



**TOP 10
SPECIES PRIORITIES
FOR A NEW ADMINISTRATION**



2016

REMOVING THE WALLS TO RECOVERY



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Our thanks go out to each member group that nominated species to this year's report. We're particularly grateful to staff who helped shape the top ten stories:

Center for Biological Diversity: Collete Atkins, Tierra Curry, Steve Jones, Russ McSpadden, Andy Parker, Michael Robinson, Randy Serraglio, Sarah Uhlemann, Dr. Abel Valdivia • Defenders of Wildlife: Bryan Bird, Bob Dreher, Haley McKey, Ben Prater, Mark Salvo, Catalina Tresky, Jennifer Witherspoon • Dogwood Alliance: Sam Davis, Scot Quaranda • Humane Society International: Iris Ho • The Humane Society of the United States: Raul Arce-Contreras, Chloe Detrick, Jill Fritz • International Fund for Animal Welfare: Peter LaFontaine • Native Plant Conservation Campaign: Emily Roberson • Natural Resources Defense Council: Zak Smith • Northern Jaguar Project: Diana Hadley, Megan "Turtle" Southern • Save Our Wild Salmon: Joseph Bogaard, Sam Mace • WildEarth Guardians: Taylor Jones, Lori Colt • Wildlands Network: Susan Holmes, Ron Sutherland, Kim Vicariu • Xerces Society: Matthew Shepherd, Sarina Jepsen.

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We're grateful to Lyn Arnold for her inspired writing in the report! We thank Autumn-Lynn Harrison, for her beautiful design.

"THE WILDLIFE AND ITS HABITAT CANNOT SPEAK, SO WE MUST AND WE WILL."

THEODORE ROOSEVELT

Each administration puts its stamp on our natural heritage. New leaders can protect or destroy that heritage. They can safeguard the public trust or surrender it to special interests.

An administration that chooses to be the protector follows the will of the people. Americans love our wild nation and overwhelming majorities want to see it protected.

Guarding wildlife, wild lands, and waterways isn't just popular, it also makes good business sense. Real estate experts know that people want to live, work, and play in clean, healthy environments with wild places nearby. In contrast, damaged natural resources—smog-filled air, lead-contaminated water, and barren landscapes—devastate healthy communities.

Bountiful plants and wildlife, protected in wild areas, give us the opposite. Catskills forests remove pollutants from water—a free natural filter that provides drinking water to every New York City residence and building. Wildlife

watching—from the coral reefs of Florida to the wolves of Yellowstone—generates millions in revenue for local economies and produces tens of thousands of jobs. And animals pollinate crops from California to Kansas to the tune of \$14-23 billion.

We ask the Trump administration to follow Theodore Roosevelt's footsteps—a Republican who was also a conservationist. He created the U.S. Forest Service and established 150 national forests, 51 federal bird reserves, 18 national monuments, five national parks, and four national game preserves. Then in 1973, President Richard Nixon signed the Endangered Species Act—our safety net for species on the brink of extinction that is 99 percent successful. Their good work safeguarded wildlife.

Today, we need a conservationist president for a new generation. We urge the Trump administration to pick up the mantle of protector.

Kierán Suckling
Center for Conservation
Biology

Jamie Rappaport Clark
Defenders of Wildlife

Danna Smith
Dogwood Alliance

Leda Huta
Endangered Species
Coalition

Andrew Rowan
Humane Society
International

Wayne Pacelle
The Humane Society
of the United States

Azzedine Downes
International Fund
for Animal Welfare

Emily Roberson
Native Plant
Conservation Campaign

Rhea Suh
Natural Resources
Defense Council

Diana Hadley
Northern Jaguar Project

Joseph Bogaard
Save Our Wild Salmon

John Horning
WildEarth Guardians

Greg Costello
Wildlands Network

Scott Hoffman Black
Xerces Society
for Invertebrate
Conservation

The Americas'



Greatest Cat

Jaguar

Panthera onca

Sonoran Desert

OVERCOMING THE BORDER WALL: THE AMERICAS' GREATEST CAT

STATUS



RANGE



Southwestern
United States to
South America

POP.

