turtles and frogs), 23 plants and invertebrates in Hawaii and more than 30 springsnails in the Great Basin. One species, the Miami blue butterfly, is even getting emergency protection.

We're looking forward to more good news in the months and years to come for scores of other species in the agreement, including the American wolverine, Pacific walrus and Rio Grande cutthroat trout.

But as you know, the Center isn't content to sit back and savor our victories. There's too much more to do. That's why we're fighting tooth and nail against congressional attacks on our environmental laws, organizing grassroots campaigns to save our climate and doing more than ever to keep pesticides and other toxics from poisoning wildlife.

We also launched a new national overpopulation campaign this fall called 7 Billion and Counting, calling attention to the disastrous impacts that the human population explosion is having on the species extinction crisis around the globe. As part of that campaign, we're giving away 100,000 of our wildly popular Endangered Species Condoms this year to volunteer distributors in all 50 states.

So whether you're new to giving to the Center or you've been helping our work for years, thank you for all that you help us do. And take heart in knowing that, from coast to coast, there's more hope than ever for hundreds of mammals, birds, insects, fish, plants and all the wild places they live. •

FRONT COVER ILLUSTRATION IMAGES COURTESY NASA (EARTH FROM SPACE) AND FLICKR COMMONS/JAMES CRIDLAND (CROWD)

Endangered earth

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