



STEWARDS OF OUR EARTH *All of God's Creation*

Social Justice Committee, Holy Cross Parish, Mt. Airy, May 12, 2024

Endangered Species Day

“Endangered Species Day on **May 17th** is an opportunity for people of all ages to celebrate and learn about endangered species and how to protect them. This year is particularly special because it comes just after the 50th Anniversary of the Endangered Species Act in December of last year. The Endangered Species Act is a landmark piece of conservation legislation protecting our nation’s fish, plants, and wildlife, and we celebrate it—and the species it safeguards—every day.” (Tara Thornton, *Endangered Species Coalition*, 4/24/24)

“It takes millions of years for species to evolve — and if we fail to protect our incredible, diverse fellow species from man-made threats, they can be lost in the blink of an eye. **For 50 years, the Endangered Species Act has served as the last line of defense for countless species and habitats.** Today, it is our strongest tool for tackling the worsening biodiversity crisis.... Ninety-nine percent of species that have received protection under the Act — including bald eagles, Florida manatees, and gray wolves — have been spared from extinction.” However, there have been rollbacks to the Act which is in critical need of full restoration to fulfill its potential.

“**In the coming decades, a million of the Earth’s species face the possibility of extinction due to climate change, pollution, and habitat loss.** Even species that are not yet on the brink will face huge population declines. This extinction crisis means fewer pollinators for agriculture, depleted fisheries, and disappearing places like thriving rivers, wetlands, and old-growth forests.” (*Earthjustice Alerts*, 3/26/24) [Show your support in tackling the biodiversity crisis.](#)

Across our own country right now, “there are more than 12,000 species that are at risk. These species range in both their size and geographic range. But they share in the common need for greater protections. Monarch butterflies, Florida manatees, and Southern Resident orcas are just a few of the animals on this list. Existing federal funding covers only about 5% of what is needed.

Fortunately, legislation in Congress could funnel millions of dollars into wildlife conservation. The **American Wildlife Habitat Conservation Act**, if passed, would direct funding toward states' wildlife action plans.” [Send a message to your U.S. House representative in support of the American Wildlife Habitat Conservation Act.](#) (*Environmental Action*, 4/7/24)

Another issue affecting extinction is the **trade and exploitation of “millions of imperiled animals** plucked from their wild habitat each year for sale as pets, trinkets, designer fashion and décor, unproven cure-alls, and hunting trophies. And contrary to popular belief, the United States is a major player in the global wildlife market....

Next year nations from around the world will meet at the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species meeting — CITES for short — to decide which animals and plants will be protected from global trade.” [Urge the Fish and Wildlife Service to lead the way in ensuring imperiled species get CITES protections from trade.](#) (*Center for Biological Diversity*, 4/26/24)

God of Creation, guide us to be more like St. Francis of Assisi, protector of Your creation and lover of animals. Lead us to protect Your creatures on the verge of extinction and live in a way that nourishes all life.

Comments on this column may be directed to the Social Justice Committee at socialjustice@holycrossphl.org.