10,000 - 15,000



4,000 1-2

One of the so-called roaring cats, the jaguar is the largest cat native to North America. The name jaguar likely comes from the word *yaguareté*, meaning “true, fierce beast.” Today, the northernmost breeding population on the continent **STRUGGLES TO SURVIVE IN SONORA, MEXICO**, a little more than 100 miles south of the border. Here, the 55,000-acre Northern Jaguar Reserve offers protection.

Like many solitary predators, jaguars can cover an immense territory. While these cats **ONCE ROAMED MUCH OF THE UNITED STATES**, only six are known to have claimed Arizona and New Mexico as home since the mid-1990s. In 2014, critical jaguar habitat was designated in the borderlands of Arizona and New Mexico.

The jaguar is important to its ecosystem. Very adaptable, jaguars eat deer, javelina, coati, and wild turkeys. Our ecosystems adapted to their presence, and **THEY BELONG IN THE SOUTHWEST.**



A Note to the President: The U.S./Mexico border wall threatens not only jaguar recovery in the United States, but recovery for many other species. The United States should not build any additional solid walls along the border. At wildlife migration points, it should replace existing solid metal border walls with vehicle barriers that allow wildlife to pass.

110

THE NUMBER OF ENDANGERED SPECIES WHOSE RECOVERY COULD BE UNDERMINED IF A CONTINUOUS SOLID BORDER WALL IS BUILT.

THREATS: Habitat Destruction & Fragmentation • Poaching • Poisoning



Jaguar watching for Prey. 4FR/iStock.

The Tropical



Pollinators

Yellow-Faced Bees

Hylaeus spp.

Hawai'ian Islands

STATUS



The first bees
to gain ESA
protection

HAWAII'S ONLY



NATIVE
BEES

80
YEARS

Since 9 species
have been seen

KEYSTONE POLLINATOR



Supports

Wet forest 'ōlapa,
Shrubland 'akoko,
Coastal 'ilima

A POLLINATOR IN DANGER

In 2016, seven species of Hawai'ian yellow-faced (*Hylaeus*) bees became THE FIRST BEE SPECIES LISTED AS ENDANGERED under the Endangered Species Act. Yellow-faced bees are unusual and interesting species. They are named for the yellow markings on their faces, although, contrary to their name, female *assimulans* are totally black. Unlike the honeybee, yellow-faced bees are solitary; the female creates a series of cells in which she lays eggs in small cavities. There are about sixty species of yellow-faced bees in Hawai'i, the only bees native to the islands.

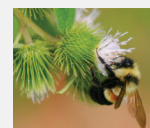
Native Hawai'ian plants depend almost entirely on endemic pollinators such as yellow-faced bees. In fact, yellow-faced bees are IMPORTANT POLLINATORS OF THE MOST SIGNIFICANT TREES AND SHRUBS OF HAWAIIAN FORESTS, shrub lands, subalpine, and coastal areas. By maintaining the native habitats through pollination, these bees support large, clean watersheds. Their role makes the lives of other wildlife possible.

NATIVE BEES ARE THE PREDOMINANT POLLINATOR FOR MOST OF THE WORLD'S PLANT SPECIES. These small animals are also responsible for pollination of over three quarters of the leading global food crops.



A Note to the President: The administration should provide adequate funding for comprehensive surveys, and develop and implement comprehensive recovery plans for all seven *Hylaeus* species.

FACING THE SAME THREATS



**RUSTY
PATCHED
BUMBLE BEE**



**YELLOW-BANDED
BUMBLE BEE**



**WESTERN
BUMBLE BEE**



THREATS: Habitat Loss • Development • Decline of Native Flora • Invasive Species



Hylaeus connectens at Kilauea Pt NWR, Kauai, Hawaii. Forest and Kim Starr.
Inset L-R: Dan Mullen, Sandy Gillian, Derrick Ditchburn.

Icon of  the West

Greater Sage-Grouse

Centrocercus urophasianus

Sagebrush Sea

AMBASSADOR OF THE SAGEBRUSH SEA

STATUS



RANGE



POP.

