

# Endangered earth

FALL 2010



## Far From Home

The restoration of wolves to the landscape has met with some success in small, isolated pockets of the country — but a national recovery effort is needed to bring the wolf home in healthy numbers. **2**

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CENTER *for* BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY

# Amid renewed attacks, Center seeks national recovery plan to save wolves

Few animals evoke the wild like the wolf. Majestic, rangy and highly social, wolves also play a crucial role in driving evolution and calibrating nature's complex set of relationships.

Scientists estimate there were once about 2 million wolves in North America, from the dense eastern forests to the Great Plains and across most of the West's mountains and valleys.

Most in the lower 48 states disappeared, victims of government extermination programs, trappers, bounty hunters, hostile livestock owners and expansive human development.

Fortunately, our thinking about wolves has changed in recent decades. Since their protection under the Endangered Species Act in the 1970s and subsequent reintroduction to Yellowstone National Park and elsewhere, gray wolf numbers have increased dramatically in the northern Rocky Mountains, which has about 1,600 wolves, and the upper Midwest, where there are about 4,200.

Federal officials are eager to declare victory and turn over control to state wildlife agencies that can enact wolf hunts and be more aggressive in killing off individuals or packs. But the job of restoring wolves is far from finished.

Wolves occupy less than 5 percent of their historic range in the lower 48, still have fewer than a viable population in some recovery areas and continue to be killed by poachers and government agents.

That's why the Center for Biological Diversity recently filed a petition with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to develop a national recovery plan for wolves. The plan would provide a much-needed roadmap for re-establishing wolf populations in suitable habitat in the Pacific Northwest, California, the Great



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*Restoring wolves across a wider swath of their historic range would not only boost the health of the species, it would enable wolves to reclaim their historic role helping to maintain rich, healthy ecosystems.*

Basin, the southern Rocky Mountains, the Great Plains and New England.

Restoring wolves in those areas — and maintaining corridors for individuals to travel back and forth — will not only increase numbers but will also allow for genetic exchange between populations. That would enable wolves to play more of their historic role in balancing prey populations, keeping wildlife diseases in check, providing meat for scavengers and bolstering the biodiversity that makes for rich, highly functioning ecosystems.

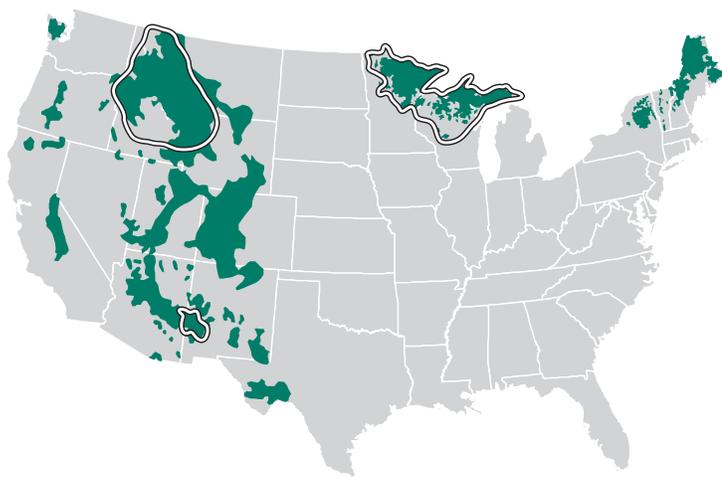
The Center hopes the petition sparks a national conversation about the future of *Canis lupus* in the United States and builds on a string of legal victories in recent months.

The most important of those victories came in early August when U.S. District Judge Donald Molloy in Montana reinstated

Endangered Species Act protections for wolves in Montana, Idaho and portions of Washington, Oregon and Utah.

The case, brought by the Center and our allies, challenged the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's decision to lift federal protections from wolves (and subsequently authorize wolf hunts in Montana and Idaho) but keep them in place in Wyoming. Molloy, in overruling the agency, said delisting decisions have to be based on wolf biology, not arbitrary state boundaries.

Earlier in the summer, a lawsuit by the Center and allies forced Wildlife Services — the federal government's animal-control division — to call off plans to shoot two of Oregon's 14 wolves. The state had asked that two wolves be killed after six cows were killed in eastern Oregon. The Center and allies argued that the wolf killings would not deter more livestock conflicts because the



 Current gray wolf distribution  
 Potential gray wolf habitat

*A recent Center petition calls for a national recovery plan for gray wolves — a much-needed roadmap for re-establishing wolves in suitable habitat in the Pacific Northwest, California, the Great Basin, the southern Rocky Mountains, the Great Plains and New England. Wolves currently occupy less than 5 percent of their historic range in the lower 48 states.*

agency was not targeting wolves known to be involved in the depredations, but rather any two wolves in the pack. They also pointed out that ranchers could have used additional nonlethal measures to keep wolves away from their livestock.

