

Species management common practice

MICHELLE T. HARRINGTON CENTER FOR BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY PHOENIX

Opinion

In Monday's lead editorial, "Fine feathered fraud: Law protecting one species from another cries out for reform," the editors claim it's wrong to interfere in the natural rivalry between species. However, this is a widely accepted practice (think game management agencies and cowboys), and when based on science, an essential tool in protecting and restoring native plants and animals.

Brown-headed cowbirds have expanded their range and become abundant in the Southwest only as land has been cleared for cattle and agriculture. They compromise other bird species, such as the endangered southwestern willow flycatcher, by displacing the eggs in the other birds' nests with their own. To manage nest parasitism, cowbirds may be trapped and killed.

Non-native bullfrogs, crawdads, and green sunfish have polluted Arizona's waterways. Removing these species is essential to restoring imperiled native fish populations.

The Endangered Species Act boasts a successful track record and has more than 80 percent of the American

people's support. The raiders in Congress who want to "reform" the act ignore the fact that 99 percent of the species on the list continue to persist, and seven out of 10 are stable or recovering.

The Endangered Species Act is working well and deserves our protection.