HISTORICAL
16 MILLION

CURRENT
200K - 400K

↓ 97%

PROTECTING SAGE-GROUSE

BENEFITS

PRONGHORN
ELK
DEER
TROUT
200
BIRD
SPECIES

SAGE-GROUSE ARE THE CENTERPIECE of an ongoing and unprecedented effort to conserve more than 60 million acres of public lands in the American West for grouse and hundreds of other species. This region is poetically dubbed the “Sagebrush Sea.”

Sage-grouse hold a LONG AND STORIED PLACE IN THE WEST. Indian tribes depended upon and honored the species in ceremonial dress and dance. The bird was once so numerous that European-American settlers reported seeing huge flocks that darkened the sky as they lifted from valley floors.

Sage-grouse are KNOWN FOR THEIR FLAMBOYANT MATING DISPLAY. Every spring the birds return to mating grounds known as “leks.” Males perform an amazing dance to attract females, fanning their tailfeathers, puffing out their chests, and fluttering their wings.

The federal government launched a National Greater Sage-Grouse Planning Strategy in 2011 to improve management of remaining sagebrush habitat across eleven western states. THIS FEDERAL CONSERVATION PROGRAM WILL BE KEY to conserving sage-grouse habitat, although scientists have also indicated that more may be required to ensure the species’ long-term survival.



A Note to the President: The new administration must be willing to fully implement and, where necessary, strengthen the federal sage-grouse conservation plans. The sage-grouse is an umbrella species for the Sagebrush Sea; more than 350 other sagebrush-dependent species will also suffer if the sage-grouse isn’t well protected. The new administration must also vigorously oppose any congressional attempts to discard the federal conservation plans in favor of weaker state strategies.

THREATS: Habitat Loss • Development • Habitat Fragmentation • Grazing • Unnatural Fire



Male greater sage-grouse, displaying. Tatiana Gettelman.

The High Climbers

Snake River Salmon

Oncorhynchus tshawytscha

Pacific Northwest

SALMON MIGRATION STYMIED AND SUFFERING

STATUS



RANGE



POP.

HISTORICAL
> 1 MILLION

CURRENT
20K

↓ 98%

KEYSTONE



137 SPECIES NEED
SALMON

Snake River spring and summer Chinook are among the longest and highest migrating salmon on the planet—often swimming upstream more than 900 miles and **CLIMBING MORE THAN 6,000 FEET IN ELEVATION** to return to their ancestral spawning grounds high in central Idaho, eastern Oregon, and Washington.

CHINOOK SALMON ARE SPIRITUALLY PRIZED among many Pacific Northwest Native American tribes. In 1805, Lewis and Clark encountered the Nez Perce tribe, who saved the expedition from starvation by offering salmon and other foods.

Snake River salmon (and other salmon and steelhead) **PLAY A BROAD AND SIGNIFICANT ROLE IN THE NORTHWEST.** Adult salmon, when they return to their natal rivers to spawn and then die, deliver tremendous amounts of marine-derived nutrients and energy to freshwater ecosystems. The healthier the populations, the greater these ecological benefits are. In addition, Chinook salmon are essential to the survival and recovery of endangered Southern Resident Killer Whales in the Pacific Northwest. Chinook make up **MORE THAN 80 PERCENT OF THE ORCAS' DIET.**



A Note to the President: Main causes of decline for these salmon are the four lower Snake River dams. Removal of these dams would restore 140 miles of free-flowing river habitat in eastern Washington and re-establish access for salmon to approximately 5,500 miles of protected, pristine river and stream habitat.

FACING THE SAME THREATS



Many other species of fish, including Winter-Run Chinook in California's Sacramento River, are imperiled by dams and the mismanagement of water.



THREATS: Dams • Habitat Degradation • Climate Change • Loss of Spawning Habitat



Underwater view of Snake River in Idaho. iStock.

Inset Left: Aerial View of Shasta Dam, California. Bob the Lomond, Flickr CC. Inset Right: Winter-Run Chinook Salmon. NOAA.

