

ENDANGERED EARTH



CENTER FOR BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY
SUMMER 2020

THIS MAP reveals the geologic history of North America through the interrelation of rock type, topography and time. From most recent to oldest, age is indicated by yellow, green, blue and red.

Explore the map in more detail online at <http://tiny.cc/eemap>.

WHERE WE'RE WORKING

January – June 2020

ENDANGERED SPECIES CONDOMS

We gave away more than 40,000 free Endangered Species Condoms on Valentine's Day in the country's "most sexually satisfied" cities to help couples consider population growth's threat to wildlife and the planet.

CUCKOOS

Due to pressure by the Center, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service proposed nearly 500,000 protected acres for western yellow-billed cuckoos, including more than 1,200 linear miles in seven states. These migratory songbirds once nested along rivers and streams across the West, but they've been driven out of many areas by habitat loss.

WILDLIFE SERVICES

The Center worked with Humboldt County, California, to take steps toward more humane and effective management of its wildlife and change its agreement with Wildlife Services, an agency known for indiscriminate and cruel killing of wildlife.

BORDER WALL

We sued the Trump administration for taking \$7.2 billion from the Department of Defense for border-wall construction without congressional approval, and we're challenging six waivers that sweep aside dozens of environmental and public-health laws to fast-track wall construction in California, Arizona, New Mexico and Texas.

HAMMERHEADS

We filed a groundbreaking lawsuit seeking protection for three species of hammerhead shark under Mexico's list of species at risk. The Mexican fishing industry catches thousands of tons of hammerheads a year.

BOUNDARY WATERS

We sued the Trump administration in May to stop a massive copper mine at the edge of the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness in Minnesota. These world-class waters contain 1,200 miles of canoe routes and more than 1,000 lakes left by receding glaciers.

COVID-19 AND THE WILDLIFE TRADE

We released a sweeping action plan for the United States to dramatically crack down on wildlife trade, the likely cause of the COVID-19 pandemic. The plan recommends that the United States end live wildlife imports, curtail all other wildlife trade pending stricter rules, and take a global leadership role in controlling the trade.

FRESHWATER MUSSELS

Following 10 years of advocacy and litigation by the Center, the Fish and Wildlife Service moved to protect 319 river miles of critical habitat for threatened yellow lance freshwater mussels in North Carolina, Virginia and Maryland.

PINE SNAKES

Following Center pressure, about 325,000 acres in Mississippi and Alabama will be protected for rare black pine snakes, whose longleaf pine forests have been reduced to less than 5% of their historic extent.

CORALS

In response to a lawsuit by the Center, the Trump administration agreed to critical habitat protection for 12 threatened coral species: five species found in Florida and the Caribbean, and seven around islands in the Pacific Ocean.

CARIBBEAN SKINKS

We launched a lawsuit against the Trump administration for failing to protect eight rare species of skink in Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands under the Endangered Species Act.

ACTIVIST SPOTLIGHT: Elsa Enstom (left) and Victoria Estes (right) are activists who have been working on our national campaigns and have been leaders on the ground in North Carolina fighting to get 100% renewable energy in Asheville and end the Duke monopoly. Both frequented local businesses last summer collecting signatures for these Center campaigns. Together they're forming a local group of activists who want to save life on Earth. As we practice social distancing in activism, Victoria is helping plan webinars to train other activists while fine-tuning her Zoom skills.





PANDEMICS AND WILDLIFE

Somewhere in a jungle, or hiding out in an animal that’s being smuggled across a border or sold in a live market, the next emerging infectious disease is lurking.

It’s hard to contemplate another global pandemic as COVID-19 continues to ravage our lives. But health experts are already eyeing the horizon, and so should we.

More than 60% of emerging diseases are zoonotic. “Zoonoses” are diseases that naturally reside in animals but can mutate and infect people. These mutations are increasing in number as more people take up more land, alter our climate and exploit animals.

The forces that drive the emergence of new zoonotic diseases — wildlife exploitation and habitat loss — also drive the extinction crisis, according to more than 150 experts convened by the UN in the 2019. Those experts also warned of the likely loss of a million species unless we change business as usual.

