



Endangered
earth

SUMMER 2015

CENTER FOR BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY



INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- 1 • For Wildlife and People
- 3 • Protecting Grand Canyon
- 4 • Porpoise on Extinction's Edge
- 5 • Defusing Dangerous Oil Trains
- 6 • A Deadly Program
- 7 • Oil Industry in California
- 8 • Plant-based Meals
- 9 • Advocacy

ON THE WEB



Endangered Species Ringtones: Hear the call of the wild? Or want to, whenever your cell phone rings? At the Center's

RareEarthtones.org, you can download free ringtones of the songs, roars, chirps and howls of more than 100 imperiled animals — and wallpaper, too. (Check out **LlamadasSalvajes.org** for ringtones with descriptions in Spanish.)



Photo by Brad Smith

For Wildlife and People A Renewed Fight Against Toxics

In its first six months, the Center's newest program, Environmental Health — which protects biodiversity and human health from toxic substances and promotes public understanding of the link between the health of people and that of other species — has been racking up victories.

First, we've made big strides forward in our work to stop pesticides from hurting people and wildlife and driving extinctions. Bees, which pollinate one out of three bites of the food we eat, are in drastic trouble from the more than a billion pounds of pesticides that are used each year in the United States, so in 2015 we're taking aim at one of the prime offenders: a new class of insecticides called neonicotinoids. "Neonics" are highly toxic to bees (plus birds, butterflies and many other species) and are widely used; more than 100 million acres of American soil are planted with seeds drenched in these bee-killing insecticides, despite the fact that the EPA has found that neonic seed treatments don't increase yields or help farmers.

We've been working to get them banned across the country, securing dozens of stories in national media helping to squash industry allegations that pesticides are not the problem. We've also been deploying our grassroots base to successfully push retailers like Lowe's to stop carrying neonics. We're also celebrating both a local ban of neonics in Portland, Ore., and a ban across all 150 million acres of national wildlife refuges.

Of course, neonics aren't our only pesticide target. Glyphosate, commonly known as Roundup, is the world's most popular herbicide and a leading cause of species declines — including monarch butterflies, down by more than 90 percent, for whose protection we petitioned in summer 2014. The massive increase in glyphosate use on genetically engineered crops has also

contributed to the rise of herbicide-tolerant superweeds, now a serious challenge to American agriculture covering more than 60 million acres of U.S. cropland.

We're also challenging the EPA's failure to consider the impacts of three new pesticides on endangered species. Despite a clear mandate to ensure that its actions don't jeopardize our nation's most imperiled animals and plants, the agency has refused to consult with wildlife agencies when it approves new pesticides.

We recently brought a case in California to force the state to publicly disclose and analyze its pesticide-spraying practices, including spraying around schools, neighborhoods and organic farms. In Oregon we participated in legislative work groups attempting to rein in the most dangerous aerial pesticide spraying.

While our hands are more than full with fighting pesticides, we're also working on an array of other threats to human health and the environment. We just filed a lawsuit to protect the residents of Imperial County, Calif. — including flat-tailed horned lizards — from an ill-conceived air emissions plan that would increase dangerous small particulate matter pollution. We're pushing to limit dangerous pollution from coal-fired power plants and other sources in Iowa, Puerto Rico and Washington, and we've joined a coalition taking on destructive, out-of-control mountaintop-removal coal mining in West Virginia. We also just won a landmark settlement that will force the EPA to analyze the impacts of glyphosate and atrazine — the two most commonly used pesticides in the United States, accounting for nearly 40 percent of total pesticide volume used — on 1500 endangered plants and animals across the country.



Lori Ann Burd is the Center's Environmental Health program director. She directs efforts to protect humans and all other species from the harmful effects of toxic substances.



