

Editorial

Politics and the murrelet

The marbled murrelet is apparently the latest victim of the Bush administration's practice of subverting science to politics.

The murrelet is a seabird in the Pacific Northwest, known to nest in old-growth trees near the coast of Oregon. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, a subset of the Interior Department, considers it a threatened species, which presents a problem for logging companies.

According to the lawsuit brought by the Center for Biological Diversity, the Bush administration tweaked an official scientific review to make it appear the birdie didn't need further federal protections.

The allegations don't end at the murrelet. In all, the CBD claims the Interior Department manipulated findings or refused to act on 55 species of plants and animals, from flying squirrels to manatees.

If past is prologue, it won't be shocking if this is true. Administration officials have been accused of everything from massaging pre-war Iraq intelligence to muzzling scientists whose findings on stem cells, sex ed and secondhand smoke didn't jibe with the White House's agenda. Mr. Murrelet & Friends are just more evidence that, when it comes to policy-making, politics and ideology have too often trumped the truth.