

Star-Telegram

Group threatens to sue feds over lizard

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The Associated Press

ALBUQUERQUE, N.M. — Environmental groups are threatening to sue the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service over the agency's decision not to grant endangered species protections to a lizard found only in southeastern New Mexico and West Texas.

Federal officials have said the decision not to list the dunes sagebrush lizard was based partly on voluntary conservation agreements now in place in the two states.

But the Center for Biological Diversity and Defenders of Wildlife contend that the agreements between landowners and the Texas Comptroller's Office are confidential and not even the Fish and Wildlife Service can review them.

The groups say the agency will not be able to determine whether there are adequate protections in place for the lizards.

Similar voluntary agreements made with landowners and businesses in New Mexico are not confidential