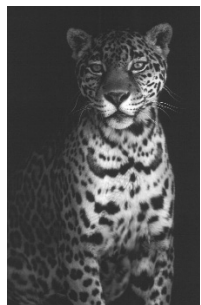


GROWING RANKS

335 PLANTS AND ANIMALS JOIN THE RANKS OF THE PROTECTED . . .

The Center has protected hundreds of imperiled plants and animals through a variety of means, including advocacy, ecosystem protection, urban planning, reintroduction efforts, and much more. One quantifiable measure of our success is the tally of plants and animals that the Center has gained a place for on the federal threatened and endangered species list, where they are protected under the Endangered Species Act. We've won protected listings for 335 imperiled plants and animals—more than any other conservation group.



MAMMALS – 15: including the jaguar (photo by Robin Silver), Buena Vista Lake shrew, Canada lynx, woodland caribou, St. Andrew beach mouse, San Bernardino kangaroo rat, San Miguel fox, Santa Catalina Island fox, Santa Cruz Island fox, and Santa Rosa Island fox.



BIRDS – 9 : cactus ferruginous pygmy owl (photo by Robin Silver), coastal California gnatcatcher, Mexican spotted owl, Puerto Rican broad-winged hawk, Rota bridled white-eye, short-tailed albatross, southwestern willow flycatcher, and Steller's eider.



AMPHIBIANS – 7 : California red-legged frog (photo by Marguerite Gregory), California tiger salamander, Chiricahua leopard frog, flatwoods salamander, gopher frog, mountain yellow-legged frog, Sonoran tiger salamander



REPTILES – 3: Alameda whipsnake (photo courtesy of USFWS), bog turtle, Lake Erie water snake



FISHES – 9: Alabama sturgeon, Arkansas River shiner, Atlantic salmon, Devil's River minnow, Kootenai River white sturgeon, Rio Grande silvery minnow, Sacramento splittail, vermilion darter, and **Topeka shiner** (photo by Konrad Schmidt)



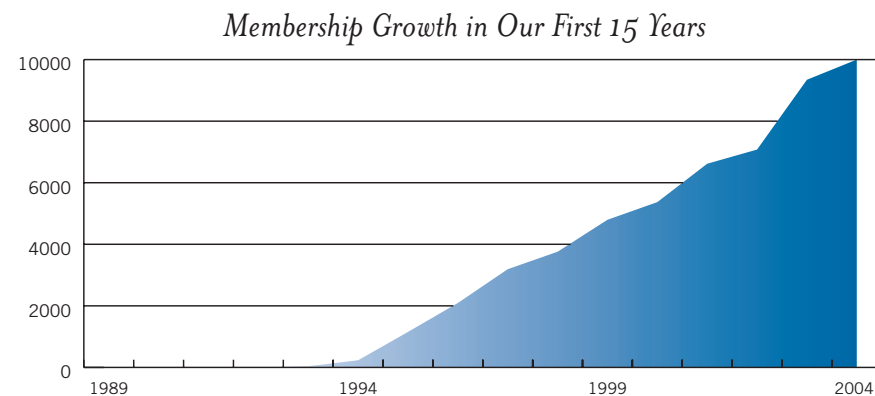
INVERTEBRATES – 36: including the armored snail, Government Canyon Bat Cave spider, Helotes mold beetle, Hine's emerald dragonfly, scaleshell mussel, white abalone, and **Quino checkerspot butterfly** (photo by Peter Bryant)



PLANTS – 256: including ash-gray Indian paintbrush, Britton's beargrass, Canelo Hills ladies' tresses, Kincaid's lupine, kolea, and **Peirson's milk-vetch** (photo by Jim Dice)

. . . AS OUR MEMBERSHIP RANKS GROW STRONGER

The astounding growth of our membership from just a handful of supporters 15 years ago to more than 10,000 members today has inspired our work and fueled our successes. We thank all our members for playing such a substantial part in the trials and triumphs of our first 15 years.



CENTER FOR BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY

BECAUSE LIFE IS GOOD.

