

# In the Political Crosshairs

2025

10

Species jeopardized by  
politicians in Congress





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# Introduction

For over fifty years, the Endangered Species Act (ESA) has ensured the survival of vulnerable animals and plants. One of our most effective laws, 99 percent of species protected under the ESA have avoided extinction. Now fully recovered, bald eagles were nearly lost forever before science-based conservation measures ensured their recovery. More than a thousand species, worldwide, have received vital protection and recovery commitments under the ESA. Iconic species like the gray wolf and grizzly bear had been eradicated from 99% of their habitat in the United States, and the ESA has inspired their reintroduction and ongoing recovery efforts.

It is also one of our most beloved laws. Americans across political ideologies favor wildlife conservation afforded by the ESA: 84% of Americans support it, 80% support fully funding it, and 70% believe that species listing decisions should be made by scientists, not politicians.

Despite its success and popularity, attacks by Congress on the ESA are second only to the Affordable Care Act, and Trump's Administration is accelerating these attacks. Powerful industries and anti-government activists have long targeted the ESA as an obstacle to development. Backed by deep-pocketed lobbyists, they've pressured Congress and the White House to weaken its protections. During Trump's first term (2016 –2020), industry allies re-wrote the rules, drastically undermining how the Act was managed and enforced.

President Biden reversed many of these policies to restore science-based management of the ESA. Since returning to the presidency in 2025, Trump has again wreaked havoc on the ESA and other environmental protections. He allowed tech billionaire Elon Musk to illegally fire hundreds of scientists managing its day-to-day work. Although courts reinstated many, the firings disrupted ESA programs and wildlife protections. New policies now put drilling, mining, and logging first, while sidelining protections for threatened and endangered species. In one of the most brazen attacks yet, Trumps appointees are proposing that destroying habitat doesn't count as "harm" under the ESA, even though habitat loss is the leading driver of extinction.

Meanwhile, some members of Congress are working on amendments to make these abuses permanent. Crafted by a small but powerful group to appease billionaire donors, the "ESA Amendments Act" will weaken scientific standards, strip protections, turn industry reviews into a "rubber stamp," and cripple the ESA's ability to protect species. Separate measures seek to sidestep the ESA entirely and eliminate protections for iconic species such as the gray wolf.

This report tells the story of ten species imperiled by the ESA Amendments Act of 2025 and other bills removing protections for specific species. We provide updates on species featured in previous ESC reports —*"Extinction Plan: Ten Species Imperiled by the Trump Administration"* (2018) and *"Ten Stories of Hope: The Endangered Species Act at 50"* (2023) — and explain how Congress could eliminate the very protections that save them from extinction.



# 1 West Indian manatee



**“Manatees and seagrass communities have co-evolved over millions of years. Uncontrolled development, lax regulation, and pollution from Florida’s growing human population have fueled the cycle of algae blooms that cause seagrass loss.”**

***-Patrick Rose, Aquatic Biologist and Executive Director of the Save the Manatee Club***



# West Indian Manatee

## *Trichechus manatus*

Life is slow and sweet for sea cows: eating, relaxing, slow winter swims in warm southern waters, gliding to the surface every 20 minutes for the next breath. This plant-eating, fully aquatic mammal's closest relatives span a curious spectrum from the lumbering elephant to a pudgy, round-eared, tailless rabbit-looking creature called hyraxes.



The West Indian manatee, including the Florida manatee subspecies (*T. manatus latirostris*), weighs in at an easy one thousand pounds and can live to 60 years. With few natural predators, manatees only faced serious threats when humans altered their habitats. And although watercraft collisions, propeller cuts, drowning by canal locks, and suffocation by fishing gear are significantly impacting manatee numbers, the biggest threats to manatees are red tide, algae blooms, and water pollution.

*Adapted excerpt from "Extinction plan: Ten Species Imperiled by the Trump Administration," 2018*

In 2017, the Trump Administration downgraded manatees to "threatened," removed slow-speed zones, and weakened water quality rules and pollution restrictions. The consequences were devastating: massive seagrass die-offs –manatees' main food source – resulting in a 20% population decline. Proposed ESA Amendments in Congress will protect developers and block protections. If passed, we could lose manatees forever.