Prophet of



the Desert

Joshua Tree

Yucca brevifolia

Mojave Desert

FLORA FACING CLIMATE CHANGE

STATUS
PETITIONED
FOR ESA
LISTING
THREATENED

HABITAT
Expected to
Decrease



By 2100

KEYSTONE
LIZARDS
INSECTS
SQUIRRELS
WOODRATS
JACKRABBITS
KANGAROO RATS



Joshua trees, named after the prophet Joshua, grow only in the Mojave Desert and are **SYMBOLIC OF THE SOUTHWESTERN HIGH DESERT**. Historically, Native Americans used the tree for food, fiber, and construction. Joshua Tree National Park was designated to conserve the species and the ecosystem that depends on it. The park draws over one and a half million visitors a year.

JOSHUA TREES PROVIDE FOOD, MOISTURE, AND HABITAT for many desert species. Scott's orioles, ladder-backed woodpeckers, and northern flickers nest in them. American kestrels and loggerhead shrikes use them as hunting perches. Insects use fallen leaves and branches as shelter.

Because **THEY ARE SLOW TO GROW AND REPRODUCE**, they will have difficulty moving their range to adapt to climate change. They require specific weather conditions and as the climate warms, those requirements may not be met.



A Note to the President: The administration must commit to combating climate change by addressing oil, gas, and coal use. Curbing climate change is essential to saving the ecosystem of the Joshua tree and other flora.

FACING THE SAME THREATS PLANTS ARE ESPECIALLY VULNERABLE TO CLIMATE CHANGE



WAI'ANAE RANGE LOULU PALM

The palm is an important species in the native mesic forest of the Wai'anae Mountains on the island of O'ahu in Hawai'i. The plant provides habitat for invertebrates and watershed cover and helps stabilize slopes.

EN
ESA

CR
IUCN

130 Individuals
in 1998

211 Individuals
Today

Joshua tree modern landscape. Steven Kriemadis/iStock.
Inset: Loulu palm on the ridgelines above the Makua Valley Military Reservation, Oahu. U.S. Army Environmental Command.

THREATS: Climate Change • Invasive Species • Wildfires • Development



The Apex



Predators

Wolves

Canis lupus, Canis lupus baileyi, Canis rufus

American Wilderness

MORE WOLVES, LESS POLITICS

STATUS



Gray Wolf
Mexican Gray Wolf
Red Wolf

WILD POP.

GRAY

5,542 (lower 48)

MEXICAN GRAY

< 125

RED

< 60

ECONOMICS

Wolf-related
tourism delivers

\$ 35.5 MILLION

annually to WY,
ID, and MT



As apex predators, WOLVES PLAY A VITAL ROLE IN MAINTAINING THEIR ECOSYSTEM. They keep the populations of deer, elk, and other species at healthy levels. The remains of wolf prey help provide food for other wildlife.

Wolves are a significant tourist draw. Studies show an ECONOMIC BENEFIT TO TOWNS NEAR WOLF HOTSPOTS. Hotels, restaurants, tour operations, and other industries all benefit from the presence of wolves because of the public's fascination with them. Ecotourism creates millions of dollars for local communities.

Humans are the greatest threat to wolves. Gray wolves are threatened by the prospect of being removed from the federal endangered species list and handed over to hostile state management agencies. State regulations have allowed excessive hunting, trapping, snaring, and even hounding, putting WOLVES IN GREAT JEOPARDY. Mexican and red wolves both went extinct in the wild in the 1980s due to human actions. Small populations have been reintroduced. Now poor federal management is preventing wolf recovery in the wild.



A Note to the President: The administration and Congress must recommit to using the best available science to recover native carnivores. U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service must release additional Mexican and red wolves from captivity into suitable public lands. It must follow the science in developing and implementing recovery plans, and prioritize the wolves' recovery over special interests. The administration must oppose any efforts that weaken Endangered Species Act protections of wolves and other large carnivores. We cannot abandon their recovery.

FACING THE SAME THREATS



CANADA
LYNX



GRIZZLY
BEAR



WOLVERINE

Proposed
Threatened

THREATS: Poor Management • Poaching • Habitat Loss



Gray wolf howling. Keith Szafranski

Inset Left: Canada lynx. Keith Williams. Inset Center: Grizzly bear and salmon. Brian W. Schaller. Inset Right: Wolverine. Barney Moss.

