

California Tiger Salamander Declared Endangered State-Wide

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By Drew Mackie



In what environmentalists may consider a victory in the fight to ensure certain species remain on the planet, a Dec. 14 ruling by California Superior Court Judge Lloyd Connelly overturned the California Fish and Game Commission's (CFGF) rejection of a petition from the Center for Biological Diversity to classify the California tiger salamander as "endangered." The ruling responded to a CFGF vote which would have kept the species from the list.

The California tiger salamander lives in vernal pools and other wetlands throughout the state. The populations in Santa Barbara and Sonoma counties were listed as being endangered by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. However, these classifications are structured in a way that such species can be labeled as endangered by both federal and state agencies. In other words, two separate lists are compiled by conservationists. Though endangered species often appear on both, the salamander was not regarded as endangered or threatened by California state law until this ruling. Thus, the salamander now appears on both lists.

"The thorough and well-reasoned opinion overturned the commission's decision because the commission

ignored or misrepresented the overwhelming scientific evidence showing that the salamander is highly imperiled," read a press release from Kathy Trisolini of Chatten-Brown and Carstens, the firm that represented the Center for Biological Diversity.