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### Population

~12,000

### Status

THREATENED

### Range

FLORIDA AND THE CARRIBEAN

### Habitat

BOTH FRESH AND SALT WATER





# 2 Piping Plover

**“Having an awareness that these beaches are living ecosystems makes for a more enriched experience. It’s not just about the sun and surf — this is somebody’s home. The piping plovers, they’re New Yorkers too.”**

***-Chris Allieri, founder and director of the  
NYC Plover Project***





# Piping Plover

## *Charadrius melodus*

A newly hatched piping plover weighs less than a nickel! That tiny cotton puff on sticks faces a month of beach life dodging gulls, foxes, feral cats, and other predators before it can fly. Our feet, flying frisbees, and friendly dogs can destroy a nest. Plovers need their caloric reserves to fly great distances. Every flushed bird burns precious energy needed for survival and migration. Few chicks survive the first month.

All U.S. plover populations were listed under the ESA in 1985, when fewer than 8,000 Atlantic Coast birds were left, including just 476 breeding pairs. By 2004, the coastal population boasted 519 breeding pairs, and by 2019, 1,818 pairs—all thanks to the ESA.

Piping plovers remain far from fully recovered on these beaches and serve as an indicator species: their presence or absence reflects the health of coastal and prairie shoreline habitats. Their story tells our story of how human activity shapes—and can protect—the natural world we share.

**Excerpt adapted from “Ten Stories of Hope: The Endangered Species Act at 50,” 2023**

Piping plovers have benefited from the ESA’s “blanket rule,” which helps establish clear and immediate protections for populations listed as threatened under the ESA, instead of endangered. This allows for preliminary protections while agency experts to consider whether to develop species-specific protections for them. Congress has proposed to eliminate the “blanket” rule forever. If they succeed, piping plovers would again be impacted by nest disturbances, and recovery could slip out of reach.

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### Population

BETWEEN 7,600 TO 8,400 MATURE INDIVIDUALS

### Status

THREATENED (ATLANTIC COAST POPULATION);  
ENDANGERED (NORTHERN PLAINS AND GREAT LAKES  
POPULATIONS)

### Range

ATLANTIC POPULATIONS FROM MARITIME CANADA TO  
CAROLINAS; INLAND POPULATIONS IN THE NORTHERN  
GREAT PLAINS AND GREAT LAKES REGIONS

### Habitat

SANDY AND GRAVELLY BEACHES WITH NESTING SITES  
NEAR WATER





# 3 Hellbender

“Things we can do include protecting and re-establishing forest cover around streams, and adopting best agricultural management practices that prevent livestock from entering streams. And of course, better water quality is good for us.”

-Dr. Bill Hopkins, professor at Virginia Tech,  
hellbender research



# Hellbender

## *Cryptobranchus alleganiesis*

The Eastern Hellbender breathes through its slimy, mud-colored, sometimes speckled skin and spends its entire life beneath one river rock in shallow, slow-moving streams. These ancient wrinkled mudpuppies tip the scale at 5 pounds and steal the hearts of all who know them.

Hellbenders feast on insects and small fish, and are eaten, in turn, by snakes, turtles, and larger fish. They are a vital indicator of water quality—thriving only in the cleanest of streams. When their habitat deteriorates, they disappear. Hellbenders have been around for tens of thousands of years, but populations have dropped by as much as 70% across most of their range. Water pollution, dams, and disease are the leading threats to hellbender survival. More and more are being found crushed as people mine river rocks and look for these animals. Eastern hellbenders lay between 100 and 300 eggs beneath the stones people stack and play with; entire generations can be lost in an instant.

**Adapted Excerpt from “*Extinction Plan: Ten Species Imperiled by the Trump Administration*,” 2018**

Endangered Species Act protections could make the difference between life and death for hellbenders. As of spring 2025, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is moving to finalize its status as endangered. Just as hope builds, Congress may strip away the parts of the Endangered Species Act that would save them.

The consultation process is a cornerstone of the Endangered Species Act. It ensures the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service reviews industry impacts on endangered species, such as water pollution and dams, and requires measures that avoid damage and protect their habitats. But politicians are trying to turn this into a meaningless “rubber stamp” gesture, replacing science with political convenience, locking in harmful industry practices. For sensitive species like these salamanders, any changes in water quality are dangerous and will push them that much closer to the brink.