There was a glimmer of good news, too, for the Southwest's long-struggling Mexican gray wolf. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service — responding to a petition from the Center — determined that the Mexican wolf may qualify for listing as an endangered species separate from other wolves. The step means the agency may finally produce a viable recovery plan that gets the wolf off the path toward extinction and into areas of its native homeland where it's been absent for far too long.

Despite these significant steps forward, it's clear that we can't let up in our work to keep wild wolves out of the crosshairs.

Just 42 Mexican wolves (including two breeding pairs) were found in the wild during a January count — an alarming 19 percent decline from the year before and the fourth straight year where the population has fallen or remained stagnant. And yet, bowing to pressure from the livestock industry, the Fish and Wildlife Service in October indefinitely delayed the release of more Mexican wolves. In August, the livestock industry also filed its third lawsuit seeking to compel the government to kill more wolves — a case in which the Center has intervened.

Conservative congressmen have introduced multiple bills that would, variously, strip Endangered Species Act protections for wolves in Idaho, Montana and nationwide. Wildlife officials in Montana and Idaho are also seeking permission to hunt wolves again, and Wildlife Services specifically proposes shooting wolves from the air and gassing pups in their dens.

Wolves in the upper Midwest, too, face an uncertain future after the Fish and Wildlife Service decided in September to consider taking them off the endangered species list — a move that the Center is opposing. State officials in Wisconsin and Michigan have also asked for permission to kill more than 100 wolves a year.

Wolves remain vilified in many circles, the result of stubborn mythology and irrational response. Like all wildlife, they are neither good nor bad. They are simply a cog in nature's complex machine that needs all parts working to survive and thrive. Restoring wolves, including protecting those that have returned and designating new recovery areas for those to come, restores that natural function and, perhaps, helps restore us all. •



*Noah Greenwald directs the Center's endangered species program from Portland, Ore.*

## Endangered species need protection, not politics.

Unfortunately, hundreds of imperiled plants and animals, from the gray wolf and grizzly bear to the sage grouse and Rio Grande cutthroat trout, aren't getting the help they need — because the government is letting politics get in the way.

Development, pollution, other habitat destruction and even shooting threaten to drive these and other species out of the last lands and waters they call home — and into extinction.

But as much as ever, the Interior Department, which is supposed to protect plants and animals in danger of disappearing forever, is instead beholden to big-industry interests that are concerned with profit — not preserving the open space and clean water that species need to survive.

The Center needs your help to win protection for hundreds of critically imperiled plants and animals being kept off the endangered species list due to political interference.

Wildlife foes are powerful — but with your help, *so are we*. To make your special year-end gift to the Center, simply use the enclosed envelope, call us at (866) 357-3349 or visit us online at [2010Gift.biologicaldiversity.org](http://2010Gift.biologicaldiversity.org). All our staff and the species we protect thank you.

YOUR  
 YEAR-END GIFT  
 CAN MAKE THE  
 DIFFERENCE

# Vanishing Into Thin Air



FLICKR COMMONS/NATHANIEL HORMIER

**Creatures that dwell on our highest peaks have long evolved to survive where others could not. But as warmer temperatures climb the peaks and mountaintop species' habitat disappears, the Center is working to save them.**

**T**he brown-colored Bicknell's thrush is unremarkable in appearance, but the hardy songbird has lived for millennia where many plants and animals could not: in the Northeast's high-elevation spruce and fir forests. Life on a mountaintop is no easy proposition — the weather is harsher, the soils thinner, the air colder and the winters longer — but the thrush is among those tenacious species that have made a specialty of survival in such rugged climes.

Unfortunately, the wildlife presiding over our peaks are only as tough as the habitat to which they're so uniquely well adapted — and that high-elevation habitat is proving vulnerable to the warmer temperatures wrought by climate change. In the Northeast, which has warmed more than 2 degrees Fahrenheit since 1970, the high coniferous forests where the Bicknell's thrush builds its nests are giving way to the upward creep of unsuitable hardwoods. New diseases, predators and competitors also threaten to move upslope.

Thousands of miles away, the far-flashier 'i'iwi, or scarlet Hawaiian honeycreeper, faces the same fundamental threat. Mosquitoes that carry avian malaria and pox are making inroads into its high-elevation habitat, made more hospitable to insects as temperatures rise. Already squeezed out of its lowland habitat by development and disease, the 'i'iwi now stands to lose its cooler, upslope refuges too.

