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High Country News

Elephants and rubber dodos

[Ed Quillen](#) | Jan 26, 2009 11:00 AM



We just swore in a new president, and already there's speculation about who might run in 2012 -- including a [Westerner](#), Dirk Kempthorne of Idaho.

Kempthorne was George W. Bush's last Secretary of the Interior, replacing Gale Norton of Colorado in 2006. He had a long political resume -- mayor of Boise, U.S. Senator, and state governor -- before going to Interior.

He also has an extremely low rating from the League of Conservation Voters, and was the [2007 winner](#) of the "Rubber Dodo Award" from the Center for Biological Diversity because he went longer -- beating James Watt's record of 376 days -- than any previous Interior Secretary (since the Endangered Species Act became law in 1973) without listing a new species as endangered or threatened.

It should be noted that a more prominent potential 2012 Republican presidential candidate, Alaska Gov. Sarah Palin, won the [Rubber Dodo Award for 2008](#) on account of her opposition to protection for polar bears.

At this rate, we can just compile a list of Rubber Dodo winners in coming years, and by 2011, we'll be able to handicap the GOP presidential field.