
ENDANGERED
EARTH
CENTER FOR BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY • FALL 2026

A Red Wolf Baby Boom



Everyone loves a comeback story, and red wolves are trying to stage a historic return.

Earlier this year four litters of red wolf pups were born in the wild in North Carolina, the most pups born in more than a decade.

The pups come on the scene at an inspiring moment when landowners, local communities, government agencies and thousands of supporters are working together to save the world's most endangered carnivores. But we know there's much more work to be done.

Only 21 adult wolves remain in the wild. Their kind were once hunted to near extinction, but the Endangered Species Act helped them bounce back. Red wolves were reintroduced to eastern North Carolina, and by 2011 more than 120 red wolves roamed the landscape.

Then gunshot mortality and policy changes caused red wolf populations to crash to as few as seven. Now, though, their numbers are rebounding once more, especially with the addition of four litters this year.

Three litters were from breeding pairs who'd birthed pups together last year. Red wolves mate for life, and siblings and grandparents often help raise pups.

But it isn't enough to just cheer on new wolf pups when they're born.

Vehicle collisions are now the leading cause of death for red wolves. Nine have been killed by vehicle strikes since 2020, including three in the past year. Amelia, the matriarch of the largest remaining red wolf pack, was killed by a vehicle this summer, leaving behind her two red wolf pups. Nearly all the road mortalities occurred along Highway 64, which runs through the heart of the red wolves' refuges.

Fortunately, the Center is leading efforts to reduce road mortality for red wolves. The Center and 12,000 supporters raised nearly $2 million to help secure a federal grant to build wildlife crossings beneath Highway 64, and the design phase is underway. Red wolves, black bears, river otters, spotted turtles, and more than 30 other species will benefit.

The Center and our partners have also launched a campaign to offer red wolf specialty license plates in North Carolina, and we're leading research for additional reintroduction sites across the Southeast. **Stay tuned.**





Will Harlan is the Center's Southeast director.

SaveRedWolves.org

Meet individual red wolves, view photos and videos, get the latest news, and take action.

5 Species We're Fighting for Right Now

1



COASTAL MARTEN

In response to a Center lawsuit to save imperiled coastal martens, a federal court has ordered new restrictions on off-road vehicles at Oregon Dunes National Recreation Area, giving some extra protections to these furry mammals as they search for food, find mates, and raise their young. Fewer than 400 coastal martens remain, living in highly isolated populations in Oregon and California.

2



GRAY-HEADED CHICKADEES

In Alaska we're seeking Endangered Species Act protection for gray-headed chickadees, who may be North America's rarest and most imperiled resident bird. The last confirmed sighting was in 2017 in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. Rapid warming is disrupting the timing of the Arctic spring, raising serious concerns about the birds' future.

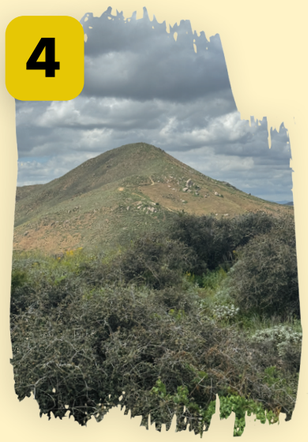
RED KNOT

We're planning legal action against the Trump administration for not moving fast enough to protect red knots, shorebirds that stop along the length of the Eastern Seaboard during their 19,000-mile, round-trip migrations. Experts have calculated the species has seen a 94% decline in abundance over the past four decades.

3



4



PALMER'S OAK

In Southern California the Center and allies reached an agreement to help safeguard the world's oldest known living oak — a plant that is at least 13,000 years old, with cultural significance to local Tribes. The agreement permanently protects 54.7 acres of open space near an ancient Palmer's oak in Jurupa Valley.

5



DUNES SAGE-BRUSH LIZARD

In our fight to save dunes sagebrush lizards in Texas and New Mexico, we've filed a legal appeal seeking to overturn a federal court's decision allowing the Trump administration and Texas to strip them of protections. Most of their habitat has been destroyed by oil and gas extraction and other development.