Mountaintop species like these two distinctly different songbirds are among the first species being edged closer to extinction by global warming — disturbing harbingers of what's to come should the crisis be left unchecked.

So in late summer, the Center for Biological Diversity filed scientific petitions to provide endangered species protections to these and two other mountaintop animals at

imminent risk from climate change: the Rocky Mountains' white-tailed ptarmigan, whose adaptations to the cold may not allow it to survive upward swings in temperature, and Southern California's San Bernardino flying squirrel, threatened by the retreat of its high-forest habitat and decline of its truffle fungi food.

It's high time we took notice of such trends: This summer the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration charted the first half of 2010 as the warmest on record — topping a string of records set over the past decades.

Changes in mountainous areas are accelerating, and in some places, warming is occurring more rapidly than at lower elevations. But while the harsh mountaintops may seem faraway and inhospitable to all but a few spectacularly adapted forms of life, many changes seen first in those remote locations will soon also make themselves felt in the places the rest of us call home.

Thus, what we do now to save the vanishing species living in the peaks may ultimately help save other vulnerable species — including our own. •

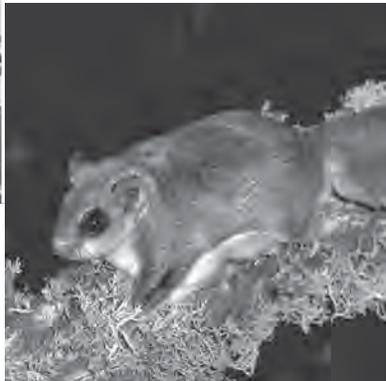


*Mollie Matteson works from the Center's Vermont office to protect native ecosystems and imperiled species in the Northeast — where, as a frequenter of mountaintops, she's had the pleasure of seeing and hearing Bicknell's thrush.*



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In the high mountains of the western United States, the **white-tailed ptarmigan's** remarkable alpine adaptations — feathered, snowshoe-like talons, seasonally changing plumage and the ability to gain body mass even throughout harsh winters — could spell the bird's doom. The ptarmigan's range is severely limited by its sole dependence on alpine habitat, which is shrinking as hotter temperatures sneak up the mountainsides, threatening to push the treeline — and the ptarmigan — to ever-higher elevations, until there's no more room to rise.



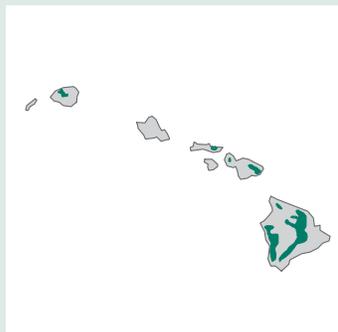
DR. LLOYD GLENN INGLES © CALIFORNIA ACADEMY OF SCIENCES

The **San Bernardino flying squirrel** is one of the most distinctive nocturnal residents of Southern California's high-elevation conifer forests. The subspecies' sole remaining population — restricted to the upper-elevation forests of the San Bernardino Mountains — is imperiled by urban development and wrongheaded forest-management practices. It's climate change, however, that poses the gravest threat: The squirrel's forest habitat is marching upslope as temperatures warm, and drought threatens its truffle food supply.



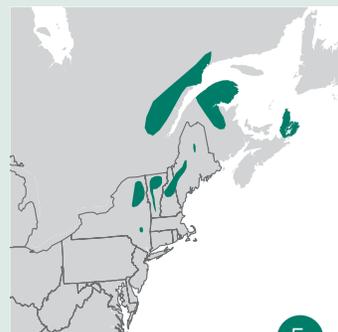
© JIM DENNY/KAUAIBIRDS.COM

The fiery-red **'iwi** — or scarlet Hawaiian honeycreeper — is one of the most recognizable birds of Hawaii. But the spread of avian malaria and avian pox has limited its range to high-elevation areas where disease-carrying mosquitoes can't survive, and as climate change pushes colder temperatures farther and farther upslope, the 'iwi will have fewer and fewer high-mountain refuges — and will eventually run out of room altogether.



© HENRY TROMBLEY

With a mating system unusual for most bird species — both sexes mate with multiple partners in a season — the **Bicknell's thrush** breeds in the high peaks of New England and northern Nova Scotia. There, with food and habitat availability stretched thinner than ever — thanks to development, logging and pollution — climate change threatens to erase the bird's little remaining habitat as the high-elevation coniferous forests it depends on for its unique breeding habits founder.



