

**Group: EPA not protecting species**

**Center sues feds, says they OK'd pesticide that threatens endangered species in Bay Area**

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An environmental group on Wednesday sued the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency for approving the use of pesticides in areas populated by Bay Area animals that are protected under the Endangered Species Act.

The lawsuit, filed by the Tucson-based Center for Biological Diversity, seeks restrictions on the use of pesticides in habitat used by 11 Bay Area species until the effects of those pesticides on wildlife are fully evaluated. The group said if the lawsuit is successful, it would likely lead to permanent restrictions on pesticide use in some areas.

"Given the proximity of agricultural pesticide spraying to some Bay Area residential areas ... we should be wondering if we are next when we see endangered species poisoned by these chemicals," center spokesman Jeff Miller said in a news release.

EPA spokeswoman Jennifer Wood defended the agency's pesticide regulation in an e-mailed statement.

The lawsuit seeks to prevent pesticide poisoning of the Delta smelt, the tidewater goby, the California clapper rail, the salt marsh harvest mouse, the tiger salamander, the San Francisco garter snake, the California freshwater shrimp, the San Joaquin kit fox, the Alameda whipsnake, the valley elderberry longhorn beetle and the Bay checkerspot butterfly.