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## Advocacy group report says Keystone threats loom large



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By TALIA BUFORD

The Keystone XL pipeline could have devastating effects on at least a dozen threatened and endangered species and the habitats that lie in the project's path, according to a new analysis from the Center for Biological Diversity.

The report, released Wednesday by the environmental advocacy group, found that power lines used to operate the pipeline

pose collision threats for birds and bats; construction would disturb 15,500 acres, potentially crushing endangered foxes with young in their dens; and the project itself would exacerbate climate change by increasing production of the oil sands.

"Keystone XL will really be a disaster for the nation and for iconic species like the whooping crane or the burying beetle and species that are part of the Great Plains and the American

landscape for tens of thousands of years," said Noah Greenwald, director of the Endangered Species Program at the Center for Biological Diversity. "For a pipeline that will hold very little benefit for the American public and allow for the export of tar sands onto the world market, it's not worth it."

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mates, and it mirrors some concerns that the Interior Department raised in its comments on the pipeline in August, Greenwald said, including the potential impact to migratory birds.

In March, the State Department released a draft environmental impact statement that found the pipeline would cause “no significant impacts to most resources along the proposed project route,” assuming certain safeguards are followed.

The problem with that analysis, Greenwald said, is that State didn’t analyze the potential impacts of a spill — even as it acknowledged that spills are likely up to twice annually — and it only focused on the impacts within the direct path of the pipeline, rather than considering the hazards presented by related power lines, roads and construction activities.

“We think it’s ludicrous and irresponsible,” Greenwald said of State’s analysis. “There are endangered species in the path where they write off the impacts of a potential spill.”

In all, the center identifies several species that could be severely affected by the pipeline: the American burying beetle, greater sage grouse, black-footed ferret, piping plover, interior least tern, Western prairie fringed orchid, Sprague’s pipit, northern swift fox, pallid sturgeon and the whooping crane.

Especially imperiled, Greenwald said, would be the pallid sturgeon, a prehistoric fish that makes its prime habitat in the Missouri and Yellowstone rivers along Keystone XL’s path, and the whooping crane, whose migratory corridor crosses the pipeline’s path.

“This could be the nail in the coffin for the pallid sturgeon,” Greenwald said. “It could put it on the path toward extinction.”