Courtesy NPS

Saving Grand Canyon: A Monumental Task

Arizona’s spectacular Grand Canyon has long been a focal point in the struggle between conservation and capitalism in the American West. Back in 1908 President Theodore Roosevelt, recognizing both the grandeur of the canyon and the increasing pressure to commodify its resources, designated the place a national monument in order to preserve it for generations to come. A local mining tycoon quickly challenged the designation in court, but happily — in a ruling that has withstood the test of time — the U.S. Supreme Court unanimously supported the president’s power to create such monuments under the Antiquities Act.

More than a century later, industry still does its worst to exploit the world-famous natural wonder. Uranium mining continues on both the South and North rims of the canyon. Logging of old-growth ponderosa pine forest on the North Rim, home to the Kaibab squirrel and the largest breeding population of northern goshawks, continues under the guise of “forest restoration.” And in the town of Tusayan, the southern gateway to Grand Canyon National Park, a multinational developer now plans to cash in on the canyon with a sprawling, Vegas-style resort.

The Center is fighting on multiple fronts to stop these disastrous projects. We’re successfully helping to defend the Obama administration’s temporary 2012 ban on new uranium claims in the Grand Canyon watershed in federal court; we’re suing to halt further construction of an existing uranium mine that would permanently desecrate one of the Havasupai Tribe’s most sacred sites; and we’re assembling a petition to the Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management requesting that they update long-outdated mining rules to better protect environmental and public health near Grand Canyon.

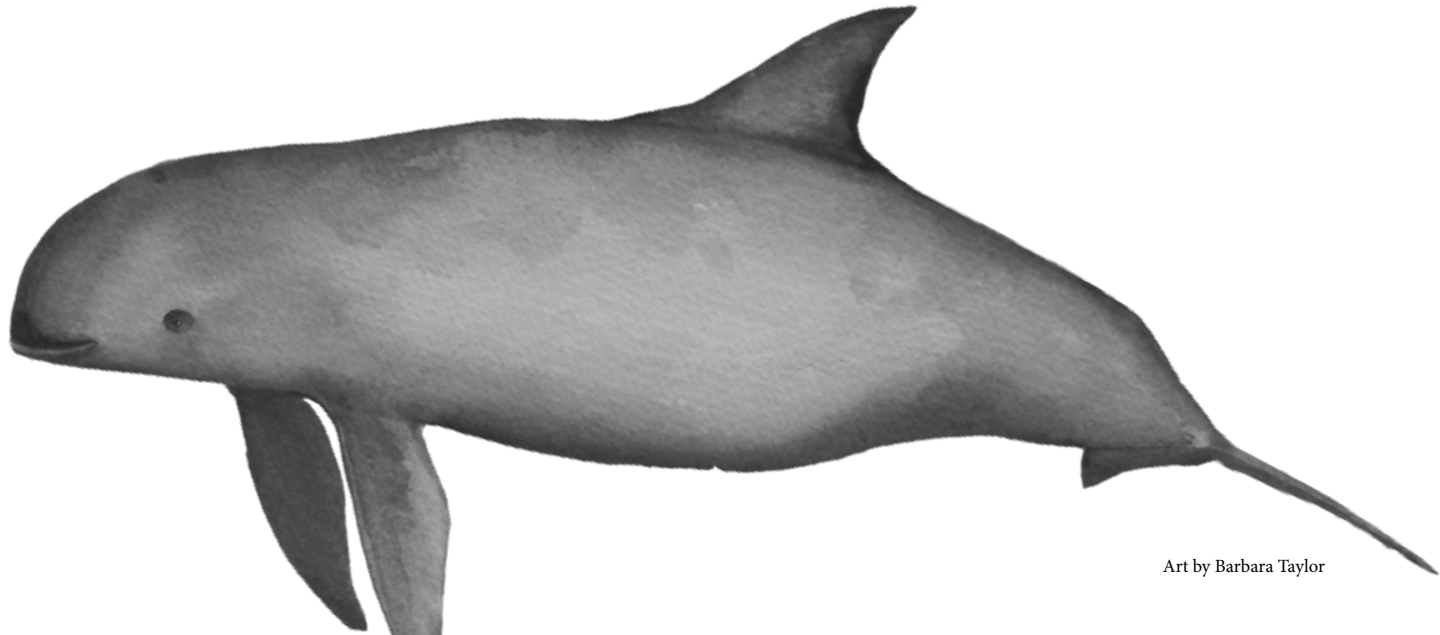
We’ve also filed emergency petitions with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to protect the Arizona wetsalts tiger beetle and MacDougal’s yellowtops flower — two endemic species that could disappear in our lifetime if the Tusayan development moves forward and depletes the seeps and springs they rely on to survive. And we helped inspire more than 200,000 Americans to write the Forest Service in opposition to this development.