CELEBRATING FIFTEEN YEARS OF PROTECTING THE WILD

This fall the Center for Biological Diversity celebrates 15 years of unwavering dedication to the protection of endangered plants and animals and their habitat. In these pages we look back on an impressive track record of success, and highlight some of our most significant accomplishments.

THE FIRST FRONTIER

The Center for Biological Diversity emerged from an idea – that wilderness and wildlife are essential – but it also emerged from a specific landscape: the Gila Headwaters of southwestern New Mexico and southeastern Arizona. Located in the confluence of four major bioregions, the Gila Headwaters region is the wildest corner of the Southwest. With millions of roadless acres of public lands, and a naturally high rate of biological diversity, northern species such as the red squirrel and goshawk mix with tropical species such as the coatimundi and jaguar.

This was where, in the late 1980s, Kieran Suckling, Peter Galvin and Todd Schulke met while surveying Mexican spotted owls for the Forest Service. Witnessing firsthand the destructive policies and practices at work in the region, the three moved to a pine-covered canyon bisected by the San Francisco River of southwestern New Mexico and began their work to protect the Gila. Two miles' hike from their vehicles parked on a national forest road, they lived in teepees, watched cattle consume every cottonwood and willow seedling that dared sprout up in the river flood plain, and pored over maps depicting the Forest Service's plans to log every roadless area in the Gila that was not explicitly protected by Congress.

Joined by Dr. Robin Silver, M.D., an avid wildlife advocate and photographer, the Center founders established with their work in the Gila a precedent from which many future accomplishments have followed.

Focusing on a largely unimplemented clause of the Endangered Species Act (ESA) allowing for "citizen petitions," they compiled compelling and comprehensive scientific data on the Mexican spotted owl, and demanded that it be listed as an endangered species. And when the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service failed to respond to the petition, the Center turned to the courts. Their persistence worked: in 1993 the Mexican spotted owl was finally placed on the federal threatened and endangered species list.



But this was only the beginning. Once the owl was protected by law, the Center focused on ensuring that the law was enforced. Further pressure from the Center resulted in a 1995 moratorium on all logging activities in the 11 national forests of the Southwest until a conservation plan for the owl could be developed. Since these historic actions, there has been a drastic reduction of logging activity in the Gila. Livestock have been banned from over 300 miles of critical riparian areas. And the Center has continued to seek protection for other Gila species: the southwestern willow flycatcher, cactus ferruginous pygmy owl, jaguar and several others are now on the endangered species list.

A CREATIVE AND PERSISTENT STRATEGY

Since those early days in the Gila, the Center has grown in many ways – in membership, staff, budget, and most importantly in the scope of its programs. But the Center's expansion over the past 15 years would be meaningless unless there were concrete results to show for it. The true measure of success has been the protections the Center has secured for species and habitat. Our achievements in this pursuit have been unprecedented and unmatched by any other environmental organization. Since the first victory with the Mexican spotted owl, the Center has won a total of 335 new listings for imperiled plants and animals under the ESA and gained protection of more than 43 million acres of habitat.

By combining rigorous scientific research with aggressive legal action, the Center has developed an exceptionally effective strategy. Having won over 90 percent of its more than 300 legal actions, the Center provides an empowering example for other environmental groups seeking protection for wildlife and habitat under the law, demonstrating that a tenacious approach can yield incredible victories – even when facing powerful corporate interests and the inertia of government bureaucracies. If the Center had done nothing else over the past 15 years, this accomplishment would remain a lasting legacy.

AN ECOSYSTEM APPROACH

The Center's mission is not simply to see that animals and plants are put on the endangered species list. This is only one essential aspect of a larger goal: the preservation of entire ecosystems. As in the Gila forests, the Center has combined sound science with strong advocacy and legal action to achieve protections for wildlife

...story continued on page 2...

CELEBRATING FIFTEEN YEARS... *continued from front page*

and habitat in hundreds of locations across the U.S. and beyond:

Deserts

The deserts of the western U.S. are home to a surprising abundance of unique species, and the Center has secured a wide range of protections for desert wilderness. Our most sweeping victory on this front has taken shape in the California Desert Conservation Area (CDCA), a 25-million-acre swath of the Sonoran, Mojave and Great Basin deserts stretching from the Mexican border north to Death Valley and the eastern Sierra Nevada Mountains. The area includes some of the most scenic and biologically important areas in southern California. In just a few short years, the Center has revolutionized management of the CDCA, protecting imperiled animals such as the desert tortoise, southwestern willow flycatcher, and peninsular bighorn sheep.