Health experts have the same message: AIDS, Ebola, Zika, and avian and swine flus all emerged in the past 40 years, and a new disease is expected to appear as regularly as every four months. Our globalized economy has become a small, intimate place where new diseases spread rapidly.



Tanya Sanerib • Legal Director and Senior Attorney
Environmental Health Program

As we look to the future, we need to see transformative change. That’s why the Center is pushing hard, both domestically and globally, to re-envision our relationship with wildlife and nature.

And we can’t just point fingers: The United States consumes roughly 20% of global wildlife, including about 224 million live animals and a stunning 883 million dead specimens. Our demand for wildlife-based décor, fashion and meats shifts disease risk to other countries — it doesn’t negate the risk. New international measures to address wildlife-related disease are needed but could take decades to finalize and offer no immediate protections.

So what do we do? We and other major wildlife-consuming nations, like the E.U. and Japan, need to pick up where China’s wildlife-consumption ban left off. We need to ban all wildlife trade and close wildlife markets as a first response. Halting demand and drying up trade channels is key, but we also have to reconceive the future. Livelihoods will have to change, and so will lifestyle choices.

COVID-19 has shown us how interconnected the world truly is. Let’s fight for the transformation we desperately need to protect our planet and our health.



Squirrel monkeys photo courtesy DMCA

A GRAND VISION

Our Fight to Protect 30% of Land and Water by 2030

Three-quarters of the planet’s land and two-thirds of its waters have been heavily altered by people. In the United States we lose a football field’s worth of nature to human development every 30 seconds. Wildlife populations are crashing around the world: Scientists predict that more than 1 million species are on track for extinction in the coming decades.

Whenever a species goes extinct, our world is incrementally impoverished and destabilized. Losing biodiversity threatens life-support processes like crop pollination and water purification. It’s also a tremendous spiritual and cultural loss to our own species.

The extinction crisis is made worse by the climate crisis, and we have a limited amount of time to address both. That’s why some of the world’s top scientists led by famed biologist E.O. Wilson have launched an international campaign named the Half-Earth Project to protect half the planet’s land and seas by 2050.

And it’s why the Center is part of a new national movement, along with dozens of other conservation groups, to protect 30% of the world’s lands and waters by 2030 — an urgent, interim goal toward protecting 50% of the planet by 2050 and saving life on Earth. We’re calling it 30x30.

Right now just 12% of U.S. lands and 26% of U.S. oceans are protected, so we’ve got a ways to go. But the United States has a vast system of public lands, so securing increased protections can form the building blocks for 30x30. And there’s plenty of other land that’s still undeveloped.

We’re identifying key regions that are rich in biodiversity but lack laws to protect them — from Appalachian mountaintops to Florida wetlands to the West’s Sagebrush Sea. Together with local communities and policymakers, we’ll build support to permanently preserve these places for future generations.



House and Senate companion resolutions are offering a framework for action, including efforts to address environmental injustice. Achieving 30x30 will take local, state and tribal government actions, too — but Congress and the next president will need to do the heavy lifting.

The president can establish new national wildlife refuges and marine monuments. Policymakers should expand protected areas, designate wildlife corridors, and fund efforts to restore connectivity, such as underpasses for wildlife to safely cross highways.

We’re encouraging Congress to spend at least \$20 billion to protect habitat and acquire and protect new lands. It also must cast off the “multiple use” requirement that governs public-land management and has typically meant that most public lands are run for the benefit of the fossil fuel industry, logging industry and other extractive interests.

We’re at a crossroads. We can preserve and restore our lands and waters, and prevent mass extinction — or see the ecosystems of our planet unravel past a point of no return.

Randi Spivak • Director
Public Lands Program



HOW WE'RE WINNING

January – June 2020

CONFRONTING COAL

For almost a quarter-century, a legal loophole has let Big Coal operate with little responsibility for the ways its activities harm endangered species. Over the past 10 years, we've been fighting to hold coal-mining companies accountable — and we recently won the battle. In response to a lawsuit by the Center and allies, the Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement agreed to meet with the Fish and Wildlife Service by Oct. 16 to review coal mining's nationwide impacts on endangered species and ensure it's not threatening their survival.