Explained:

TRUMP'S WORST ATTACK YET ON ENDANGERED SPECIES

What did the Trump administration do?

Over the summer, the Trump administration stripped protections for the places where endangered species live — a catastrophic decision that contradicts all scientific and legal understanding of the importance of habitat to America's most vulnerable plants and animals. If allowed to stand, it will have staggering, far-reaching consequences that will upend decades of work to save species.



Noah Greenwald is codirector of the Endangered Species program.

How did they do it?

By rescinding the regulatory definitions of "harm" under the Endangered Species Act, the administration is paving the way for corporate profiteers to destroy or degrade habitat for endangered species, even if it kills or injures them.

Can they really do that?

This move is clearly illegal, in part because harming species through habitat destruction is prohibited by the Endangered Species Act's statutory language. The definition repealed by the administration had been on the books for 50 years and is backed by decades of legal precedent, including from the U.S. Supreme Court.

Why is this so important?

Put simply, you can't save endangered species without protecting the places where they live. One key to the success of the Endangered Species Act — which has saved 99 percent of the species under its care from extinction — has been the law's fundamental definition of harm, which recognizes the commonsense concept that destroying a forest, beach, river or wetland that a species relies on for survival constitutes harm to that species.

What will the effect be?

Disastrous. With the stroke of a pen, industries can move into endangered species habitat and cut down forests, build roads, bulldoze land, drill, and mine. It's going to hurt imperiled species from coast to coast, including Florida manatees, grizzlies, salmon and steelhead, bird species like rufa red knots, golden-cheeked warblers and northern spotted owls, as well as Hawaiian monk seals, Canada lynx and pollinating insects.

What are we doing about it?

We can't let this stand. For starters, just days after the Trump administration made the change, we sued. The Center is part of a coalition of groups that filed a lawsuit in federal court in Seattle. The lawsuit is now working its way through the legal system.

Why is the timing so important here?

The timing couldn't be worse. We're in the midst of a global wildlife extinction crisis that's unprecedented during human times — with more than one-third of species at risk. We know that habitat destruction is a leading cause of extinction and that animals and plants in the United States are already running out of places to live. When species disappear, ecosystems become at risk of widespread collapse. People need intact ecosystems too, for everything from agriculture and clean water to medicine and disease prevention.

There's also a larger context, right?

This is the latest egregious attack on endangered species by the Trump administration. They've also limited protections for newly listed species and given corporations more influence over what habitat does — or doesn't — get protected. The administration also exempted all oil and gas activities in the Gulf of Mexico from needing to comply with the Endangered Species Act, an unprecedented and unlawful use of the so-called God Squad provision.

A Growing Threat to
WEST COAST WHALES

In late May a humpback whale in California's Monterey Bay was spotted entangled in ropes, buoys and other crab-fishing gear. The crab pots were gone, but the ropes were wrapped tightly around the whale's tail and flukes and digging into her flesh.

Sightings of the injured whale, nicknamed the Duchess of Anchovy, continued for several weeks. Thankfully, a crew of rescuers eventually sliced the gear away from the humpback, allowing her to swim off into the deep. Not all entangled whales escape with their lives: Some drown or later succumb to their injuries.

While the worldwide fight against commercial whaling persists, entanglement has emerged as another serious threat. And on the U.S. West Coast, the problem appears to be getting worse.

Between 2000 and 2013, NOAA Fisheries determined that an average of 10 whales per year were reported entangled off the coasts of California, Oregon and Washington. However, for the past 12 years (2014-2025), the agency estimates an average of 35 whale entanglements per year. (Scientists say the actual number could be five times higher because only a fraction are ever witnessed by people.)

One cause may be marine heatwaves that push more prey — and subsequently more whales — closer to shore, where they're more apt to run into ropes and traps set out for crabs and fish.

For species like critically endangered North Pacific right whales, with fewer than 50 individuals who visit the West Coast, a single entanglement can drastically increase their chance of extinction. Similarly, entanglements can harm the recovery of other imperiled species — including humpbacks, blue whales, killer whales, fin whales, and sperm whales, which have all been observed entangled in fishing gear on the West Coast.