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### Population

UNKNOWN, OF THE 700 DISTINCT POPULATIONS, 40% HAVE BEEN EXTIRPATED AND 40% ARE RAPIDLY DECLINING

### Status

PROPOSED LISTING AS ENDANGERED  
THROUGHOUT ITS ENTIRE SPECIES RANGE

### Range

NEW YORK TO MISSISSIPPI AND VIRGINIA TO ILLINOIS


### Habitat

FAST-FLOWING, WELL-OXYGENATED RIVERS AND STREAMS





# 4 Rusty patched bumble bee



**"1 in 5 bumblebee species in the US could be endangered. But there is hope. The rusty patched endangered listing has led to programs that restore habitat and the bees' preferred plants."**

***-Dr. John Mola, professor at Colorado State,  
forest and rangeland stewardship research***



# Rusty patched bumble bee

## *Bombus affinis*

This bumble bee is a powerhouse pollinator, working crops like blueberries, cherries, plums, tomatoes, eggplants, and peppers, with a buzz-pollination shimmy that honey bees can't match. It has vanished from nearly 90% of its range, driven out by disease, pesticides, and habitat degradation—especially the destruction of tall-grass prairies and heavy use of neonicotinoids (a pesticide banned in other parts of the world).

**Adapted Excerpt from “*Extinction plan: Ten Species Imperiled by the Trump Administration*,” 2018**



When the rusty patched bumble bee was listed under the Endangered Species Act, it triggered the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to produce a rigorous, science-based conservation plan and map the places most vital to its survival. These “critical habitats” mark where the rusty patched bumble bees live, and where conservation efforts matter most. These maps revealed that the majority of these bees live on privately owned lands.

However, politicians in Congress are trying to exclude privately owned land from critical habitat designations under the Endangered Species Act. That would give private landowners a free pass to degrade vital habitats, and discourage willing landowners from accessing conservation support and incentives that would save the rusty patched bumble bee.

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### Population

UNKNOWN- IN THE LAST 20 YEARS, THE BEE'S POPOULATION HAS DECLINED 87% WITH A 90% DECLINE IN IT'S HISTORICAL RANGE

### Status

ENDANGERED

### Range

EASTERN AND UPPER MIDWEST UNITED STATES

### Habitat

GRASSLANDS AND TALL-GRASS PRAIRIES, ALSO WOODLANDS AND PASTURES





A close-up photograph of a gray wolf's face, looking directly at the camera with intense yellow eyes. The fur is a mix of gray, black, and white. The background is dark and out of focus.

# 5 Gray wolf

**“Removing protection for wolves would reverse the recovery of one of our most beloved species and take us back to a time when wolves were shot, trapped, and poisoned until they disappeared from the landscape. Endangered Species Act protections remain key to ensuring gray wolves return to the American landscape where they belong.”**

**-Susan Holmes, Executive Director,  
Endangered Species Coalition**



# Gray wolf

## *Canis lupus*

It is estimated that some two million gray wolves roamed North America in the early 1800s, before white settlers began to wipe them out. Few were left by the 1920s, and virtually none remained in a huge ecosystem of more than 20 million acres of intact wilderness spanning Montana, Wyoming, and Idaho. Yellowstone National Park was the centerpiece of this landscape, and it was here that the Endangered Species Act cleared a path to restore wolves to the western ecosystems with wolf reintroductions in Yellowstone National Park and central Idaho in 1995.

Native Americans have always revered wolves, regarding them as powerful spirits and supernatural guardians. The Nez Perce tribe was the first tribe in U.S. history to contract with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to undertake the field work and monitoring of wolves in Idaho. Thanks to these reintroduction efforts, wolf packs have been bringing balance back to Yellowstone National Park and central Idaho. The film, "Lost Wolves of Yellowstone: (2025)", followed the 1995 reintroduction and was a sobering story of how removing wolves led to the absence of everything from beavers to songbirds.

