

# CENTER FOR BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY

BECAUSE LIFE IS GOOD

## ABOUT THE CENTER

Since its first victory protecting the Mexican spotted owl in the forests of the Southwest, the Center for Biological Diversity has gone the distance to save endangered plants and animals around the globe—protecting 335 species and 43 million acres of habitat in just over 15 years.

The Center for Biological Diversity was founded on a principle: that creatures from all walks of life are precious—from polar bears and bowhead whales to tiny butterflies and jewelers. We believe that humans are inextricably linked to the natural world, and that the planet needs each of us—as we need each other—for life.

The Center's founders came together in 1989 in an effort to protect the Mexican spotted owl and the ancient forests of the Southwest where it thrives. At the time, the number of owls had declined to fewer than 2,000, as the region's old-growth forests fell to political pressure from the timber industry.

Armed with scientific evidence and legal savvy, the Center successfully petitioned to have the owl protected under the federal Endangered

Species Act. These protections halted timber harvesting on millions of acres of forest in Arizona and New Mexico until the government upheld the Endangered Species Act and came up with a plan to save the owl.

Since then, the Center has mastered this highly effective method of combining science, advocacy, and environmental law.

We start with rigorous scientific research, evaluating the most vulnerable plants and animals, ecologically vital habitat, and greatest threats to our environment. With research in hand, we seek protections for the species that need it most, by filing citizen petitions to get species on the endangered species list, challenging activities that illegally harm habitat, forming coalitions of conservation groups, and engaging in grassroots activism. Finally, we take legal action on behalf of vulnerable plants and animals when necessary to ensure their protection. With a 90 percent success rate in the courts, our intervention has made a critical difference for hundreds of species struggling to survive.



CHARITABLE STATUS: 501(c)3 non-profit organization. Contributions are tax-deductible.

MEMBERSHIP: 32,000 members nationwide.

OFFICES: Tucson and Phoenix, AZ; Silver City, NM; Joshua Tree, San Diego, and San Francisco, CA; Portland, OR; and Washington, D.C.

OCEANS

**M**ore than 80 percent of life on Earth can be found under the ocean's surface and remains largely unexplored. In response to threats of overfishing, fisheries bycatch, pollution, and habitat destruction, the Center works to protect the oceans'

most imperiled animals, from corals to killer whales. The Center's efforts have resulted in proposals to protect Alaskan sea otters and Puget Sound orcas under the Endangered Species Act, shut down commercial fisheries that entangle and drown thousands of sea turtles and other marine animals and birds each year, and halted sonar testing harmful to whales.

DESERTS

**T**he deserts of the western U.S. are home to a surprising abundance of unique species, and the Center has secured a wide range of protections for desert wilderness. Our most sweeping victory on this front has taken place in the California Desert Conservation Area, a 25-million-acre swath of the Sonoran, Mojave and Great Basin deserts. In just a few short years, the Center

has revolutionized management of this area, protecting imperiled plants and animals such as the desert tortoise, Peirson's milk-vetch, and peninsular bighorn sheep from livestock grazing, mining and off-road vehicle abuses. The Center also protects deserts from ever-encroaching urban sprawl. In Arizona, our efforts resulted in the legal protection of the cactus ferruginous pygmy owl, whose listing as an endangered species spurred the creation of the Sonoran Desert Conservation Plan—the most ambitious and scientifically-grounded conservation plan in the country.

OTHER PROGRAMS

**Air, Climate, and Energy**  
The Center is engaged in a bold campaign on behalf of species endangered by global warming. We have sought protections for the vulnerable habitat of Caribbean corals and polar bears, and challenged the U.S. government's lagging efforts to adopt renewable energy sources.

**Urban Wildlands**  
Focusing on urban-growth hotspots in the Southwest and California, the Center challenges poorly planned, out-of-control development that destroys vital habitat, creates pollution, and reduces quality of life in cities and surrounding rural areas.

**International**

Our conservation efforts are expanding to an ever wider range. We are currently seeking protections for a long list of foreign birds and butterflies, and recently helped launch a campaign in Okinawa, Japan to oppose plans for a U.S. military airbase that would destroy a fragile coral reef and habitat for the endangered dugong, a marine mammal held sacred by Okinawans.

**Biodiversity**

The Center recently launched the most sweeping listing effort in Endangered Species Act history, filing scientific petitions to protect 225 of the nation's most imperiled plants and animals, all left unprotected for years on the federal government's "candidate" species list.

FORESTS

**F**orests provide some of the world's richest habitat for wildlife. The Center's Forests Program has expanded its scope to forests throughout the Southwest, California, Pacific Northwest, and southeastern Alaska. Using a variety of tools, we have prevented the destruction of old-growth forest lands and worked diligently to secure protections for forest-dependent species such as the northern goshawk, Pacific fisher, and Sierra Nevada mountain yellow-legged frog. Advocating collaboratively with other groups, the Center has worked to push government management and restoration of our national forests in a more rational direction—one that does not sacrifice the long-term integrity of our lands and the diversity they harbor to short-term private gain at taxpayer expense. The Center is also working at the cutting edge of restoration policy and practice.