# Six months after Gulf disaster, oil's risks remain

Oct. 20 marked a grim anniversary in the Gulf of Mexico. Six months earlier, on a warm spring night some 50 miles from shore, an explosion ripped through BP's *Deepwater Horizon* rig, killing 11 workers and ushering in the worst environmental disaster in U.S. history.

It's hard to forget the heartbreaking images that followed: brown pelicans too oiled to fly, endangered sea turtles awash in toxic muck, mile after mile of beaches and wetlands coated in gobs of greasy oil.

After the well was capped most news crews disappeared, and the public's attention wandered. But the tragedy continues to unfold, and the systemic flaws that led to the spill have yet to be addressed.

Center for Biological Diversity Executive Director Kierán Suckling and Assistant Executive Director Sarah Bergman traveled to the Gulf in late summer and found, contrary to optimistic pronouncements from the government, that oil still fouled beaches, marshes, wetlands and wildlife.

According to the latest count, more than 6,100 birds, 600 sea turtles and nearly 100 mammals, including dolphins, have perished; one study estimates that 20 percent of juvenile Atlantic bluefin tuna have also died.

Fortunately, the Gulf and its wildlife have had the Center and our supporters working tirelessly on their behalf. Tens of thousands of you responded to our alerts, taking action for the Gulf's endangered sea turtles and speaking out to stop



*During an August visit to the Gulf, Center Executive Director Kierán Suckling found the beach in Louisiana's Grand Isle State Park still thick with oil inches beneath the surface — just one sign that it will take years for the area to recover from the worst oil spill in U.S. history.*

more dangerous offshore drilling — while donations poured in to bolster our legal work to hold BP and the government accountable.

We'll continue to demand that full accounting for every drop of oil spilled. In addition to playing the lead role in exposing the government mismanagement that led to the disaster, the Center has launched seven lawsuits in its wake, including one seeking \$19 billion from BP and Transocean for violating the Clean Water Act. That case is among hundreds scheduled to be heard in New Orleans, and if we win, the money will go toward government efforts to restore the Gulf.

## LEAVE A LEGACY



FLICKR COMMONS/QNR

## Make sure they'll still be around by making sure we'll be.

The Center's aggressive work in the Gulf and elsewhere has made us the strongest legal lifeline around for endangered plants and animals that are losing precious habitat on an unprecedented scale. You can help keep that lifeline intact for future generations with a commitment to our Legacy Society, made through your will, living trust, retirement plan or life insurance policy.

To learn more about membership in the Center's Legacy Society and how to make a gift that will endure beyond your lifetime, as well as providing you and your loved ones with significant tax and financial advantages, please call us at (866) 357-3349 x. 318 or email us at [tjanes@biologicaldiversity.org](mailto:tjanes@biologicaldiversity.org).

The Center is also keeping up the fight to make sure this kind of cataclysm isn't repeated; we continue to push for an expansion of the moratorium on deepwater drilling in the Gulf to include all new drilling, even in shallow water. Industry and government simply haven't shown they're capable of ensuring the protection of people or the environment. Lamentably, the Obama administration lifted its drilling moratorium in October. A week later, we began fighting that decision.

Regulators in the Gulf, where there are more than 3,600 offshore oil and gas operations, still aren't complying with the Endangered Species Act or the Marine Mammal Protection Act during the permitting process for drilling rigs, so we're fighting that too. We're seeking an end to environmental waivers — a bureaucratic loophole that allowed hundreds of offshore drilling projects, including BP's Deepwater Horizon, to be approved without a full review of the risks to wildlife and communities.

There has been good news. In mid-September, the National Marine Fisheries Service agreed to consider Endangered Species Act protections for the Atlantic bluefin, which has struggled for years under the burdens of overfishing and habitat loss. After the spill — which pushed it even closer to extinction — the Center petitioned in May for federal protections for the tuna. The Center threatened a lawsuit in mid-September, and two days later the agency announced its decision.



*The Center's team toured Grand Isle with the Hermit Crab Survival Project, which uncovered these oiled crabs on our visit. Despite recovery efforts, thousands of animals have died — including more than 6,100 birds, 600 sea turtles and nearly 100 mammals, including dolphins.*

We were also pleased with the Obama administration's plan to permanently plug nearly 3,500 abandoned wells in the Gulf. But the move is only a first step: A recent Associated Press investigation found more than 27,000 wells in the Gulf, including some dating back to the 1940s and 1950s.