But our best chance to permanently protect Grand Canyon and its watershed long into the future relies on the same tool the President Roosevelt used nearly 100 years ago: the Antiquities Act. We’re gathering momentum on both local and national levels to make designation of Grand Canyon Watershed National Monument a priority for President Obama — a designation that would permanently protect the watershed from new uranium mining claims and would preserve remaining old-growth forest and wildlife habitat.

Our work to protect our public lands may never be finished, but with your help, we can create a legacy of conservation that, like Grand Canyon, will withstand the test of time.



Katherine Davis is a public lands campaigner focused on all aspects of forest protection and restoration for Southwest forests and wildlife.



Art by Barbara Taylor

Rare Porpoise on Extinction’s Edge

Mexico’s Gulf of California is one of the most biodiverse places on the planet, a distinction that led the United Nations to declare it a World Heritage Site in 2005. Its waters teem with 891 species of fish and a third of the world’s cetacean species, including the smallest and most endangered porpoise on Earth: the vaquita.

Vaquitas are about the size of small humans, topping out at about 5 feet long and 120 pounds, with black lining around their expressive eyes and rounded mouth like makeup on a Goth teenager. They’re known to be shy and elusive — but apparently all too easy to scoop up in alarming numbers in fishing nets.

Scientists say there may be only 50 vaquitas left, down from 200 in 2012. This means the animals could be extinct by 2018 unless the Mexican government steps up powerfully to protect them from drowning in gillnets that are being set by both the local shrimp fishery and an illegal fishery for totoaba, or Mexican sea bass. The totoaba is another endangered species, targeted for its swim bladder used in a Chinese delicacy soup called “buche,” believed to increase fertility and improve skin.

The remoteness of the Gulf, also known as the Sea of Cortez — ringed by high cliffs and dotted with hundreds of desolate islands — has made it challenging to police, particularly given the involvement of drug cartels in the illegal totoaba trade. So the Center for Biological Diversity and our allies are working to create more tools, resources and incentives to save the last of the vaquitas.

We’re petitioning the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) to place the Gulf of California on its World Heritage “in danger” list, which would give Mexico more funding for protection, along with international assistance. We’re also petitioning the United States (under a U.S. law called the Pelly Amendment) to institute trade sanctions against Mexico if it doesn’t crack down on the criminal totoaba trade threatening the world’s last few vaquitas. Those sanctions could include a ban on the import of shrimp from Mexico.

The Gulf of California’s rich wildlife and stunning beauty was celebrated by writer John Steinbeck, who explored the region in the 1940s, chronicling the journey in his 1951 book *The Log From the Sea of Cortez*.

“The literature of science is filled with answers found when the question propounded had an entirely different direction and end,” wrote Steinbeck. But with vaquitas facing extinction, our direction and end are clear: We must do all we can to protect the endangered vaquitas from the gillnets that are killing them.

Sarah Uhlemann, a senior attorney and the International Director at the Center handles a variety of marine and endangered species cases, with a special focus on international issues.



Defusing Dangerous Oil Trains

The Center is waging an urgent campaign against explosive and dirty oil-transport trains throughout the United States — and we won't stop our fight to put on the brakes until these trains stop putting places, wildlife and people at risk. Oil trains are a threat to public safety, clean water, sensitive species and a livable climate.