RIVERS

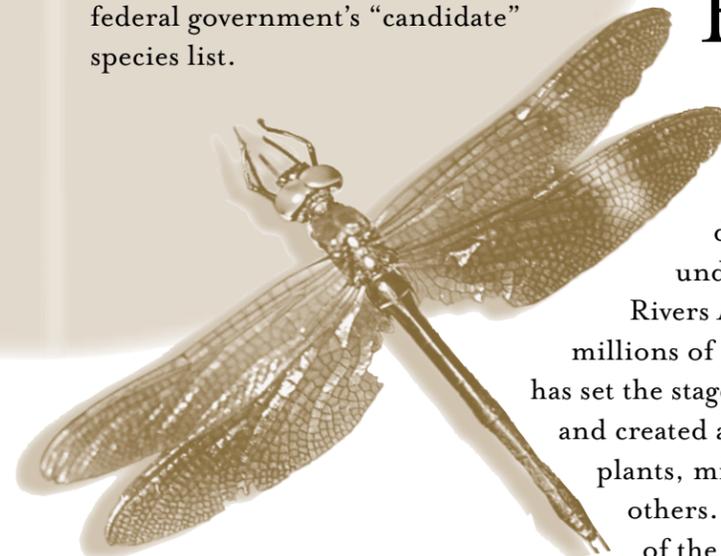
**F**rom the Pacific Northwest and California to the Great Lakes, the Center protects and restores rivers and wetlands. We've worked to have dozens of rivers protected under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act. And by establishing millions of acres of protected endangered species habitat, the Center has set the stage for the restoration of a wide variety of riparian ecosystems and created a lifeline for western native trout, numerous native fish, rare plants, migratory birds, and gravely imperiled amphibians, among others. A key focus has been the protection of the last living rivers of the desert Southwest, including Arizona's spectacular San Pedro Watershed—one of the most biologically diverse places on Earth.



sea otter



desert tortoise



northern goshawk



arctic grayling

photo courtesy CDDonGettyPhoto.com

photo by Robin Silver

photo by Robin Silver

photo by Ernest R. Keeley

## DEFENDING ENVIRONMENTAL LAWS

The Endangered Species Act is one of the nation's most important environmental laws. It serves as a safety net for plants and animals on the brink of extinction. Ensuring that imperiled species and habitat gain protection under the Act, and that those protections are upheld, is a fundamental objective of our work.

Unfortunately, federal agencies charged with preserving endangered species and wild lands often fail to hold up their end of the bargain for political reasons. In recent years the laws protecting imperiled animals and plants, wilderness, clean air and water, and human health have come under fire as never before. The current administration has launched an unprecedented attack on the environment, attempting massive rollbacks of endangered species and wilderness protections that conservation and public interest groups have fought long and hard to achieve. The Center for Biological Diversity counters these attacks through advocacy, education, and monitoring agency and industry activity to ensure that environmental laws are upheld and enforced.

## PROTECTING HABITAT

Recognizing that habitat loss is the primary threat to 85 percent of all endangered species, Congress amended the Endangered Species Act in 1978 to require the designation of mapped-out critical habitat areas—the lands and water necessary for species recovery. Critical habitat has proven to be a very effective conservation tool: plants and animals with it are less likely to be declining and over twice as likely to be recovering than species without it. In our efforts to attain critical habitat designations for hundreds of species, the Center has won protection of 43 million acres stretching from Alaska to Texas.

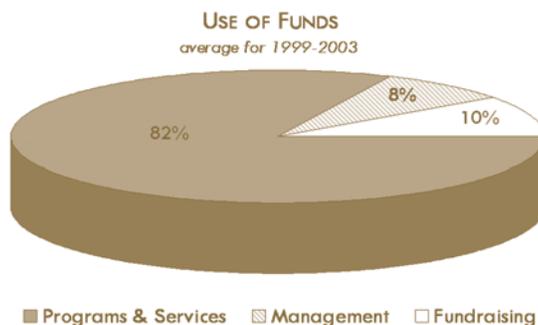
## WATCHING OVER PUBLIC LANDS

Land management agencies such as the U.S. Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management routinely fail to consider the needs of endangered species and habitat when approving timber sales, mining operations, grazing permits, urban sprawl, and other activities. The Center monitors these activities to ensure that federal agencies manage, protect, and restore our national forests, national monuments, wilderness areas and other public lands lands in keeping with environmental laws.

## MEMBERSHIP SUPPORT GOES A LONG WAY

*"I feel the Center uses my donation dollar for dollar to the fullest extent to protect native species and their critical habitat."*

~ Center member



We owe our victories for endangered species to the passion and commitment of Center members. In return, we make efficient and effective use of our funds: 82 percent goes directly to conservation programs where it is needed most. Although the Center has grown steadily since its inception in 1989, we still operate as a grassroots organization—remaining committed to helping our members have a direct impact in protecting their environment.