



## ENDANGERED SPECIES:

### Law helped recover most bird populations -- report

Corbin Hiar, E&E reporter - June 21, 2016

A conservation group report today determined that the Endangered Species Act has been “extraordinarily successful” in recovering imperiled birds.

The Center for Biological Diversity study -- which says it is “the most exhaustive and systematic analysis of its kind” -- found that 85 percent of bird populations in the continental United States increased or stabilized while protected under the ESA.

The law was less successful in recovering Pacific island birds. Only 61 percent of those populations have increased or stabilized since they were added to the endangered or threatened species lists, according to the report.

The study examined the long-term population trends of all 120 bird species protected by the ESA or its precursor statutes since 1967.

Twenty-three species were excluded from the analysis because they were last seen prior to listing, were delisted for reasons unrelated to their population trend, or have been protected for less than a decade.

Recovering species include California condors in the Golden State and Arizona,

which are up 391 percent since 1968; whooping cranes in the central United States, up 923 percent since 1967; and wood storks in the Southeast, up 61 percent since 1984.

The report calls for more money to be spent on recovering birds near extinction, as well as imperiled bird species in the Pacific.

The center is working on a more detailed version of the study that it intends to submit to a peer-reviewed scientific journal.

“The journal paper includes the contents of today’s report, plus several additional analyses dealing with more technical aspects of how to determine the success of the Endangered Species Act, comparisons of different methods of assessing population trends of endangered species, and more detail on regional trends,” co-author Loyal Mehrhoff said in an email.

“While today’s report was not formally peer-reviewed, the trend data was distributed to multiple bird experts to help make sure we were assessing trends appropriately. Their feedback was invaluable,” added Mehrhoff, who is the center’s endangered species recovery director. “We released a portion of our overall findings via today’s report because they were clear and important to current public discussions.”