



STEWARDS OF OUR EARTH All of God's Creation

Social Justice Committee, Holy Cross Parish, Mt. Airy, July 30, 2023

Restore the Endangered Species Act (ESA)

“This year is the **50th anniversary of the ESA**, and right now we have an opportunity to restore important protections for the imperiled species it protects....

To this day, the ESA is a success story and one of our nation's most effective wildlife protection laws — successfully **preventing more than 99% of species under its care from going extinct**, including the iconic grizzly bear and bald eagle. Yet in 2019, ... the ESA was targeted with short-sighted, anti-scientific rollbacks in a blatant attempt to eviscerate protections for the most imperiled species in our country....

[The **good news** is that] in response to a federal lawsuit, the Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) and the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) have proposed revisions that would reverse many of those ... rollbacks and get this story back on track....

For example, the proposal:

☀ Strengthens key habitat safeguards to help address the onslaught of habitat destruction and climate change, key drivers of the biodiversity crisis.

☀ Restores common-sense default protections for threatened species to prevent them from sliding further towards extinction.

☀ Ensures that listing decisions are based on science, not money, and makes it easier to consider future threats to species.”

(Lucas Rhoads, Staff Attorney, Wildlife, *Natural Resources Defense Council*)

The **bad news** is that the current administration has missed a huge opportunity to fully restore the power of this vital law. “Instead of leading the effort to address the extinction crisis, they're proposing to keep in place the majority of the harmful [current] policies that are pushing species like polar bears, northern spotted owls, and gulf sturgeon toward extinction....

They must revoke the [current] rules in their entirety to ensure a strong Endangered Species Act for the next 50 years and beyond.” (*Center for Biological Diversity*, 6/30/23)

“As the world faces twin climate and biodiversity crises, these protections have never been more essential. They help to preserve functioning, intact ecosystems on which all life — including healthy people — depends. And with **1 million species worldwide at risk of extinction**, we need bold steps to fully reverse efforts to undermine ESA protections and work to defend the law from future attacks.”
(Lucas Rhoads, Staff Attorney, Wildlife, *Natural Resources Defense Council*)

[Tell the FWS and NMFS we need bold, transformative action — not half measures — to ensure a strong Endangered Species Act for the next 50 years and beyond.](#)

Pope Francis writes in *Laudato Si'* that **creation is a gift “in which every creature has its own value and significance”** (No. 76). “In theological terms, there is one community of creation. Everything is connected to everything else, and we all flourish and wither together” (Elizabeth A. Johnson, *The Earth's Beloved Community*, *America*, June 2023).