CALIFORNIA MOUNTAIN LIONS

In response to a petition by the Center and allies, the California Fish and Game Commission voted 5–0 to advance Southern California and Central Coast mountain lions to candidacy under the state's Endangered Species Act. With state protection we can start to improve connectivity to reverse genetic isolation of the six puma populations included in our petition.



ENERGY AND JUSTICE

In January we launched a new Energy Justice program focused on driving the urgent transition to a clean-energy future to protect wildlife and people. Staffed by attorneys and renewable-energy experts, the program will wage innovative legal campaigns to challenge utility corruption and build paths to democratic, decentralized renewable electricity.



ISLAND MARBLE BUTTERFLIES

The island marble butterfly was once deemed extinct. Then it turned up on Washington state's San Juan Island in the 1990s. We petitioned for its protection under the Endangered Species Act in 2002 and then sued to force the Fish and Wildlife Service to take action. That petition was denied in 2006. But eighteen years later, following continuous Center pressure, island marble butterflies have been granted protection, along with 812 acres of protected habitat.

WIN FOR WOLVES

In a key win for wolves and other wildlife, we helped finalize an agreement that sets strict limits on how and where a federal agency can kill wolves in Idaho, bans the use of M-44 "cyanide bombs" statewide, and prohibits the use of snares to kill wolves on public land.



ENDANGERED HAWAII

Thanks to a momentous legal victory for the Center and Hawaiian wildlife, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service must designate protected critical habitat for 14 endangered Hawaii Island species, including the beautiful 'aku 'aku plant.

SAVING LIFE ON EARTH

Tierra Curry • Director
Saving Life on Earth Campaign



1 Two butterflies in Florida, a beetle in Arizona, a songbird in Hawaii, a fish in the Ozarks, a springsnail in Georgia, a pocket gopher in Washington state: Nationwide, species are going extinct with neither media fanfare nor urgent governmental response.

Each time a species disappears, a place is inextricably harmed. Together the losses tell the story of the heartbreaking wildlife extinction crisis unfolding around us.

Last year several global analyses laid bare that more than just the survival of wild animals and plants is now at stake: The future of humans is also at risk if we don't make sweeping changes to how we treat wildlife and resolve to keep the air, water and climate livable.

Recognizing the gravity and potential of this moment, the Center has launched a new campaign called Saving Live on Earth. We've been at work for decades to save species — from jaguars to forest jumping slugs — and now we're building an innovative, inclusive movement to end extinction.

The Saving Life on Earth campaign will elevate and unite all the Center's campaigns while working to inspire people's imaginations. Our message is that environmental health, social justice and extinction are all connected — and that we have a duty and the power to create a more just, sustainable future.

2 Losing wildlife is more than just a scientific problem; it's also a cultural and spiritual crisis. Although it's often unconscious or unspoken, human beings retain a deep emotional dependence on the wild world in which we've always lived. Wild animals have inspired our thinking, cultures and religions. Our own wellbeing on all levels is tied to the integrity of wild places.

The Center's sweeping new campaign aims to create a new sense of responsibility for the rest of Earth's inhabitants. Our goal is to inspire people from all walks of life to unite behind saving life on Earth. We're gathering individuals and groups from across the political and cultural spectrums by working through channels including art, poetry and spirituality. We're developing strategic relationships with a broader range of people and partners to increase mutual power and elevate the urgency of saving the wild.

3 We're fighting the dangerous rollback of environmental protections the Trump administration has enacted, and we're also looking ahead. We've outlined key steps the next administration must take, including declaring the extinction crisis a national emergency. We're urging U.S. policymakers to commit to ending extinction here and abroad through two initiatives: protecting 30% of U.S. lands and waters for wildlife by 2030, and restoring the Endangered Species Act and listing all imperiled species under its successful protections.

Before the pandemic brought travel to a halt, our polar bear mascot Frostpaw was trailing presidential candidates demanding action on the extinction crisis. Now, to keep the momentum going until we can hit the streets again, we're offering webinars, online organizing and livestreams on social media platforms. The year 2019 was a year of warnings. Now 2020 is underscoring that everything is connected, that rapid change is possible, and that funding is available for the vital changes needed to overhaul our energy, food and transportation systems to safeguard the wellbeing of all Earth's inhabitants.