Needless to say, there's still plenty of work to be done. Scientists say it will be years before the full extent of the damage from the Gulf catastrophe is known. It will also take years for our efforts to play out in keeping BP and the government accountable. They will pay off, however: Reforms must be made, Gulf and Arctic waters must be protected from dangerous drilling and our economy must switch to cleaner energy sources. If not, disasters like Deepwater will recur. ●

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*On the Web: Get our six-month recap of Center actions for the Gulf, as well as a full slideshow of our visit to the area, at our updated Gulf Disaster website: [www.biologicaldiversity.org/gulf\\_disaster](http://www.biologicaldiversity.org/gulf_disaster).*

## BP boss scores Dodo award



In early October, with voting input from thousands of Center supporters, former BP CEO Tony Hayward was awarded our not-so-prestigious Rubber Dodo for 2010. The Rubber Dodo Award, which is now in its fourth year, is given each fall to a conspicuous offender against wildlife in general and endangered species in particular.

Under Hayward's leadership, BP — in 2010, the fourth largest corporation in the world, according to *Fortune* magazine — garnered the right to drill for oil in the Gulf of Mexico by submitting documents to the U.S. government falsely asserting that a major spill could not happen. The company also provided a ludicrous spill-response plan that claimed it could capture spilling oil before that oil caused any damage.

“If there was ever a deserving Rubber Dodo Award recipient, it's Tony Hayward,” said Kieran Suckling, the Center's executive director. “While famously whining that he ‘wanted his life back,’ Hayward showed no remorse for the thousands of rare and endangered animals BP killed in its spill. He not only pushed BP into causing the spill by creating a corporate culture of risk-taking and cutting corners, he failed to take responsibility after the spill and make all of BP's resources available to contain it.”

The Dodo award's name commemorates the most famous extinct species on Earth, whose trusting nature led to its utter obliteration by 1681. Its previous winners — Interior Secretary Dirk Kempthorne (2007), Alaska Gov. Sarah Palin (2008) and massive land speculator Michael Winer (2009) — are in aptly nefarious company with BP's former chief executive.

To take the dubious honor this year, Hayward beat out Interior Secretary Ken Salazar, who among other “achievements” hastily rubberstamped scores of offshore drilling projects without environmental review. Other contenders were Idaho's blatantly wolf-hating Gov. C.L. “Butch” Otter and pro-drilling, anti-wildlife Alaska Gov. Sean Parnell. ●

# Not Just a Number

**If we're going to solve the climate crisis, 350 is everything — almost. The other key to the equation — how fast we get there — demands that our world leaders have the will to act now.**

**350** or bust — that's the wake-up call sounded by the world's leading climate scientists, and a call to citizen action that's gaining momentum around the globe. More and more people are getting the message: To avoid runaway global warming and preserve a livable planet for future generations, we must reduce carbon dioxide emissions in our atmosphere from about 392 parts per million, where we are today, to 350 or fewer. And we must do it as soon as possible.

It's a message that couldn't be more urgent. As 2010 shapes up to be one of the hottest years on record, climate-related disasters fill the year's headlines. Drought, heat waves and fires scorched Russia, flooding displaced millions in Pakistan, and a 100-square-mile chunk of Greenland's ice fell into the sea.

Unfortunately, for anyone looking to our political leadership to address the climate crisis, 2010 delivered us, simply, to *bust*. Congress not only failed to pass a climate bill; it failed to bring to the table a single proposal based on the best available science and addressing the scope and swiftness of action needed to get us to 350. The non-binding accord announced at last December's international climate talks in Copenhagen also fell short of that mark.



*Matt Vespa and Kevin Bundy, senior attorneys for the Center's Climate Law Institute in San Francisco, took the 350 message all the way to Tianjin, China, for October's United Nations climate talks.*

Clearly, the world can't wait. The Center's climate team is working with more urgency than ever to push our leaders to take meaningful steps, right away, to cut greenhouse emissions.

In early October, we traveled to Tianjin, China, for the United Nations Climate Change Conference, where we delivered to delegates a newly released report, *Not Just a Number*. Co-authored with 350.org, the report lays out the steps we must take to reduce atmospheric CO<sub>2</sub> to 350 parts per million in time to avoid catastrophic climate change.

The safest path is one proposed by leading climatologist Dr. James Hansen. To reach 350, we must phase out coal-fired power plants, end large-scale deforestation and reforest cut-over areas. We must dramatically cut fossil fuel emissions, with CO<sub>2</sub> emissions peaking within the next five years and then beginning a rapid decline. It won't be easy — but delaying action will only make it harder, if not impossible.

