

News Roundup: Lawsuit Seeks to Save Threatened Central Texas Salamanders

By Becky Fogel
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An environmental advocacy group is suing the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The Center for Biological Diversity accuses the agency of failing to protect two Central Texas amphibians listed as threatened species: the Georgetown and Salado salamanders.

Elise Bennett is a staff attorney at the Center for Biological Diversity. “One thing that’s really unique about them and I find particularly endearing is that their heads are crowned by these beautiful fluffy gills,” she says. “They use these gills to live their entire lives underwater, and that’s why it’s so important to protect springs for these salamanders.”

Bennett says under the Endangered Species Act, U.S. Fish and Wildlife is required to protect the habitat of these salamanders.

“Unfortunately the service did not do that, even though the law required it,” Bennett says.



Georgetown Salamander/Wikimedia Commons
The Georgetown salamander was listed as threatened five years ago

“Now we’re about five years away from that decision to protect them – and they’ve still gone without these protections.

So this lawsuit is all about making sure that there will be clean water and habitat for these salamanders moving into the future.”

Bennett adds that ensuring the salamanders have clean water not only protects their habitat, but it protects people as well.