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## Saving Nemo? Clownfish Could End Up on Endangered Species List

By Samantha Grossman



Anemonefish, also known as common clownfish, swim in the aquarium of the Pacific complex in Long Beach, California. GABRIEL BOUYS / AFP/ Getty Images

Sadly, this isn't just another promo for Finding Nemo 3D.

The Center for Biological Diversity filed a petition with the National Marine Fisheries Service to protect clownfish — and seven other coral reef-dwelling species — under the Endangered Species Act, the Los Angeles Times reports. But before you start shedding tears for Nemo and his buddies, keep in mind that this request isn't based on any evidence of a decline in the clownfish population. Instead, what has sparked concern is the deteriorating health of coral reefs as a result of climate change and growing ocean acidity.

"As we continue to emit greenhouse gas pollution, we are seeing more and more animals and plants in the U.S. and around the world that are in danger from climate change," Shaye Wolf, the climate science director for the Arizona-based organization that filed the petition,

told the McClatchy Company. "This case is important because not a lot of people understand how much the ocean is being harmed by carbon pollution."

A critical element of the Endangered Species Act is protecting species' natural habitats as opposed to merely protecting their populations. Take, for example, the polar bear, which earned a spot on the endangered species list in 2008 despite a recent uptick in the animal's population. The U.S. Department of the Interior cited the receding ice of the Arctic sea as reason to declare the species "threatened," TIME reported that May.

And so, similarly, a projected long-term threat to the clownfish's habitat has prompted environmentalists to begin seeking protection now. Above all, this threat is troubling because who wants to live in a world where we'll no longer see Nemo swimming out to sea?