Next, the Center's largest international delegation ever is gearing up to take our message from Tianjin to this month's more advanced climate talks in Cancún, Mexico.

Meanwhile, the Center continues to push the U.S. government to enforce existing laws, including the Clean Air Act, to regulate greenhouse gas pollution. This fall, we petitioned the Environmental Protection Agency under the Act to limit greenhouse gas and black carbon pollution from locomotives, following on our earlier petitions asking the agency to limit emissions from airplanes and ships.

We also continue to call for higher fuel efficiency standards for new cars and light trucks; the Obama administration's most aggressive proposal, released in October, leaves the United States lagging behind Europe and Japan.

Just days after the China climate talks, Center staff and supporters joined people all over the planet for 350.org's 10/10/10 Global Work Party — the largest global grassroots climate action ever, with more than 7,000 carbon-cutting projects in nearly every country worldwide. We pitched in at events in San Francisco, Portland, Ore., and Washington, D.C., among others — in projects protecting habitat for warming-threatened northern spotted owls, riding in a "Roll Against Coal" bike rally and putting solar panels on the White House.

The day was a people-powered testament to the fact that while the task is daunting, we can get it done — if we tackle it now. It's time for our leaders to get that message, too. •

*On the Web: More than 59,000 supporters have signed our People's Petition to Cap Carbon Dioxide Pollution at 350 Parts Per Million. Haven't signed? Add your name today at [www.biologicaldiversity.org/peoples\\_petition\\_for\\_350](http://www.biologicaldiversity.org/peoples_petition_for_350).*

# Alaska team defends Arctic — global warming's ground zero

The Arctic is North America's last great wilderness, an irreplaceable haven for the majestic animals whose survival depends on its delicately balanced ecologies. On the blue-white expanses of sea ice, polar bears roam hundreds of miles in search of denning ringed-seal prey; walrus gather in small, social groups to rest between feeding bouts. Beneath that vast but shrinking frozen skin, bowhead whales migrate, navigating between breathing holes across countless miles. Arctic foxes trot on delicate paws over both tundra and ice, and millions of migratory birds alight along the coast in summer to breed and build their nests.

But this final wild frontier may be the first wilderness lost to global warming. It's currently heating up at twice the rate of the rest of the world. As its permafrost thaws, sea ice melts, coastal cliffs collapse into the sea, and the ocean becomes more acidic and less able to sustain life, it's clear the Arctic is ground zero for one of the earliest, most crucial battles to arrest warming and protect life on Earth.

One of the first groups to take on the Arctic fight, the Center has earned early landmark victories, including protection of the polar bear under the Endangered Species Act. Since that 2008 milestone, we've redoubled our efforts, establishing the Climate Law Institute, to champion science-based national climate policy, and our Alaska office in Anchorage.

This summer, Arctic sea ice again dwindled to a near-record minimum, making the past four years the lowest on record. This drastic loss of ice gravely threatens a host of Arctic species. Already, startling effects are visible. Polar bears forced to shore and open water face starvation and drowning. Walrus have recently been sighted hauling out on shore in uncommon numbers, where they have a harder time finding food and young are vulnerable to stampeding deaths.

The Center petitioned the federal government to list the Pacific walrus and four ice seal species under the Endangered Species Act — and when they failed to act on our petitions, we took them to court. Our relentless efforts will force the government to make listing decisions for ringed and bearded seals, as well as the Pacific walrus, in the coming months.

Once struggling Arctic species are protected under the Endangered Species Act, the government will have to deal with the runaway greenhouse gases that threaten their survival, as well as another major threat — oil and gas development. Oil companies are moving in on Arctic waters, trolling for permits



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*On the Web: Polar bears aren't the only Arctic species that global warming threatens with extinction. Meet some of the other Arctic animals we're working to save in a new Center report at [www.biologicaldiversity.org/Arctic\\_extinction](http://www.biologicaldiversity.org/Arctic_extinction).*

to drill in some of the world's harshest conditions — conditions that would make a large spill in the Arctic even harder to clean up than the Deepwater Horizon gusher in the Gulf of Mexico. A catastrophic oil spill in the Far North could mean extinction for some Arctic species.

Over the past four years, the Center and our Alaskan allies have successfully blocked offshore oil development in the Beaufort and Chukchi seas through a series of lawsuits. In 2009, a federal court threw out a five-year Bush plan for offshore development because it ignored the Arctic's environmental sensitivity; in 2010 we won a court order stopping drilling activities in the Chukchi due to poor environmental review. As a result Shell Oil, slated to drill in the Arctic every year since 2007, has not yet stuck its drills in the water.