The volume of crude oil shipped by rail in the United States grew more than 50-fold between 2008 and 2014, resulting in a chain of catastrophic, often deadly rail accidents throughout North America, with fires, explosions and hundreds of thousands of gallons of crude oil spilled into our nation's waterways. In fact, the amount of crude spilled from trains in 2013 was equal to *all* the crude oil spilled from rail transport in the previous 40 years.

The Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration has admitted that this increase in oil-train traffic and associated derailments “pose[s] a significant risk to life, property, and the environment,” yet the government's response has been weak regulations that will do very little to prevent more disasters.

In 2015 alone five oil trains have already derailed and exploded — in northwest Illinois near the Mississippi River; two near Gogama, Ontario; in the small North Dakota town of Heimdal; and in Fayette County, W.V., spewing 378,000 gallons of burning oil into the biologically important Kanawha River. Several of these incidents resulted in fires that burned out of control for days.

In early May 2015, with allies, we filed a lawsuit against the U.S. Department of Transportation over its lax tank-car standards and inadequate speed limits. In fall 2014, also with allies, we called for an immediate ban on puncture-prone tank cars involved in several explosive accidents; we're also part

of a coalition fighting the expansion of oil transport along the Hudson River. With Riverkeeper, in 2014 we filed a national petition to reduce the risk of oil train derailments by limiting the length and weight of trains hauling oil and other hazardous liquids, as well as a petition requiring shippers to have better oil-spill response plans.

And we've already seen real progress. The U.S. Coast Guard and Environmental Protection Agency have agreed to analyze the risks to endangered species of oil-spill response on the Hudson and in the Pacific Northwest; in March 2015 we engaged with Democratic senators on a bill to remove the most dangerous tank cars from service, increase track inspections, and help ensure that first responders have the equipment needed to respond to derailments; and in May 2015 the EPA cited California's Bakersfield Crude Terminal for 10 violations of the Clean Air Act — declaring the facility a major air pollution source and forcing California to take action.

Also in California our organizers are working with local allies and a rapidly growing number of activists to fight the Santa Maria Phillips 66 rail spur project, which would bring mile-long oil trains nearly every day through San Luis Obispo.

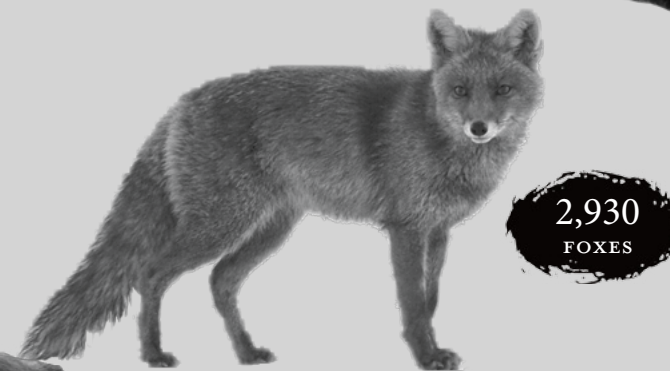
Jared Margolis is
a Center attorney
that works on
issues of energy and
endangered species.



Courtesy U.S. Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration

A Deadly Program

Since 1996 Wildlife Services has shot, gassed, poisoned and strangled by snare 27 million native animals. During fiscal year 2014 alone, this program wiped out more than 1 million native animals — including coyotes, bears, beavers, wolves, otters, foxes, prairie dogs, mountain lions, birds and other animals deemed pests by powerful agricultural, livestock and other special interests — with little oversight, accountability or a requirement to disclose its activities to the public, even though the program is paid for by taxpayer dollars.



Wildlife Services has
killed **27 MILLION** native
animals since 1996, including
more than **1 MILLION** in 2014.