**Excerpt adapted from "Ten Stories of Hope: The Endangered Species Act at 50," 2023**

Gray wolves are a keystone species: when removed, a chain reaction occurs that negatively impacts the ecosystem, as seen in Yellowstone National Park. An explosion in elk populations led to a significant decline in willow and aspen trees and the near disappearance of songbirds and beavers. Rivers changed course, wetlands no longer purified water, and habitats for fish and amphibians were destroyed.

Some in Congress would upend this balance, clinging to outdated hatred and a culture that refuses to coexist with wolves. They want to strip away protections for gray wolves, ignoring science and silencing the courts. If successful, we could be dragged back to a time when wolves were shot, trapped, and poisoned until they disappear from the wild once more. Recovery efforts would stall, leaving states without the federal support to restore wolves to the places they still belong. When politics tramples science, critical conservation efforts collapse. One of America's great conservation success stories—the return of the gray wolf—could unravel before our eyes.

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### Population

FEWER THAN 7,000 IN THE LOWER 48 STATES

### Status

ENDANGERED IN THE LOWER 48; MINNESOTA POPULATION LISTED AS THREATENED; DELISTED IN NORTHERN ROCKIES

### Range

POPULATIONS IN ALASKA; NORTHERN MICHIGAN, WISCONSIN, AND IDAHO; WESTERN MONTANA, NORTHEAST OREGON, AND WYOMING'S YELLOWSTONE REGION

### Habitat

WOODLANDS, FORESTS, GRASSLANDS AND DESERTS, TUNDRA





# 6 Leatherback and Loggerhead sea turtles



**"We need leatherbacks. They eat the  
jellyfish."**

***-Medhini Kumar, writer,  
Evergreen Action***



# Pacific leatherback sea turtle

*Dermochelys coriacea*

# Loggerhead sea turtle

*Caretta caretta*



Leatherbacks and loggerheads share extraordinary journeys, crossing entire oceans to breed, feed, and mature. These sea turtles maintain the balance of their ocean habitats and enrich beaches by depositing essential minerals when nesting. They fuel local economies, bringing in millions of dollars in tourism each year. Yet these ancient mariners are in grave danger.

Thousands are killed every year by fishing nets and other human activities, and only a portion of their sea and sand habitats are currently protected. Climate change further exacerbates the threats to their already vulnerable habitats. Without stronger protections and urgent action, we risk losing them forever.

**Adapted Excerpt from “*Extinction Plan: Ten Species Imperiled by the Trump Administration*,” 2018**

Rollbacks to the Endangered Species Act will fast-track the removal of these two species from the endangered list, remove science from all policy decision-making, and strip sea turtles of critical habitat protections essential for their survival, accelerating an already declining population. This shift in ecosystem balance will also devastate the seafood economy as leatherbacks are a major predator on jellyfish, which devour millions of commercial fish eggs each year.

Rollbacks in the Trump Administration’s Endangered Species Amendments Act of 2025 would jeopardize already declining leatherback and loggerhead sea turtle populations. The consequences extend beyond conservation to the health of our seafood economy. Leatherbacks, as primary predators of jellyfish, provide a vital ecosystem service. Jellyfish devour fish eggs before commercially valuable species can mature, and with overfishing reducing competitors and sea turtle declines removing predators, jellyfish populations are exploding. This shift is destabilizing once-balanced marine ecosystems, putting both biodiversity and coastal economies at risk.

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## Leatherback

### Population

CURRENTLY BETWEEN 34 AND 94,000 ADULTS. ONCE NUMBERED SEVERAL MILLION. POPULATIONS EXPERIENCING A 40-90% DECLINE IN POPULATION SIZES.

### Status

ENDANGERED

### Range

WESTERN SUBPOPULATION: CALIFORNIA TO MALAYSIA; EASTERN SUBPOPULATION: MEXICO AND SOUTH AMERICA

### Habitat

TERRESTRIAL (NESTING BEACHES), COASTAL AND OPEN OCEAN (JUVENILES AND ADULTS)

## Loggerhead

### Population

CURRENTLY 50,000. ONCE NUMBERED SEVERAL MILLIONS

### Status

THREATENED

### Range

TEMPERATE HABITATS IN THE ATLANTIC, PACIFIC, AND INDIAN OCEANS

### Habitat

TERRESTRIAL (NESTING BEACHES), ESTUARINE AND OPEN OCEAN



# 7 Western yellow-billed cuckoo



**“It’s very important that there’s a broad network of suitable sites and protected areas that they [cuckoo] can make use of.”**

