



## ENDANGERED SPECIES:

Interior to decide fate of 10 species by 2018 under agreement with CBD

Phil Taylor / E&E reporter  
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The Fish and Wildlife Service has agreed to decide in the next five years whether to list 10 new species under the Endangered Species Act, including a rare Pacific Northwest mammal, an Arizona orchid and four species of springsnails.

The settlement announced late last week with the Center for Biological Diversity requires the agency to issue listing determinations on each of the species by fiscal 2018 -- decisions that could affect high-profile projects including a copper mine in Arizona and a water pipeline in Nevada.

The agency will issue 12-month findings on the Humboldt marten in Northern California and Oregon; Coleman's coralroot in Arizona; the Lake Valley, hardy, flag and bifid duct springsnails; the Big Sandy crayfish from Appalachia; the black rail along the Atlantic coast; and the Big Blue Springs cave crayfish and Barbour's map turtle in Florida, according to CBD.

"From logging of old-growth forests in northern California, to groundwater pumping to feed Las Vegas sprawl, to mountaintop removal in Appalachia, these 10 species all face serious threats to their survival," Tierra Curry, a conservation biologist with CBD, said in

a statement. "This agreement will move some of the most endangered species in the country toward the protection they desperately need to avoid extinction."

The settlement follows a much larger pact CBD and WildEarth Guardians reached with FWS in 2011 that required the agency to issue final listing decisions on more than 250 candidate species and initial decisions on hundreds more (Greenwire, Jan. 11).

Under that settlement, CBD agreed to limit deadline lawsuits -- which target the agency's ability to comply with the ESA's decision time frame -- to 10 species per year. The species in this latest settlement represent the group's quota for fiscal 2012.

Republicans and some industry groups have attacked the groups' 2011 settlement, arguing that it was struck behind closed doors and sets arbitrary listing deadlines that could hamper energy development nationwide.

But wildlife advocates and FWS have argued that the settlement will allow the agency to implement the 1973 species law more efficiently by limiting the procedural lawsuits that had bogged it down for years.

By the end of the year, FWS will issue a decision on the Coleman's coralroot, which grows in the Dragoon Mountains southeast of Tucson

and in the Santa Rita Mountains, site of Rosemont Copper Co.'s planned open-pit mine, said CBD, which sued FWS last summer hoping to stop the project (E&ENews PM, June 29, 2012).

Another species, the Big Sandy crayfish, has lost much of its range because of water pollution from mountaintop-removal coal mining operations in Virginia, Kentucky and West Virginia, according to a separate lawsuit filed by CBD nearly a year ago (E&ENews PM, May 31, 2012).

A listing determination will also be made for the Humboldt marten, a rare weasel-like creature long believed to have been extinct until one was captured on a motion-detection camera 15 years ago in a Northern California forest. CBD contends the carnivore is threatened by extensive logging of coastal old-growth trees (E&ENews PM, Jan. 12, 2012).

Both the crayfish and marten will receive listing determinations by April 2015.