In the wake of the BP Gulf disaster, we're also putting pressure on the government to reject the corporation's plans to drill the world's longest horizontal wells in the Arctic Ocean.

As one oiled ocean clearly shows the immediate dangers of fossil-fuel addiction, another ocean's retreating sea ice warns us of its far-reaching consequences. For the wild Arctic, the future is already here — and the Center's Alaska office is working hands-on with our powerful climate team to keep this fragile, irreplaceable landscape and its creatures from vanishing. •



*Rebecca Noblin, staff attorney, directs the Center's Alaska campaigns from Anchorage — with a focus on protecting marine animals from global warming and oil and gas development.*



FLICKR COMMONS/DANIELE SARTORI

*Thanks to a persistent Center campaign, New Zealand's yellow-eyed penguin and five other penguin species have been protected under the Endangered Species Act.*

## Center gives amphibians and reptiles faced with extinction a lawyer all their own

When it comes to endangered species campaigns, amphibians and reptiles — the herpetofauna of the world — don't see much time in the limelight. Yet mounting scientific evidence suggests we should pay more attention to their fate: More than one-third of all amphibians and at least one-fifth of all reptiles are threatened with extinction.

Alarming, while many are especially susceptible to local threats like pesticide contamination, many are also proving to be among the species most vulnerable to precipitous declines from global threats, like climate change.

It's none too soon to respond to this growing crisis for the cold-blooded creatures among us, so the Center is ramping up our work. This summer we added Collette Adkins Giese, the world's first lawyer focused exclusively on protecting rare amphibians and reptiles, to our attorney team.

Her first client: the Jollyville Plateau salamander, whose prime central Texas habitat is newly threatened by plans for a massive water-treatment plant. Recent science shows that the salamander, just discovered in 2000, likely comprises two distinct populations — making each one even more endangered than previously thought. The Center is headed to court to speed help

## Six penguin species, from Africa to Chile, receive protection

In response to a 2006 Center petition for federal protection of 12 species of penguins, six of the most beleaguered waddlers on the globe — struggling under the burdens of climate change, rising levels of acidity in the world's oceans, and commercial fishing that make it harder for the aquatic birds to find food — have now been granted safeguards under the Endangered Species Act.

In August, protection was given to the Humboldt penguin of Chile and Peru as well as four New Zealand penguins: the yellow-eyed, white-flipped, Fiordland crested and erect-crested. In September, African penguins, the only penguin nesters on the African continent, also joined the lineup.

Although Endangered Species Act listing of wildlife living in foreign lands and waters doesn't afford as many ironclad legal protections as it gives to U.S.

species — most notably, for reasons of sovereignty, critical habitat can't be designated — listing raises national and international awareness of the penguins' urgent plight. It will also make more money available to spend on penguin research and conservation and increase oversight of U.S. government activities — such as the permitting of high seas fisheries — that could hurt the world's most captivating flightless birds.

“Protecting these penguins under the Endangered Species Act is long overdue and gives them a renewed chance at survival,” said Center biologist Shaye Wolf.

Along with our allies at the Turtle Island Restoration Network, the Center plans to file suit to save two other penguin species: emperors, which are the world's largest penguins, and northern rockhopper penguins, known for their dramatic and sometimes comical yellow head plumes. The Interior Department denied the two species endangered or threatened listings despite scientific evidence that they're marching steadily toward extinction because of global warming, overfishing and other threats. •

for the salamander and has filed a new scientific petition to gain Endangered Species Act protections for both populations. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service previously acknowledged the need to add the salamander to the list of federally threatened or endangered species, but instead consigned it to a place on the list of “candidate” species, indefinitely waiting for protection.

Of course, since our beginnings the Center has hopped to the defense of dozens of “herps” — from the arroyo toad to the blunt-nosed leopard lizard. Some of those familiar faces, and many more amphibians and reptiles, are soon to be represented in



FLICKR COMMONS/WUPERRUPPER

*The Wyoming toad is one of more than three dozen amphibian and reptile species nationwide that the Center seeks to protect from pesticide use in an upcoming lawsuit.*

a sweeping case, spearheaded by Adkins Giese, suing the Environmental Protection Agency for its failure to consider the impacts of nearly 400 pesticides on hundreds of protected species across the country.

The notion of helping “unpopular” animals — say, even rattlesnakes faced with persecution by humans — drew Adkins Giese to the Center’s mission.

