

# CASPER Star Tribune

## Loda: Toads benefited from the Endangered Species Act

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Editor:

It's amazing to see the news that endangered Wyoming toads are now successfully re-establishing and breeding in the wild ("Second large release of endangered toads planned; unique species once thought extinct finds hope," May 30).

Thanks are due to the private landowners and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for giving this species such a great chance at recovery.

As a herpetologist who first became captivated with frogs and toads on my family's farm as a child, I am overjoyed to see folks working to help bring Wyoming toads back from the brink of extinction on their own private lands. This type of cooperation illustrates how agencies and landowners can work together to protect and recover endangered species.

The Wyoming toad was essentially wiped out from the wild before these types of reintroduction. The last 10 toads were taken from the wild in 1989 for a captive breeding program, similar to California condors. Providing the toad Endangered Species Act protections in 1984 absolutely played a critical role in this breeding program that is allowing them to be reintroduced now.

At a time when Republicans in Congress have made a habit of turning the Endangered Species Act into a punching bag, it is uplifting to see the Act in action – not only preventing the Wyoming toad's extinction, but allowing for efforts to bring this species back into the wild where it belongs.

Calls to weaken or gut the Endangered Species Act are counterproductive to these cooperative efforts to preserve our natural heritage. This iconic environmental law has been highly effective, preventing more than 99 percent of protected species from extinction. This is not the time to weaken the law. Instead, Congress should provide more funding to help save our most imperiled species from being lost forever.

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