BiologicalDiversity.org/wildlifeservices

From Spills to Water Pollution, Oil Industry Wreaks Havoc on California

It started with a 911 call reporting a strong oil smell near a California beach. Firefighters soon found oil from a ruptured pipeline pouring into the ocean near Santa Barbara. Before the flow was staunched, more than 100,000 gallons of heavy crude had spewed onto one of the world's most beautiful coastlines.

The Center swung into action by highlighting the track record of leaks and spills by Plains All American, the ruptured pipeline's owner. Center attorneys also put federal officials on notice that they could not legally allow this corroded pipeline to pump oil again without a full environmental review.

But so much damage has already been done. Tens of thousands of gallons of oil flowed into the wildlife-rich ocean off the Santa Barbara coast. Dolphins, sea lions, pelicans and elephant seals have been found covered in toxic black goo. Hundreds of birds and marine mammals have died.

And the spill, which contaminated beaches for miles, will likely continue killing animals and wreaking ecological havoc for years. Cleanup efforts typically don't recover more than a fraction of oil that's spilled into the ocean.

While this disaster is a high-profile reminder of petroleum's true cost, the Santa Barbara spill is hardly the only damage the oil industry has inflicted recently on California.

Even as Gov. Jerry Brown was ordering emergency action to respond to the pipeline spill, his state regulators were allowing oil companies elsewhere to continue dumping millions of gallons of toxic waste fluid into underground drinking-water sources.

State regulators recently admitted that thousands of oil industry injection wells are operating protected aquifers from Monterey down to Los Angeles and Kern counties.

During the worst drought in California history, oil companies have dumped waste tainted with cancer-causing benzene into aquifers with water clean enough to drink or irrigate crops.

Even in the face of these disasters, Gov. Brown has backed an expansion of fracking and oil drilling. About half of all new wells drilled in the state are now fracked, according to the California Council on Science and Technology. Companies have even fracked offshore wells in the Santa Barbara Channel.

But the more they drill, the more they'll spill — and the more toxic oil waste will threaten California's water supplies.

Gov. Brown must change course. The best way to protect California's coast is to phase out the aging offshore platforms pumping oil through the pipeline that just ruptured and others like it.

To safeguard our water — and our climate — the governor must halt fracking and rein in the state's out-of-control oil companies. Until he acts the oil industry will continue polluting the Golden State.

Patrick Sullivan is the Center's climate media director. He helps coordinate media relations and other communications efforts for the Center's Climate Law Institute.



Courtesy Courtesy www.DrewBirdPhoto.com



Photo by Jeremy Brooks

Saving the Planet With Plant-based Meals

The science is clear: Meat production is killing the planet. Greenhouse gas emissions from animal agriculture are a leading contributor to climate change. In the United States, millions of native animals, from prairie dogs to gray wolves, are killed every year by the taxpayer-funded Wildlife Services program at the behest of the livestock industry. Grazing cattle destroy habitat and put threatened and endangered species in harm's way. Livestock operations drain water, pollute rivers and gobble up land.

With more than 7 billion people on the planet and a growing global appetite for meat, our diets are chewing up enormous amounts of resources. Studies have shown that no matter how we improve animal agriculture practices, reducing consumption has to be part of any sound plan to save habitat, slow global warming and feed future generations.

That's why the Center launched the Take Extinction Off Your Plate campaign in 2014 to raise awareness about the connection between meat production and threats to wildlife, advocate for policies that promote sustainable diets, and encourage people to reduce their environmental footprint by eating less meat. We were one of the first environmental groups to recognize that this issue is too important to ignore — and we're just getting started.

In the first year of the program, our bold and unique wildlife messaging reached millions. Our work has been featured in top media outlets, and initiatives like our Labor Day "Extinction-free BBQ" campaign have taken off on social media. More than 20,000 people have signed the Earth-friendly Diet Pledge to reduce their meat consumption by one-third or more.