The Center also protects desert from ever-encroaching urban sprawl. In 1997, the Center's efforts resulted in the legal protection of the cactus ferruginous pygmy owl, whose listing revolutionized urban planning in Tucson and surrounding Pima County, forcing authorities to adopt new strategies to accommodate imperiled species threatened by sprawl development, and spurring the creation of the Sonoran Desert Conservation Plan—the most ambitious and scientifically-grounded conservation plan in the country.

Forests

Forests provide some of the world's richest habitat for wildlife. The Center has expanded its Forests Program well beyond the initial scope of the Gila, to forests throughout the Southwest, California, Pacific Northwest, and southeastern Alaska. Using a variety of tools, the Center has prevented destruction of forest lands and worked diligently to secure protections for forest-dependent species such as the yellow-billed cuckoo, Pacific fisher, and Sierra Nevada mountain yellow-legged frog.

Advocating collaboratively with other groups, the Center has worked to push government management of our national forests in a more rational direction—one that does not sacrifice the long-term welfare of our lands and the diversity they harbor to short-term

private gain at taxpayer expense. Center staff are also working at the cutting edge of restoration technology on a collaborative, on-the-ground project in the Gila, Santa Fe and Kaibab National Forests to develop systems for restoring ponderosa pine forest—one of the Southwest's best-understood and most degraded forest ecotypes.

Rivers and Watersheds

From the West and Southwest to the Great Lakes region, the Center has developed Wild and Scenic River campaigns to protect the few remaining un-dammed rivers and streamside habitat. In its protection of millions of acres of critical habitat, the Center has set the stage for the restoration of a wide variety of river, wetland, estuarine and marine ecosystems. In Arizona, the Center has challenged the very basis of Arizona water law, and joined with local conservation groups to advocate for state policy changes that would help quell the rampant withdrawal of groundwater in the last remaining riparian ecosystems of the desert Southwest.

In Arizona, a key focus has been the spectacular San Pedro Watershed, one of the most biologically diverse places on Earth. In addition to the Mexican spotted owl and the cactus ferruginous pygmy owl, the Center has won ESA protection for the southwestern willow flycatcher, jaguar, Sonoran tiger salamander and Huachuca water umbel, and is seeking federal protection for others. We are also advocating to reform water use policy in the basin and ensure that the San Pedro remains a free-flowing river.

Marine

The expansion of the Center's reach is most clearly evidenced by its recent marine work.

Over 80 percent of life on Earth can be found under the ocean's surface, and the biodiversity found there is only beginning to be understood. In direct response to threats of overfishing, fisheries bycatch, pollution, and habitat destruction, the Center has worked to gain protections for animals such as leatherback and loggerhead sea turtles, killer whales, sea otters, and the Steller's eider, to name just a few. Recently, Center staff traveled as far as Okinawa to oppose U.S. Department of Defense plans to develop, and effectively destroy, coral reef and habitat for the endangered dugong (a relative of the manatee). The Center will pursue important new protections for ocean life in the coming years.

The combined effect of the Center's many victories has had a truly significant impact on the health of many highly valuable and diverse ecosystems. But the Center's work is far from over. The Bush administration's policies have made securing and maintaining wildlife protections all the more challenging—and all the more vital. Critical habitat designations are routinely slashed, and protections for species are often challenged by powerful industry players. As the Center expands its efforts to fight these attempted rollbacks, it connects with and supports a growing network of local grassroots advocates for endangered species and biological diversity. There is much reason to expect that the accomplishments of next 15 years will exceed those of the past, and that the Center will continue to lead the way toward a more secure future for irreplaceable wildlife and wilderness.