The Center has been fighting to end entanglements for more than a decade. Years of Center-led litigation and campaigns have prompted states to adopt stronger regulations and embrace new, innovative "pop-up" (aka ropeless) fishing-gear systems that reduce the risk of entanglement. It's a good start but, given what's happened with the Duchess of Anchovy and others recently, there's much more work to be done.



Ben Grundy is a campaigner in our Oceans program.



By the Numbers:
RESCINDING THE ROADLESS RULE

In August the Trump administration moved ahead with plans to scrap the country's most significant tool for protecting national forests. Rescinding 2001's Roadless Rule, which provides crucial protection for undeveloped forests and all the wildlife and water within them, is the most significant attack on national forests in U.S. history.

45 million
acres of wild, undeveloped national forests that would be opened up to roads, logging, and other development under Trump's plan

70,000
river miles that would also be threatened

37
states with roadless areas that would lose protection under this plan

404
endangered species found in roadless areas, including grizzlies, Canada lynx, salmon, spotted owls, butterflies and wildflowers

88
number of endangered species with designated critical habitat within these targeted roadless areas

7.4 million
acres of designated critical habitat for imperiled species that could be open to bulldozing, logging and other types of destruction

1,791
miles of rivers and streams in roadless areas are designated as critical habitat for fish, mussels and other freshwater creatures

60 million
people in 33 states whose municipal water supplies have their headwaters in national forests

Fewer than 300
number of wolverines estimated to be living in the lower 48, including those depending on wild and undeveloped roadless areas

1,250
estimated number of Alexander Archipelago wolves in southeast Alaska threatened by fragmenting habitat and more roads to facilitate hunting and trapping

2 feet
length of the giant salamander known as the hellbender, a species who depends on rivers where roadless areas provide some of their last, best intact habitat

131
stream miles in Arizona and New Mexico known to harbor threatened Gila trout, where roadbuilding and logging would jeopardize their fragile recovery

200
number of Canada lynx in the only confirmed breeding population in Minnesota, which is threatened by forest roadbuilding and logging in their critical habitat



FRESH THREATS TO GRIZZLIES

One of the great joys of living where I do in Idaho is the chance to spot a grizzly bear nearby. I especially enjoy catching them in the golden autumn light as they're packing on the pounds for a long winter's rest.

Grizzlies are a keystone species — helping to set the ecological table for so many other animals in the northern Rockies — and true icons of the American West.

But the Trump administration seems determined to make life harder for our grizzlies.

Over the summer the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service proposed a revised Endangered Species Act rule that would allow more killing of grizzly bears across the lower 48 states, where they're currently protected as a threatened species. It's a troubling move that could allow the states, openly hostile to carnivores, to kill more grizzlies with no federal oversight.

We're organizing a push to fight this disastrous shift in management.

Meanwhile we've sued the Trump administration for approving an expanded livestock grazing plan that would harm grizzlies and other imperiled wildlife across the western United States. The plan will open 24 million acres of Forest Service and BLM lands to grazing where cattle aren't allowed. Expanding grazing on federal public lands risks harming important carnivores like grizzlies and wolves, because these are the animals who end up being killed all too often because of conflicts with livestock.

These developments are exactly what grizzlies don't need right now.

Historically grizzly bears ranged from Alaska to Mexico, with an estimated 50,000 of them occupying the western half of the contiguous United States. Today grizzly bears occupy just 6% of their historical range in the lower 48 states, surviving in four isolated locations in the northern Rockies, where their current population is approximately 2,000.

Grizzly bear numbers in and around Yellowstone and Glacier national parks have improved since the animals were first protected in 1975. But the bears continue to be threatened by isolation from other grizzly populations and human-caused deaths.

Science shows that connections among grizzly bear populations are needed for genetic health, but habitat destruction along with killing continue to prevent this crucial connectivity. Connectivity between grizzlies in the Northern Continental Divide and Greater Yellowstone ecosystems could significantly improve the bears' genetic diversity.

