



Endangered Species Protection Sought for Oklahoma's Disappearing Horned Lizards

Your Update from Ron Hays of RON
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The Center for Biological Diversity, concerned scientists and a 15-year-old lizard enthusiast filed a formal petition Thursday seeking state endangered species protection in Oklahoma for the Texas horned lizard. Despite their name, these formidable-looking lizards with numerous horns on their heads were once common throughout Oklahoma, but have now nearly disappeared due to habitat destruction, pesticides and introduced fire ants.

"Time's running out for these lizards," said Collette Adkins Giese, a Center biologist and lawyer focused on protecting reptiles and amphibians.

"The state of Oklahoma needs to recognize the dire situation these rare creatures are in before it's too late."

The petition documents that the Texas horned lizard has undergone massive declines in Oklahoma and continues to be threatened by loss of habitat and many other factors. Fifteen-year-old Kade Wilson contacted the Center for help in protecting the lizards after learning that a shopping center would be built in a field near his home, where he enjoyed finding the lizards, also known as "horny toads."

The lizard is already listed as a "threatened species" in Texas. In both states it is illegal to kill the lizards or collect them for pets.