Even as the consequences of what we put on our plates gains attention, convincing people to embrace a greener diet requires

a massive shift in attitudes. As part of this effort, the Center is helping lead a broad coalition of environmental, food and health advocates pushing to keep recommendations in the 2015 Dietary Guidelines for Americans for more plant-based foods and less meat for personal health and environmental sustainability. Since the guidelines inform purchasing decisions for government institutions and influence nutrition education, this revision could have a major effect on how Americans think about food.

When it comes to taking on meat production and consumption, cultural taboos collide with powerful industry barriers. But even in the face of these challenges, the Center's campaign is expanding. With fresh, innovative resources, we'll help more people transition to wildlife-friendly diets; with creative policy and science-driven campaigns, we plan to shift public attitudes and redefine sustainable eating.

Learn more about the campaign and take the pledge at TakeExtinctionOffYourPlate.com.

Jennifer Molidor, the Center's senior food campaigner, drives the Population and Sustainability program's Earth-friendly Diet initiatives. She helps lead our sustainable food initiatives, including the Take Extinction Off Your Plate campaign.





Mural by Roger Peet

EPA to Analyze Impacts of Monsanto Pesticide, Atrazine on 1,500 Species

In a historic agreement, the Environmental Protection Agency agreed in June to analyze the effects of atrazine and glyphosate — the two most commonly used pesticides in the United States — on 1,500 endangered plants and animals in the United States. The agreement is part of a settlement with the Center for Biological Diversity in litigation seeking to protect wildlife from dangerous pesticides.

Up to 80 million pounds of atrazine are used in the United States each year. In addition to causing severe harm to endangered species, atrazine may also be linked to increased risks of thyroid cancer and birth defects in people.

Atrazine is the second-most commonly used pesticide after glyphosate, more commonly known as Monsanto's Roundup, which has been linked to massive declines in monarch butterflies.

The Environmental Protection Agency has, for decades, continued to register and allow the use of pesticides without considering their impacts to endangered species. The Center has

filed a series of lawsuits to force the agency to conduct those analyses and better understand how these chemicals affect everything from Florida panthers to California tiger salamanders.

Last year the Center entered a nationwide settlement with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service requiring the agency to analyze impacts on endangered species across the country from five dangerous pesticides — carbaryl, chlorpyrifos, diazinon, malathion and methomyl — that have been found to be toxic to wildlife and may pose a health risk to humans.

Center Challenges Emerging Deep-sea Mining Industry

In May the Center sued the U.S. government over its first-ever approval of large-scale deep-sea mining, a destructive project between Hawaii and Mexico that would damage important habitat for whales, sharks and sea turtles and wipe out seafloor ecosystems. Part of an emerging global industry that's pursuing billions of dollars worth of nickel, copper, cobalt, manganese, zinc, gold and other rare-earth metals and minerals, the project would involve massive cutting machines that would leave behind a barren landscape.

The lawsuit challenges a pair of exploratory permits that were issued to OMCO Seabed Exploration LLC, a subsidiary of defense contractor Lockheed Martin, to pursue mining work in the Clarion-Clipperton Zone in the equatorial Pacific Ocean, about halfway between Hawaii and Mexico. The NOAA issued the first licenses in 1980, but those expired in 2004. This case challenges their renewal in 2012, which was based on a request from the company.

“Endangered Species Mural Project” Launched in Idaho

Portland-based artist Roger Peet is collaborating with the Center for Biological Diversity on an innovative new mural project to raise awareness about endangered species across the United States. The first mural went up in May: a massive mountain caribou on the wall of a prominent building in downtown Sandpoint, Idaho, which received this creative gift with pride and gratitude.

The mural — cosponsored by the Selkirk Conservation Alliance — was completed just after the city of Sandpoint passed a resolution supporting recovery of the endangered mountain caribou and calling for augmentation of the southern Selkirk herd, which lives near Sandpoint in the Selkirk Mountains and is the last herd found in the contiguous United States.

