

The plunder continues

On Thursday the U.S. House of Representatives passed a bill that guts the Endangered Species Act, which has saved more than 99 percent of 1,300 species of plants and animals from extinction - including the Bald Eagle, Sea Otter, Gray Wolf and Grizzly Bear. In the process, the act has preserved 200 million acres of essential wildlife habitat.

In a now typical example of congressional doublespeak, the bill was titled "The Threatened and Endangered Species Recovery Act of 2005" by its author, Rep. Richard Pombo, R-Calif.

"This bill takes a wrecking ball to our nation's most important wildlife protection law," said Kieran Suckling of the Center for Biological Diversity. Since 1973, the act has been "the safety net for America's imperiled plants and animals. The Republican-dominated House of Representatives has ripped it apart, consigning God's creation to extinction." The bill eliminates habitat protection, exempts pesticides from environmental review and paves the way for corporations to reap hundreds of millions of dollars by simply asserting that they have been harmed by endangered species protections. They would sue the Department of Interior for their "speculative foregone profits," draining the budget established for America's national parks, wildlife refuges and endangered species. This is obscene.