**-Adriaan Dokter, migration ecologist, Cornell Lab of Ornithology**



# Western yellow-billed cuckoo

## *Coccyzus americanus occidentalis*

This Cuckoo spends its summers in the wilds of the western United States, where rivers wind through whispering willows and towering cottonwoods. Found close to flowing water in native forests and dense understories, their insect prey, like caterpillars and cicadas, as well as amphibians such as frogs, are plentiful in this habitat. In the non-breeding season, this generalist will also eat fruit and seeds.

This migratory bird's nocturnal migration crosses deserts, mountains, the Gulf of Mexico, and riparian forests—from the Amazon basin to the Western U.S. The remarkable journey that sets this cuckoo apart from many other North American birds requires a protein and nutrient-rich diet and large swaths of connected habitat for ample rest along the route.

The western yellow-billed cuckoo is becoming a ghost of the western landscape. When this iconic bird finally received Endangered Species Act protection in 2014, this started a process to evaluate the science and designate its critical habitats for protection. In 2021, nearly 300,000 acres of streamside habitat needed for breeding, nesting, and feeding were officially designated as critical and protected.

**Adapted Excerpt from “*Extinction Plan: Ten Species Imperiled by the Trump Administration*,” 2018**

As scientists discovered while studying the western yellow-billed cuckoo, these protections weren't the end of the story. In 2024, scientists found western yellow-billed cuckoos nesting in arid groves of oak, mesquite, and juniper trees. As droughts become more common in the western United States, this adaptability is exciting. New science about the species would inform updates to critical habitat protections, but not if politicians in Congress have their way. They are trying to prevent new information like this from being used to update habitat protections. When every altered river, every forest cleared, and every acre grazed by livestock diminishes the western yellow-billed cuckoo's chances of survival, we should be using the best, most updated science – not making it illegal to use it.

New data show that cuckoos also frequent the arid habitats of southeast Arizona, underscoring the need for stronger protections. Already vulnerable to climate change impacts such as drought and western water diversion projects, their expanded range and reliance on additional tree species require more efforts to safeguard these threatened birds.