Builders of



the Reefs

Elkhorn Coral

Acropora palmata

Caribbean Sea

BUILDING BLOCKS OF THE OCEANS IN PERIL

STATUS



COLONY DECLINES

up to



Since 1980

ECONOMICS

Net Value to
Fisheries and
Tourism in
Caribbean

\$ 2.5 BILLION



The elkhorn coral is named for the antler-like shape of its colonies. It is the **LARGEST BRANCHING CORAL IN THE CARIBBEAN**, and one of the fastest growing. Once very common, it is rare today. Over the past 10,000 years, it has been one of the most important coral species in contributing to reef growth in large areas of Florida, the Bahamas, and the Caribbean. Coral reefs aren't just beautiful, **THEY HELP PEOPLE AND PROPERTY STAY SAFE FROM COASTAL STORMS**, create the nursery grounds that drive fisheries, provide the biological material to source new medicines, and contribute to local economies.

The complex and beautiful branches of the elkhorn coral create habitats for lobsters, parrotfish, snapper shrimp and many other species. Coral reefs cover less than one percent of the ocean floor, yet support 25 percent of all marine life—more than any other marine ecosystem. As a **CRITICAL PART OF ITS ECOSYSTEM**, the elkhorn's endangerment is a threat to all the other species that directly depend upon it.



A Note to the President: The new administration must respect the commitments made under the Paris Agreement on climate change to reduce carbon emissions. Emissions are threatening not only to elkhorn coral, but coral reefs worldwide. The administration must also follow through on the elkhorn coral recovery plan actions. Consultation of all federal projects that could threaten the survival and recovery of elkhorn coral must be carried out. In particular, consultation in projects that substantially increase greenhouse gas emissions.

