

REGIONAL: SAN FRANCISCO GROUP SUES EPA ALLEGING ENDANGERED SPECIES VIOLATIONS

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The Center for Biological Diversity filed a lawsuit in San Francisco today against the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency alleging it violated the Endangered Species Act by allowing the use of 60 toxic pesticides in habitats of 11 Bay Area endangered species.

Jeff Miller, a spokesman for the Center for Biological Diversity, said many pesticides used threaten endangered Bay Area mice, fish, salamanders, snakes, shrimp, foxes, beetles and butterflies.

The EPA is required to consult with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to determine which chemicals may be harmful to endangered species, Miller said.

Published U.S. Fish and Wildlife studies indicate certain pesticides pose a threat to endangered species yet the EPA continues to allow use of the pesticides, according to Miller.

The Center for Biological Diversity is seeking an injunction against the use of certain pesticides and would like warning labels on pesticides that have been found to be harmful to endangered species.

Miller said warning labels on pesticides are crucial because the EPA is unable to regulate personal use of harmful pesticides that remain on the market. Miller said without warning labels, private citizens may unwittingly be using pesticides harmful to endangered species

EPA spokesman Mark Merchant said the agency is unable to comment on pending litigation.

"Even if they could comment, I don't think there is a lot they could say," said Miller.