Dispersal of bears from the Greater Yellowstone ecosystem is needed to restore them to other areas where they once lived and could thrive again. For example, the Selway-Bitterroot ecosystem has been identified as a recovery zone for grizzly bears but currently hosts no population. Reducing protections would thwart the potential for those bears to travel to nearby unoccupied areas.

The science is clear that grizzlies need full federal protection to recover, not rules that lead to more dead bears or more logging projects that cut deep into their habitat.

Andrea Zaccardi is the legal director of the Carnivore Conservation program.



Is Your Guac Killing MONARCHS?



The Center, along with more than 50 environmental and food groups, is urging U.S. grocery chains to offer only certified avocados to help curtail deforestation of Mexico's Monarch Butterfly Biosphere Reserve. Purchasing avocados from certified suppliers would protect monarch butterflies, local forests, and communities in Michoacán.

Most of the avocados consumed in the United States come from Mexico, where forest-clearing for avocado production has taken a major toll on natural areas, wildlife, and people alike.

The Pro-Forest Agriculture certification program has blocked nearly 3,000 orchards tied to recent deforestation. But until all U.S. grocers refuse to accept deforestation in their supply chains, uncertified avocados will keep piling up in our shopping carts.

That's why we continue to push some of the largest U.S. grocery chains to require their suppliers to use the Pro-Forest Agriculture certification program from Guardián Forestal. This independent Mexican nonprofit uses satellite imagery to screen avocado orchards for recent deforestation and environmental violations.

The certification program is heralded by environmental advocates as a lifeline for monarch butterflies. It also addresses other environmental harms from the orchards and supports long-established, legal orchards operated by farmers whose livelihoods the program is designed to protect.

Among the major retailers we're targeting are Kroger, Albertsons, Aldi, Food Lion, Giant, Hannaford, Safeway, Stop & Shop, Target, Trader Joe's, Walmart, and Whole Foods.

Monarch numbers have fallen 90% over the last few decades. In the past 10 years, more than 10 football fields of forest a day have been cleared to grow avocados, including nearly 2,400 acres of Michoacán's Monarch Butterfly Biosphere Reserve, the overwintering home of monarchs that migrate as far as 3,000 miles to reach it.

The damage extends beyond butterflies. Avocado orchards consume enormous amounts of water, draining aquifers and worsening drought for communities across the region. As U.S. demand has turned avocados into "green gold," it has drawn organized crime, corruption and violence into Mexico's avocado-growing highlands.



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From the Director: EPIC FIGHTS AHEAD

Over the course of just a few months, we've seen some of the most egregious attacks on wildlife protections in decades.

The first came with the Trump administration's move to strip protection for endangered species habitat. It's trying to do that by altering the definition of "harm" under the Endangered Species Act.

It may sound like a dry bureaucratic maneuver, but the move will devastate species by allowing habitat for bears, owls and other endangered animals and plants to be mowed down, mined, drilled and industrialized. It's a massive step toward destroying years of work to protect some of the last remaining places where these species live: manatees, grizzlies, bull trout, lynx — the list goes on and on.

Just weeks ago, the administration doubled down with a memo designed to make it easier to unintentionally kill and injure endangered species, essentially allowing vulnerable species to become collateral damage as long as it's deemed accidental.

The next blow came with the administration's announced plan to roll back protections for nearly 45 million acres of roadless areas in our national forests. If it goes through, it will be the largest destruction of forest protections in U.S. history.

For imperiled species, the consequences will be crushing. More than 400 threatened and endangered animals and plants rely on these roadless areas. Our internal analysis found that Trump's plan would open up 7.4 million acres of designated critical habitat to logging, bulldozing and other kinds of destruction.

More than 1,700 miles of rivers and streams also designated as critical habitat would be affected — stretches of life-giving fresh water that are home to endangered fish, mussels and other species.

These roadless areas — engines of biodiversity — are also the headwaters for rivers that provide water for some 60 million people.

We know we're in for an epic fight over both these attacks on the wild. We're already in court fighting the changes to the Endangered Species Act and are mobilizing against the assault on the Roadless Rule.

History calls on us to defend what's right, and the stakes are as high as ever: preserving a planet with a future for all life on Earth.





Kierán Suckling
Executive Director

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ENDANGERED
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