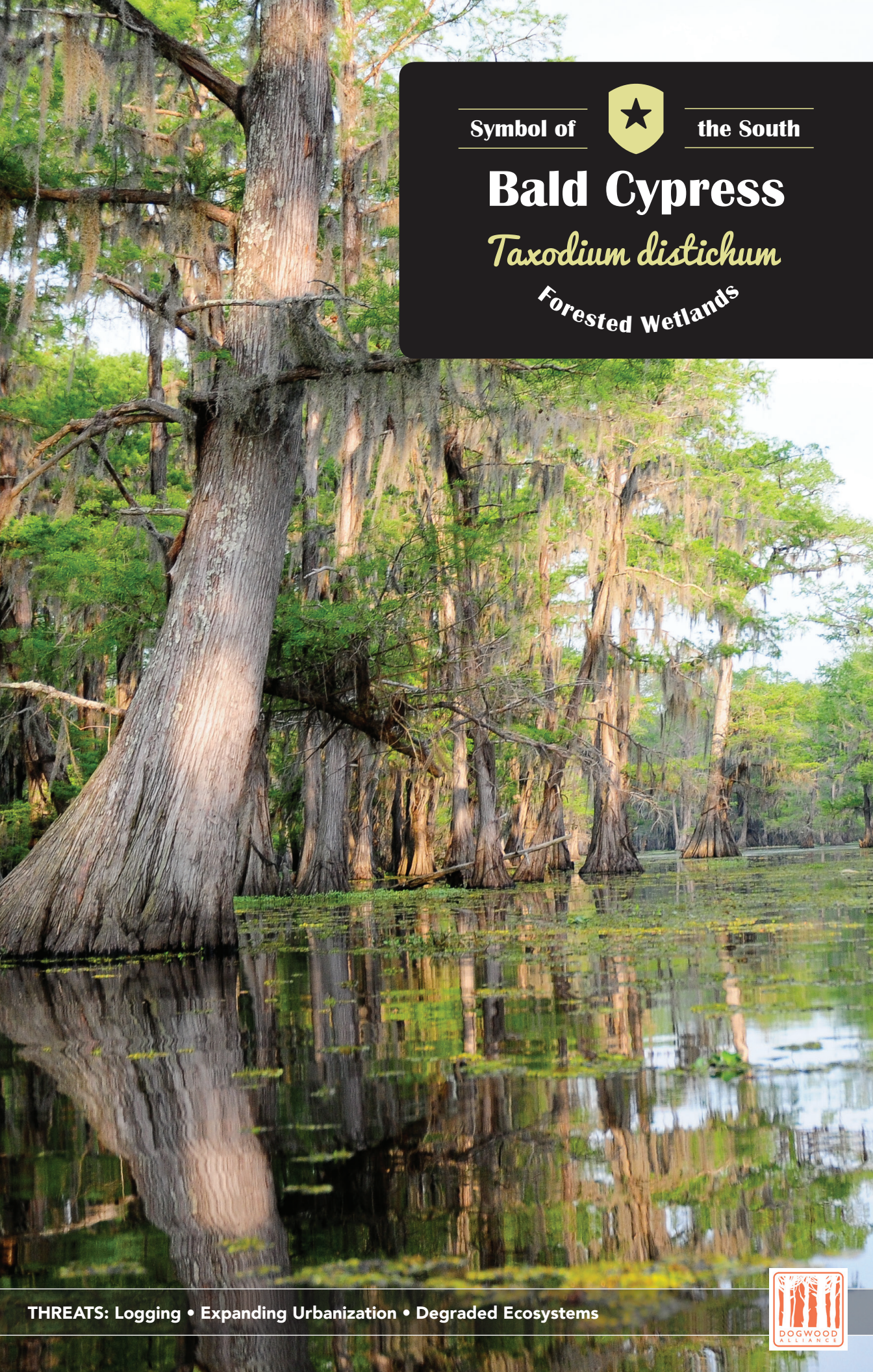
10,000
YEARS

THE NUMBER OF YEARS
ELKHORN CORAL HAVE BEEN
THE MOST IMPORTANT REEF
BUILDING SPECIES IN THE
CARIBBEAN SEA

THREATS: Climate Change • Ocean Acidification • Disease • Poor Management • Damage



Elkhorn coral, Carriacou Island, Grenada. Vero le Fleau.



Symbol of



the South

Bald Cypress

Taxodium distichum

Forested Wetlands

FROM SYMBOL OF THE SOUTH TO SAWDUST

STATUS



WETLANDS



From Historic
Levels

Can live over

800
YEARS

ENGINEER

FLOOD
CONTROL

•
WATER
FILTRATION



A MAJESTIC TREE with a fluted trunk, the cypress is considered by some to be the icon of southern swamps. When healthy, cypress can live more than 800 years. They are key to their ecosystem, providing habitat for otters, alligators, and many different species of invertebrates, reptiles, fish, and migratory birds. Its seeds provide food for turkeys, wood ducks, grosbeaks, and squirrels. Bald eagles, ospreys, warblers, herons, and egrets all use the bald cypress for nesting. Bald cypress swamps also LOWER HARMFUL MOSQUITO POPULATIONS by closing the canopy that encourages mosquito breeding.

Cypress is highly valued for timber and may be subject to greater logging pressures than other wood. Historically, cypress swamps were cleared and drained for development, agriculture, or timber. Currently, cypress swamps are harvested for timber, wood pellets, and mulch. Up to 80 PERCENT OF FORESTED WETLANDS HAVE ALREADY DISAPPEARED in the southern United States.

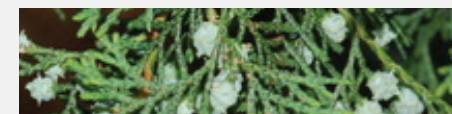
Forested wetlands are essential for carbon sequestration, clean water, and flood control. More than 48 million people in the southern United States are supported by forests that “filter” their water supply.



A Note to the President: Any administration that pledges to prioritize clean water must increase safeguards for the forested wetlands that provide it. The new administration should not only support existing conservation programs, but should also craft new policies that protect and restore forested wetlands.

FACING THE SAME THREATS

ATLANTIC WHITE CEDAR



The habitat of this species is very limited, and increasingly rare due to coastal development.

THREATS: Logging • Expanding Urbanization • Degraded Ecosystems



Bald cypress swamp, Louisiana. M.S. McCarthy Photography, iStock.
Inset: Atlantic White Cedar. USDA.