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### Population

680 TO 1,025 BREEDING PAIRS ESTIMATED TO REMAIN

### Status

THREATENED UNDER THE ESA

### Range

SOUTHWESTERN UNITED STATES

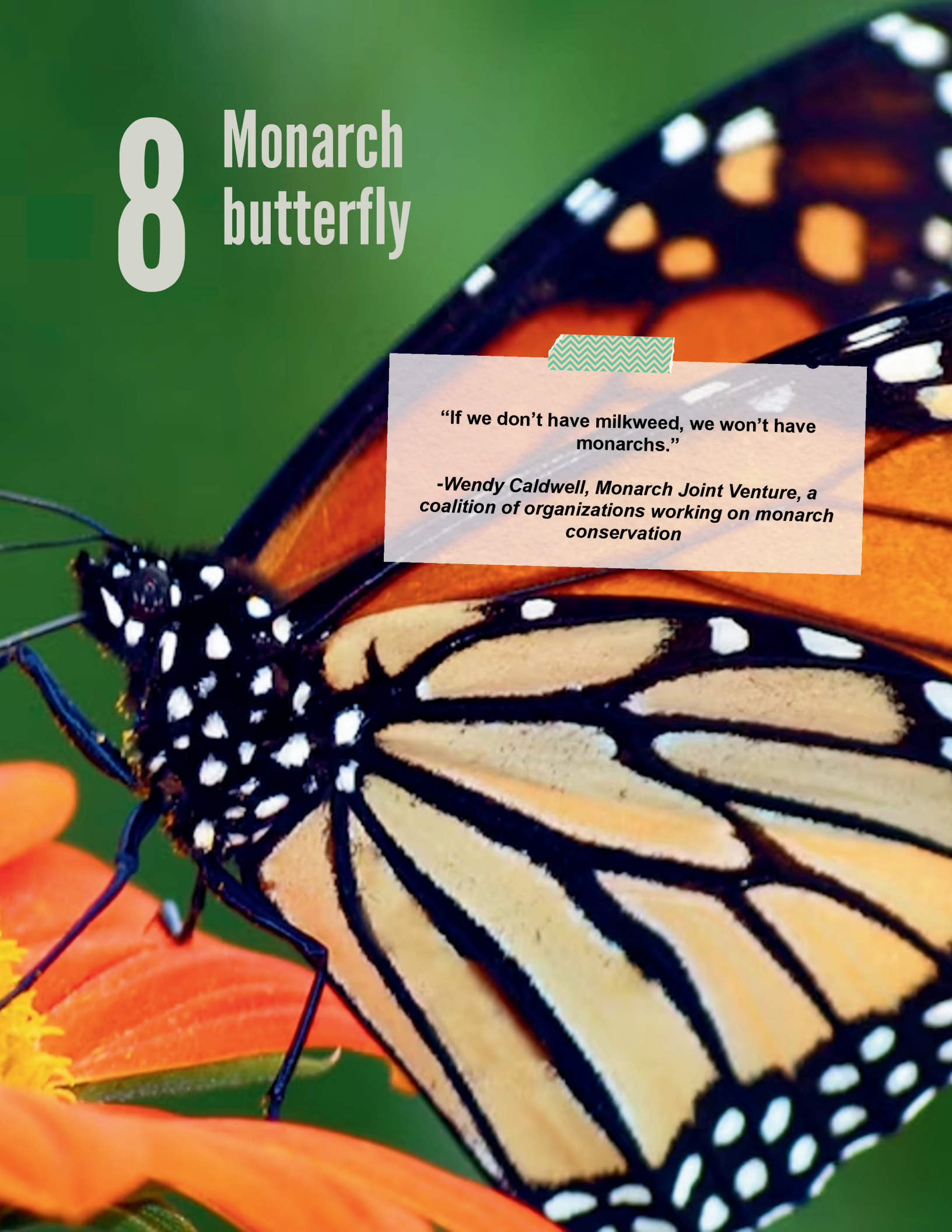
### Habitat

RIPARIAN WOODLANDS





# 8 Monarch butterfly



**"If we don't have milkweed, we won't have monarchs."**

***-Wendy Caldwell, Monarch Joint Venture, a coalition of organizations working on monarch conservation***



# Monarch butterfly

## *Danaus plexippus*



Not long ago, up to a billion monarch butterflies painted our skies each summer. Curtains of tawny orange and black against a blue sky were a sight to behold. Their collapse into crisis has made headlines for the past 20 years, with 80% of monarchs gone. California counted millions of these painted pollinators in the late 1990s; but by 2020, only 2,000 were spotted in the state—a count likely signaling pending extinction.

Monarchs are the only butterflies known to make a round-trip migration. Those west of the Rockies travel hundreds of miles to winter in southern California, while monarchs in the east fly thousands of miles, from Canada to central Mexico. Even more astonishing, a monarch can return to the very tree that sheltered its great-great-grandparent the winter before. But that's not the end of the story for this remarkable feat.

The return trip in the spring is completed by **several generations** that hatch at milkweed-rich stops along the way. This milkweed is the only thing the caterpillars eat; it's essential for a successful return. With the introduction of glyphosate (commonly known as Roundup ®) in the mid-1970s, milkweed has nearly disappeared from the U.S. agricultural heartland, over which the majority of monarchs migrate. Without milkweed, no new generations can survive the energetically expensive trip.

*Adapted excerpt from "Last Chance Top Ten Report"*

The Monarch butterfly is currently being reviewed for protection under the Endangered Species Act. National-level protections would bring more resources and cross-state coordination to restore milkweed habitats and reduce pesticide use. While many meaningful voluntary efforts to plant milkweed and nectar plants are underway in communities across the country, the historic large-scale milkweed loss and pesticide-poisoned plants continue to outpace these restoration efforts.

Some in Congress are doing big agriculture's bidding to gut the Endangered Species Act, so that the law would no longer be able to put limits on the industry's use of chemicals like glyphosate and other pesticides. If they change the ESA, it would put all the power in industry's hands over whether we will ever again see skies full of Monarch butterflies.