San Pedro River
Photo by Robin Silver

FIFTEEN YEARS OF FEARLESS LEADERSHIP

The Center for Biological Diversity is by no means a one-man show. On the contrary, it is a team of highly dedicated and talented staff members, many of whom have been with the Center since its inception. But it is impossible not to acknowledge the role that Center founder and longtime Executive Director Kieran Suckling has played in the Center's 15-year history. In his new role as Policy Director of the Center, Kieran will be able to devote more time to his passion — protecting and strengthening the Endangered Species Act. The comments and stories below from co-founders, staff, and other colleagues from the environmental community, are testament to Kieran's contribution to the Center's success.

"Kieran's joy at discovery of the uniqueness of a plant or animal, and his tireless efforts to protect these defenseless creatures are his legacy. He possesses a tireless, obsessive attention to scientific detail driven by his belief in the value of all life forms no matter how simple or complex. His efforts continue to inspire my own."

— Dr. Robin Silver, M.D.,
Board Chair & Center co-founder

"The Center is famous for its backcountry beginning in a teepee deep in the Gila National Forest. At the time Kieran owned a desert tan Subaru wagon that had a broken backdoor held down with a bungee chord. Often on his way to meetings, Kieran would get coated in a layer of trail dust that swirled up from the back of the car. He would emerge from on high like a prophet from the planet Dune to spread his ecological doctrine. Local mills were surrounded by huge stacks of old-growth ponderosa pines and the mountains were grazed to the bone. The Center was "run out of town" eventually, but little did these ranchers know that this move would launch the Center's meteoric rise from an obscure local band to one of the most effective environmental groups in the country."

— Todd Schulke,
Center co-founder and
Forest Policy Director

"Kieran, a philosophy graduate student, ended up in the Gila after his instructor at NYU wondered why so many of the undergraduates with whom Kieran worked ended up dropping out. Perhaps, said the bearded and impish grad student, it was because he advised them all to hitchhike west and fight to save the old trees. Kieran decided it was time he did the same."

— Michael Robinson,
Center Coordinator of
Carnivore Conservation



"Kieran has breathed desperately needed life into the struggle to save biodiversity, and he has done so with the seemingly unassailable, yet nonetheless radical, notion that the Endangered Species Act should mean what it says, and hence should be vigorously and rapidly enforced according to its plain terms. Perhaps most important, Kieran, along with the other stalwarts at the Center, has helped instill a belief in all of us who do this work that changing the unacceptable status quo is actually possible — that we can somehow manage to avert, or at least mitigate, the looming extinction crisis if we all simply work hard enough."

— Eric Glitzenstein,
Meyer & Glitzenstein,
a Washington, D.C. public interest law firm

"Kieran's approach to conservation is tough and complex, like boxing an octopus. He leads with an aggressive style backed by solid facts, and allows other talented staff enough freedom and support to be effective."

— Daniel Patterson,
Center Desert Ecologist

"Kieran and the Center have together become one of the most convincing voices in this country on behalf of nature and its values. I've come to greatly appreciate his science-based (and often creative) approach to conservation advocacy."

— William Snape,
Defenders of Wildlife and Endangered Species Coalition

"One of Kieran's greatest assets is his ability to convey an incredible sense of wonder for the natural world. Kieran loves to tell people amazing tidbits of information about a plant or animal, about the bizarre mating habits of a species or the almost unbelievable distances migratory birds travel. His ability to get other people to share in that sense of amazement is something I have seen reach even the most apathetic and unengaged person time after time.

Kieran thinks big and that has encouraged me to think big. He has helped make things happen that I never really thought were possible. Kieran has taught me not to fear failure, not to fear rejection. Persistence, creativity, hard work, and above all a great sense of humor are some of the hallmarks of my friend and colleague Kieran Suckling."

— Peter Galvin,
Center co-founder and Conservation Director

"It is not at all unusual to hear Kieran start a sentence "This is so cool. . ." and know that you are about to learn that butterflies have 12,000 eyes or that snails can be dormant for up to three years. He has dedicated his life to protecting unique and vulnerable species and I am certain that many plants and animals would no longer exist on this Earth if it weren't for him. This is more than most accomplish in a lifetime, and Kieran is just getting started. It is a real privilege to work alongside Kieran and I am certain that he will continue to inspire me with his courage, vision and intelligence. On behalf of all of us: thank you, Kieran."

— Chelsea Reiff Gwyther
Center Executive Director