Smallest



and Rarest

Vaquita

Phocoena sinus

Gulf of California

MARINE MAMMALS NEED STRONG LEADERSHIP

STATUS

EN
ESA

CR
IUCN

<60

INDIVIDUALS
REMAIN



BENEFITS

CRUSTACEANS

SHARKS

FISH
SQUID

Meaning “little cow” in Spanish, THE VAQUITA IS THE SMALLEST AND MOST ENDANGERED CETACEAN. These little porpoises measure around five feet long and weigh about 120 pounds. This species doesn’t migrate, instead it stays in the northwestern corner of Mexico’s Gulf of California in a VERY SMALL RANGE that is roughly half the size of Los Angeles County.

The MAIN THREAT TO THE VAQUITA IS ILLEGAL GILLNET FISHING for totoaba, a fish in great demand in China, which results in incidental bycatch of vaquita. Although Mexico has imposed a temporary ban on most gillnet fishing, that ban does not apply to fishing for corvina, and totoaba poachers have used the legal corvina fishery as a “cover” for illegal totoaba fishing in vaquita waters.

Compounded by corruption and poor oversight, the vaquita’s protection is not assured. If declines continue, VAQUITA ARE LIKELY TO BE EXTINCT IN JUST A FEW YEARS.



A Note to the President: The administration must halt all the illegal totoaba trafficked from Mexico via the United States, and should work with Mexico to increase enforcement while strengthening its current ban. It must continue to support and fund vaquita monitoring until its recovery is assured.

FACING THE SAME THREATS

MAIN HAWAIIAN ISLANDS FALSE KILLER WHALE



150
INDIVIDUALS

GULF OF MEXICO BRYDE'S WHALE



33
INDIVIDUALS

THREATS: Illegal Fishing • Poor Protection • Low Genetic Diversity



Goodbye Vaquita, student painting to create awareness for the vaquita’s plight. Frédérique Lucas.
Inset Left: False killer whale mom and calf. Robin Baird, Cascadia Research. Inset Right: Bryde’s Whale. NOAA.

The Largest  Land Animal

African Elephant

Loxodonta africana

African Savannah



THE ICONIC AFRICAN SPECIES BEING BROUGHT DOWN BY POACHING

STATUS



POP.

HISTORICAL
10 MILLION

CURRENT
415,000

100,000
KILLED

FOR TUSKS

Between
2010 & 2012



The African elephant is THE WORLD'S LARGEST LAND ANIMAL AS WELL AS ONE OF THE MOST BELOVED. They are highly intelligent, have complex social structures, and have a wide range of emotions very much like people do. Recent research shows that elephants can tell the difference between human languages.

Elephants are the symbol of Africa's natural, cultural and historical heritage. They are a HUGE PART OF THE DRAW OF ECOTOURISM IN MANY AFRICAN COUNTRIES, and the revenue produced by elephant watching makes a real difference for local communities.

POACHERS KILL TENS OF THOUSANDS OF ELEPHANTS EVERY YEAR TO FUEL THE DESIRE FOR IVORY. Action must be taken to prevent poaching and preserve habitat; if steps are not taken, human-caused extinction of wild elephants is a real possibility.



A Note to the President: We urge the incoming administration to continue to enforce the recently improved U.S. ivory regulations, which set a high global standard and help prevent the United States from being a trafficking hub, to work with other countries to curb trafficking, and to resist congressional attacks on these important rules. The fight against poachers and traffickers will require significant funding for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Office of Law Enforcement, U.S. Agency for International Development, and other agencies engaged in these efforts.

ANOTHER VICTIM OF TRAFFICKING



PANGOLINS: THE WORLD'S MOST TRAFFICKED MAMMALS

Pangolins are the most trafficked wild mammal in the world: it is estimated that more than one million were poached and illegally traded in the past ten years.

THREATS: Poaching • Habitat Loss • Loss of Connectivity



African elephant family. stillwords/iStock.
Inset: Cape pangolin. Scott Hurd.

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Scientific references and citations that support this report are available at:
www.removingthewallstorecovery.org/references