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# THE PRESS-ENTERPRISE

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## Notice of intent to sue filed over kangaroo rat protections

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Conservationists on Wednesday filed a formal notice with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service that they intend to sue the agency over a decision to scale back protections for the endangered San Bernardino kangaroo rat.

Such notices are required to be filed 60 days before the agency can be sued in federal court.

The notice from the Center for

Biological Diversity, the San Bernardino Valley Audubon Society and the Friends of the Northern San Jacinto Valley follows the wildlife agency's decision last month to remove protection from 26,516 acres of land that had been designated critical habitat for the animal. The acreage is about three-fourths of the critical habitat for the kangaroo rat.

The groups contend that the loss of habitat will drive the animal closer to extinction.

The remaining 7,779 acres includes portions of washes along the Santa Ana River and Lytle, Cable and Cajon creeks in San Bernardino County; and parts of Bautista Creek east of Temecula and the San Jacinto River wash in Riverside County.

That acreage may be smaller, but it is better focused on land most needed for the animals to thrive, a Fish and Wildlife Service spokeswoman said last month.