4 Through science and law, poetry and policy, organizing and mobilizing, we're doubling down on our work on all fronts to secure protections for all creatures great and small, from hellbender salamanders to monarch butterflies. Together we can save life on Earth.



THIS SUMMER, PUT MORE VEGGIES ON THE GRILL

During a typical summer, Americans gobble up an average of 818 hot dogs per second. All those franks — along with the hamburgers, steaks, chicken and other meats thrown on the grill — are cooking the planet, too. With meat and dairy production contributing 16.5% of global greenhouse gas emissions, changing the way we eat is critical to avoiding the worst effects of climate change.

A new study released by researchers at the University of Michigan and Tulane University, and supported by the Center, found that replacing half of all animal-based foods with plant-based alternatives in the United States would reduce diet-related greenhouse gas emissions by 35%. Over the next 10 years, that would result in a total reduction of 1.6 billion tons of climate pollution.

Reducing beef consumption by 90% alongside the reduction in other animal foods would prevent more than 2 billion tons of greenhouse gas pollution by 2030. That’s like taking nearly half the world’s cars off the roads for a year. But if Americans continue business as usual, diet-related emissions will increase by 9%.

Meat and dairy hurt wildlife as well as the climate. Raising animals and feed crops uses 80% of U.S. agricultural land. More than half the grain we grow — much of it drenched in harmful pesticides — goes to feeding livestock. Nearly half our water supports livestock production, with beef guzzling more than average. Almost a third of water used in the drought-stricken West is poured into irrigating feed crops for cattle, making it a leading threat to the region’s rivers. And millions of wild creatures, from wolves to prairie dogs, are slaughtered to protect meat-industry profits.

By reducing the meat on our plates, we can ease pressure on the climate, land, water and wildlife. Our choices help create change, but it’s not all up to us as individuals — what we choose to eat is determined by what’s available, affordable and accessible. That’s why the Center released a policy guide alongside the study to encourage government leaders to recognize food policy as climate policy.



Now that the warm weather’s here, folks are firing up the barbecue. By putting more plants and less meat on the grill, we can improve our health, reduce our carbon footprint and save wildlife.

Stephanie Feldstein • Director
Population and Sustainability Program

Grill photo by Hari Nandakumar

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The Pursuit of Justice

From the Director
Kierán Suckling

Ruby Mountains, Nevada by Patrick Donnelly

It’s been a momentous year, and it’s barely half-finished.

In the course of just a few months, we launched our landmark Saving Life on Earth campaign to combat the extinction crisis, filed our 200th lawsuit against the Trump administration, moved our work into home offices due to the coronavirus pandemic, and then were compelled by our consciences to join protests and calls for police reforms in the wake of George Floyd’s murder.

Driving all of this is the pursuit of justice: for species undeserving of eradication, public lands that shouldn’t be torn apart for greedy corporations, and Black communities that deserve an end to long-running police violence.

Our world continues to get more complex, and the problems we’re facing more urgent. Our job is to respond in kind and not look away from the injustices staring us in the face.

That’s why we have a bold new plan to combat wildlife extinction that calls for a \$100 billion investment to save imperiled plants and animals and that’s why we’re

pursuing an ambitious plan to save 30% of the natural world by 2030 and half by 2050.

That’s why, in response to the pandemic, we’re pushing a sweeping proposal for the United States to dramatically crack down on wildlife trade.

It’s also why we’re fighting trophy hunting, seeking better laws to protect our oceans, mobilizing our activists in calling for real solutions to the climate crisis, suing to stop the proliferation of pesticides, and standing in solidarity with communities in search of safety from violent institutionalized racism.

As always, I’m honored to work beside the Center’s tireless scientists, lawyers, activists and others who take on each new challenge, fight in equal measure with their hearts and minds, and stand up for what’s right every day.

And I’m grateful to have you with us at each turn.

Thank you.



ENDANGERED EARTH

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PANGOLIN
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By leaving a legacy gift through a bequest, or making the Center a beneficiary of your retirement plan or other estate plan, you'll be supporting the fight to save endangered wildlife for generations to come. To learn more about your legacy giving options, please call (646) 770-7206 or email owlsclub@biologicaldiversity.org.

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