There may be a mural coming to a town near you. Additional planned projects include murals of the watercress darter in Birmingham, Ala.; Montana's Arctic grayling in Butte, Mont.; the Ozark hellbender in St. Louis, Mo.; Colorado River fish on the Navajo reservation in Arizona; the bull trout in Oakridge, Ore.; and the monarch butterfly in Minneapolis, Minn.



RAISE YOUR VOICE FOR THE
WILD

American pika by David Kingham

Please donate today:
BiologicalDiversity.org/summer



CENTER for BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY
P.O. Box 710 • Tucson, AZ 85702-0710

Nonprofit Org
US POSTAGE
PAID
TUCSON AZ
Permit No 1308



Scan the QR barcode
with your smartphone
to read breaking news
on Center campaigns.



Linked Together

From the Director

Kierán Suckling

We aren't so different from bees and butterflies:

We all need clean food and water, safe places to live, and relief from the poisons that too often choke today's world.

Increasingly the Center is tackling the roots of environmental problems and the linkages among them. The founding and expansion of our Population and Sustainability program was followed by another launch this year that's seen enormous progress in recent months: our Environmental Health program.

The mission of Environmental Health is to reduce toxins in the environment — from pesticides that are killing off bees and other pollinators to pollution from fracking and coal to the spent lead from hunting ammo and fishing gear that poisons millions of animals a year. The lawyers and biologists in this exciting new program are fighting for far-ranging, systemic reform in the way our country deals with the chemical-industrial complex that has had, for decades, such a devastating impact on the natural world and the people and wildlife that depend on it.

The new program has already helped bring about a ban on bee-killing pesticides in Portland; joined allies to call on major retailers like Ace and True Value Hardware to stop selling these bee-killing products, called "neonicotinoids," nationwide; and launched lawsuits over a dangerous new insecticide and an herbicide that uses the notorious defoliant Agent Orange. Very recently we also won a court ruling in California preventing miners from suction-dredging rivers — a practice that puts mercury into rivers and destroys sensitive wildlife habitat.

And in June our work brought a phenomenal victory on pesticides when the EPA agreed to a Center settlement under which it will study the impacts of atrazine and Roundup — two of the most widely used pesticides on the face of the Earth, which together make up about 40 percent of American pesticide use by volume — on no fewer than 1,500 endangered species across the country.

Fundamentally, we know this: Protecting wildlife and wild places also means protecting ourselves, and securing a future for all.

Endangered earth

is the membership newsletter of the Center for Biological Diversity. With the support of more than 900,000 members and supporters, 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 three times yearly in January, July and October and printed on 100% post-consumer recycled paper with solvent-free vegetable-based inks.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Marcey Olajos – Board Chair
Stephanie Zill – Treasurer
Todd Steiner
Matt Frankel
Peter Galvin

FOUNDERS ADVISORY BOARD

Todd Schulke
Dr. Robin Silver

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Kierán Suckling

ENDANGERED EARTH EDITOR & DESIGNER

Russ McSpadden

COPYEDITING

Lydia Millet, Anna Mirocha

CONTRIBUTORS

Lori Ann Burd, Katherine Davis, Sarah Uhlemann, Jared Margolis, Patrick Sullivan, Jennifer Molitor, Kierán Suckling



BEE ON THE COVER:
Andres Morya / Flickr CC BY-NC

To become a member or give a gift membership, contact us at (866) 357-3349 x. 323 or membership@biologicaldiversity.org; send a check to Center for Biological Diversity, Membership, P.O. Box 710, Tucson, AZ, 85702-0710; or visit the "Support" page on our secure server: www.BiologicalDiversity.org. Contributions are tax deductible. Our tax ID# is 27-3943866.

Sign up to join our e-list at Join.BiologicalDiversity.org to receive the latest endangered species news, find out how to become a biodiversity activist and plug in to the Center's campaigns.

CENTER for BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY

Because life is good.