“Bringing on an attorney devoted to amphibians and reptiles reflects the Center’s dedication to the protection of all species threatened with extinction,” she said. •

## Petitions filed for rare Arizona species in path of open-pit mine

In Arizona’s Santa Rita Mountains, about 30 miles southeast of Tucson, a Canadian company plans to dig a massive open-pit copper mine — whether locals want it or not.

The proposed Rosemont Mine, being pushed by Augusta Resource Corporation, is meeting with vocal opposition from area citizens as well as local and state governments, which fear the devastation the mine would cause.

Rosemont’s open pit would be more than one mile wide and half a mile deep. It would destroy at least 4,400 acres of habitat, including more than 3,300 acres of public land on the Coronado National Forest, where the mining waste would be dumped.

Digging is now in limbo as the mine awaits the federal go-ahead; meanwhile, the Center has been campaigning since early summer to save several small but exquisite creatures in the mine’s path.

We first filed an Endangered Species Act petition for Rosemont species this June, on behalf of two snail species that could be wiped out by the mine. In July, we filed two more petitions, this time to keep Rosemont from destroying a pair of rare Arizona plant species — the Bartram stonecrop, a succulent, and the beardless chinch weed, a flower in the aster family.

And in early September, we sought protection for Coleman’s coralroot, a rare, beautiful purple-white orchid that grows in just three locations southeast of Tucson, including in the footprint of the planned mine. One of the most unique plants on Earth, coralroot has neither leaves nor roots, and lives off a symbiotic relationship with fungi instead of making its food through photosynthesis.



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*Bartram stonecrop, a rare succulent already threatened by habitat loss and collection, is also now in the footprint of the proposed Rosemont copper mine near Tucson.*

In addition to the five petitioned-for species, the mine would destroy habitat for several already listed endangered species, including the Chiricahua leopard frog, lesser long-nosed bat and jaguar.

Said the Center’s Tierra Curry, who’s working to stop the mine from pushing species to extinction, “The Rosemont Mine is a disaster waiting to happen that will permanently destroy public land crucial to Arizona wildlife, clean water, tourism and recreation.” •

## DON'T WANT TO MISS A BEAT?



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Our work on these and dozens of other campaigns unfolds at a fast and furious pace throughout the year. Fortunately, there’s a way you can get the most up-to-date news on our most recent wins for wildlife and opportunities to take action, delivered straight to your inbox: Join the ranks of more than a quarter-million readers who subscribe to *Endangered Earth Online*, the Center’s weekly e-newsletter, at [www.biologicaldiversity.org/EEO/](http://www.biologicaldiversity.org/EEO/).



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## Long May They Howl

From the Director

*Kieran Suckling*

### HEARING A WOLF HOWL IN THE WILDERNESS

is a magical experience that resonates long after you've returned home. Whether they penetrate a dense forest or drift eerily across an open plain, howls deliver something primal, beautiful and unspoiled by the modern world.

I recently spent several days in the Gila wilderness in southern New Mexico. There was plenty of wildlife — I saw black bears, goshawks, elk and Gila trout — but, unfortunately, not a wolf to be seen or heard. I have to admit, I left the Gila feeling a little deprived.

Wolves once inhabited much of North America, playing a vital role in balancing natural ecosystems. Most of them vanished, though, as settlements expanded, marched westward and killed off most wolves and other large predators.

Since then, we've learned what a mistake it was to wipe out these magnificent, social animals. Intellectually we now understand their natural function; emotionally we know our sense of the world's true wilderness is poorer for their absence.

Saving and restoring wolves has been a crucial part of the Center for Biological Diversity's work for years, pushing the government to make good on promises to build robust, protected populations in the northern Rocky Mountains, the upper Midwest and the Southwest.

Lately, though, some of the hostilities we thought had been left behind have found new traction. State officials are clamoring for more authority to kill wolves, members of Congress are proposing bills to strip away protections — every day it seems there's another assault on their survival.

We won't give up, though. The Center has won several key court victories in recent months and petitioned the government this summer to produce a national plan to recover wolves. With your help, the fight to protect these amazing animals will go on for as long as needed. And, one day, those singular howls in the wild will become a chorus. •



FRONT COVER IMAGE © LISA DEARING. BACK COVER WOLF IMAGE © PATRICK HAYES/LAUGHINGBEARPHOTOGRAPHY.COM

## Endangered earth

is the membership newsletter of the Center for Biological Diversity. With the support of more than 315,000 members and online activists, the Center works through science, law and creative media to secure a future for all species, great or small, hovering on the brink of extinction. *Endangered Earth* is published thrice yearly in January, July and November and printed on 100% post-consumer recycled paper with solvent-free vegetable-based inks.

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CENTER for BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY

*Because life is good.*