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### Population

FLUCTUATING: TOTAL POPULATION HAS DECLINED BY APPROXIMATELY 80% OVER 20 YEARS

### Status

UNDER REVIEW FOR LISTING

### Range

UNITED STATES, MEXICO, AND JUST REACHING PARTS OF CANADA


### Habitat


SUMMER: OPEN MEADOWS, GARDENS, AND AGRICULTURAL AREAS WITH NECTAR-PRODUCING PLANTS AND MILKWEED;  
WINTER: PROTECTED, TEMPERATE FORESTS





# 9 Southern Sea Otter



 “Urchins are a gluttonous predator that consumes vast amounts of small kelp plants. They also happen to be one of the sea otters’ favourite foods, and are regularly preyed upon, which helps keep them in check and facilitate the growth of young kelp.”

*-Shannia Iskandar, Applied Animal Biology researcher,  
University of British Columbia*



# Southern Sea Otter

## *Enhydra lutris nereis*



The sea otter is a keystone species. As an ecosystem engineer, its job is to keep its entire ecosystem healthy and balanced.

Without sea otters, sea urchins and crabs – its favorite prey – decimate kelp forests, wiping out food and shelter for countless species. Thousands of invertebrates, fish, birds, and mammals are affected, as are fisheries and nearby coastal communities. It's a classic example of trophic cascades: removing them compromises everything from near-shore biodiversity to local economies.

Sea otters have the densest fur of any mammal on Earth – up to a million hairs per square inch. Fur traders called it “soft gold,” and their obsession with it nearly wiped out otters. By the late 1800s, fewer than 2,000 remained. By 1920, California’s population was believed to be extinct. In 1937, a raft of 50 otters was spotted off the rocky cliffs at Big Sur, 2,000 miles from their nearest relatives. Stopping direct exploitation is what saved them. Hunting, harvesting, and fishing species faster than they can reproduce is one of the top drivers of extinction on Earth.

*Adapted excerpt from ESC’s “Stories of Hope Report”*

Powerful tools exist to stop direct exploitation. We have enforceable laws to combat the illegal wildlife trade and proven methods of restoring habitats, both of which are critical for saving species. Sea otters first gained protection in 1911 when four countries signed the first international wildlife protection treaty. In the 1970s, they received even stronger safeguards after the Endangered Species and Marine Mammal Protection Acts were passed. Their population has grown slowly since receiving these protections.

But now, proposed changes to the Endangered Species Act aim to weaken these protections. “Incidental take permits” would no longer be required to undergo any meaningful review, allowing the southern sea otter and other listed species to be harmed or even killed by industrial activity in their ocean habitats. Worse, they could lose their habitat altogether—creating a real danger of extinction for these critical ecosystem engineers.

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### Population

3,000 INDIVIDUALS

### Status

ENDANGERED

### Range

CENTRAL CALIFORNIA COAST, AS NORTH AS SAN MATEO COUNTY AND NEAR SANTA BARBARA IN THE SOUTH

### Habitat

NEARSHORE KELP FORESTS





# 10 Grizzly bear



“With ongoing federal protections, grizzlies in the Northern Rocky Mountains and North Cascades will have a real chance at long-term recovery, instead of being gunned down and mounted on trophy walls.”

-Andrea Zaccardi, carnivore conservation program legal director, the Center for Biological Diversity



# Grizzly bear

## *Ursus arctos horribilis*

Grizzly bears used to roam throughout the American West, but by the early 1900s, they'd been shot, poisoned, and trapped out of most of the country. When the grizzly bear was listed under the Endangered Species Act in 1975, only about 150 remained in the Yellowstone National Park area. Today, about 1,000 bears live in and around the park.

The Yellowstone grizzly bear's comeback is a success story of the Endangered Species Act. But Yellowstone's bears are still isolated from other grizzlies, which spells trouble for their genetic diversity and long-term viability. Genetic diversity helps animals fight off diseases and adapt to other threats. The Yellowstone bears need safe wildlife corridors so they can breed with other grizzly bears in Montana, Idaho, and Washington.

