

Settlement requires federal review of pesticides' impact on endangered species

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The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service must examine the impact of five common pesticides on endangered animals across the nation under the terms of a settlement with an environmental advocacy group.

The FWS must review carbaryl, chlorpyrifos, diazinon, malathion and methomyl. These pesticides are toxic to wildlife and may threaten human health, according to the Center for Biological Diversity.

“We don’t think these chemicals should even be in use, but at the very least, measures to protect endangered wildlife should have been put in place when these chemicals were first approved,” said Collete Adkins Gieske, an attorney with CBD.

U.S. law — the Insecticide, Fungicide and Rodenticide Act — authorizes the Environmental Protection Agency to review and approve pesticides for commercial use. However, according to CBD, the EPA routinely fails to consult on the



The California red-legged frog. — PHOTO: Wikipedia

potential impact of those pesticides on endangered species with Fish and Wildlife.

The environmental group previously sued the EPA for failing to consult with Fish and Wildlife on the impact of pesticides on California red-legged frogs and secured an injunction restricting pesticide use until such consultation took place.

However, in 2013, when the government still had not completed the consultation, the CBD filed another complaint.

In a settlement agreement announced on this week, Fish and Wildlife said it would complete the review within five years.

In addition, FWS will look at the impact of the pesticides on all endangered species in the United States, not just the red-legged frogs.

CBD says that in the United States more than a billion pounds of pesticides are used, but most of the pesticides with EPA approval were not evaluated for impacts on wildlife.

“Governmental agencies have a legal and moral duty to ensure that harmful chemicals aren’t sprayed in the same places where vulnerable wild animals are trying to survive,” said Adkins Giese. “Pesticides found in endangered species habitat can also contaminate our drinking water, food, homes and schools, where they pose a disturbing health risk.”