

Endangered Species Act Success Stories

Bald Eagle

Threatened by hunting and loss of habitat, America's bald eagle was listed as endangered in 1940. The Endangered Species Act helped to conserve the bird by protecting its habitat. In 1995, the bald eagle's status was downgraded to threatened, and some biologists say the bird is now ready to be taken off the list entirely.



Chiricahua Leopard Frog

An Arizona ranching family, part of a coalition called the Malpai Borderlands Group, is helping to keep the Chiricahua leopard frog alive by creating new habitat for the rare amphibians. The frog has disappeared from 75 percent of its historic range of habitat and was listed as threatened in 2002.

Palila

The population of the endangered palila, a native Hawaiian bird, had declined dramatically due to habitat destruction and fragmentation. In 1978, a federal court ruled that the Act required Hawaii to prevent further damage to the birds' habitat. Now a new palila population is being established and the existing forest expanded.



Southern sea otter

Oil spills, commercial fishing, and commercial gill nets posed major problems for the endangered southern sea otter of central California. New regulations on gill net fishing required under the Act have allowed the sea otter population to grow to more than 2,500— but many are still threatened by other dangers such as pollution.

Whooping Crane

With a population that had dwindled to a mere 21 wild birds in 1941, the endangered whooping crane was headed toward extinction. As a result of a successful recovery program including captive breeding and other conservation efforts, the population has grown to 338 wild cranes.

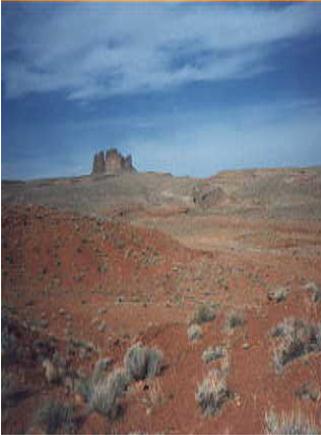


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Florida Manatee

Because the reproductive rate for manatees is slow, it will take some time before manatee populations stabilize. But the Endangered Species Act has given us reason to feel optimistic. Under the Act critical habitat has been protected, a number of sanctuaries, refuges and protection areas have been established, and protective measures have been put in place, such as slow speed zones to reduce boat-manatee collisions.

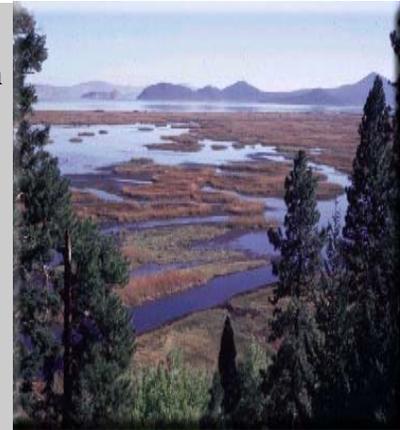


Utah Prairie Dog

The Utah prairie dog plays a keystone role in the ecosystem by creating habitat and serving as a prey base for as many as 140 other wildlife species including hawks and eagles. In the 1930s, the federal government launched an extermination campaign to eradicate Utah prairie dog, calling them a threat to cattle foraging grounds. In 1973, Endangered Species Act protections kicked in prohibiting the further take of prairie dogs. As a result, population numbers increased significantly. It is clear that without Endangered Species Act protections the prairie dog would have likely disappeared forever.

Peregrine Falcon

The peregrine was nearly wiped out by the mid-1960's from exposure to DDT, habitat loss, shooting and other factors. By 1970, only 10-20% of historic peregrine populations remained. DDT was banned in 1972 a few years after the falcon was listed as an endangered species. Under the Endangered Species Act reintroduction efforts were implemented and population numbers climbed. By 1997, more than 1,400 breeding pairs existed in North America. Thanks to these recovery efforts the peregrine was delisted in 1999.



Seabeach Amaranth

The seabeach amaranth is a small plant that grows close to the high tide line. As it grows, it binds sand to its roots helping to stabilize beaches. Since being listed as threatened under the Endangered Species Act in 1993 this plant has naturally reestablished itself in several states where it had not been seen for a 100 years. Efforts are now underway to restore the plant on barrier island throughout the mid-Atlantic and to supplement pioneer populations where the plant re-established itself.



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Key Deer

Key deer originally ranged throughout the southern Florida Keys, but were hunted to near extinction in the 1900s. By 1950 the population had been reduced to only 25 deer. In 1973, when the Endangered Species Act was passed the Key deer was among the first to be listed. The Key deer population today numbers over 500. Without the Endangered Species Act, the Florida keys would be devoid of Key deer.

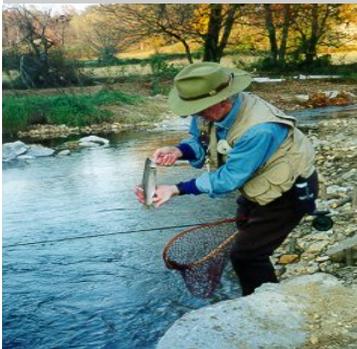


Red-Cockaded Woodpecker

After the red-cockaded woodpecker was listed as endangered in 1970, landowners began deliberately cutting down the pine trees that the birds nested in. Eventually Safe Harbor, an agreement between landowners and the federal government, compelled landowners to help protect and restore listed species.

Karner Blue Butterfly

Although 99 percent or more of the Karner blue butterfly's range has been destroyed, Wisconsin is helping to bring the species back using a conservation plan that takes into account the butterfly's entire life cycle. The state's project, which involves 38 public and private partners, began after the butterfly was listed as endangered in 1992.



California Winter Run Chinook Salmon

While salmon runs have decreased all along the Pacific Coast, winter Chinook salmon runs have actually increased from 186 fish in 1994 to more than 10,000 this past winter. Listing of the fish under the Act also caused the federal government to clean up a mine site that contributed to salmon deaths.



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