*Adapted excerpt from "No Room to Roam Report"*



In January 2025, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service recognized that more work needs to be done to connect grizzly bear populations and reintroduce bears to suitable habitats like the North Cascades in Washington and the Bitterroot ecosystem in Idaho. Keeping grizzly bears protected under the Endangered Species Act is crucial to this next step of their recovery. Short-sighted politicians are pushing to eliminate protections for Yellowstone's grizzlies and cancel reintroduction plans. If successful, bears outside of Yellowstone National Park would be the target of trophy hunters, and these majestic bears would never return to the wild places they once roamed.

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### Population

ABOUT 1,500 IN THE LOWER 48 STATES

### Status

THREATENED, DELISTING EFFORTS CONTINUE

### Range

ALASKA, CERTAIN POCKETS IN THE NORTHWEST INCLUDING WASHINGTON, IDAHO, MONTANA, AND WYOMING

### Habitat

GENERALISTS, FOUND IN FORESTS, MEADOWS, PROXIMITY TO STREAMS AND RIVERS, USUALLY COOLER AREAS, BUT HISTORICALLY THEIR RANGE SPREAD FROM CANADA DOWN TO MEXICO





## Select Additional Resources

- High Country News, July 24, 2018“ *Most Americans support the Endangered Species Act.*”
- USFWS Fact Sheet “*West Indian Manatee*”
- Data Zone Birdlife Fact Sheet “*Piping Plover*”
- USFWS Fact Sheet “*Hellbender*”
- Virginia DWR Fact Sheet “*Rusty Patched Bumble Bee*,” Colorado State University, April 4, 2024
- Living With Wolves Museum “*Gray Wolf*”
- USFWS Fact Sheet “*Grizzly Bear*”
- University of British Columbia Institute for the Oceans and Fisheries “*Southern Sea Otter*”
- Middle Rio Grande Endangered Species Collaborative Program “*Yellow-Billed Cuckoo*”
- Center for Biological Diversity, Natural History Fact Sheet: Loggerhead Turtle; “*The Importance of Sea Turtles to Marine Ecosystems*” (Wilson, E.G., Miller, K.L., Allison, D. and Magliocca, M.)
- “*The fate of this beloved American creature is in Trump’s hands. Will his Administration protect its most iconic butterfly?*” Benji Jones, VOX, Apr 17, 2025

## Acknowledgements

This report is built upon three earlier publications: No Room to Roam: 10 American Species in Need of Connectivity and Corridors (2015), Extinction Plan: Ten Species Imperiled by the Trump Administration (2018), and Ten Stories of Hope: The Endangered Species Act at 50 (2023). We are grateful for the previous reports, led by Nancy Welch, and those who contributed to those reports.

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## Photo Credits

**Page 1:** Gray Wolves (Film Studio Aves); **Page 4:** Manatee (Jorge Porro); **Page 5:** Manatee (Keith Ramos); **Page 5:** Manatee (Dan Bailey); **Page 6:** Piping Plover (DHBLAC); **Page 7:** Piping Plover (Harry Collins); **Page 8:** Hellbender (Henry Oates); **Page 9:** Hellbender (Jason Dreicka); **Page 10:** Rusty patch bumblebee (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service); **Page 11:** Rusty patch bumblebee (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service); **Page 11:** Rusty patch bumblebee (US Geological Survey Bee Lab); **Page 12:** Gray wolf (Christel S.); **Page 13:** Gray wolf (DSS Images); **Page 14:** Leatherback sea turtle (Muhammad Hudari); **Page 15:** Loggerhead sea turtle (YStudio); **Page 16:** Western yellow-billed cuckoo (Sue Barth); **Page 17:** Western yellow-billed cuckoo (Reago and Chrissy McClarren); **Page 18:** Monarch butterfly (MISSCANON and DREAMSTIME); **Page 19:** Monarch butterfly (Kim Bailey); **Page 19:** Monarch butterfly (Mert Alper Dervis/Anadolu); **Page 20:** Southern sea otter (Chrys); **Page 21:** Southern sea otter (Juliana Kinkelie-Kim); **Page 21:** Southern sea otter (Kedar Gadage); **Page 22:** Grizzly bear (Wanderluster); **Page 23:** Grizzly bear (OST); **Page 23:** Grizzly bear (Peg Bec)



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