



Monday, July 25, 2011

[PERMALINK](#)

After 20 Years, Improvements and Updates Must be Made to the Endangered Species Act

Today, the House will take up [H.R. 2584](#), the FY 2012 Department of the Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies Appropriations Bill, which includes language to restrict the listing of endangered species and habitat designations to allow for the Endangered Species Act (ESA) to be updated and reauthorized. This provision will refocus efforts on endangered species recovery and help protect taxpayer dollars and American jobs from endless ESA-related lawsuits.

ESA is Outdated, in Need of Modernization:

- The ESA, signed into law in 1973, was last reauthorized in 1988. That means it's **been 23 years since Congress has reauthorized or made any significant changes** to the Endangered Species Act.

ESA Fails in Sole Purpose of Species Recovery:

- In the United States, 1,374 species are listed: 582 animals and 792 plants. Of the domestic species protected by the ESA, the Fish and Wildlife Service has declared only 20 species recovered. This represents a **1 percent recovery rate**.
- According to a February 1, 2011 report by the non-partisan Congressional Research Service, "A major goal of the ESA is the recovery of species to the point at which the protection of the ESA is no longer necessary. If that is standard, the ESA might be considered a failure, since only 20 species have been delisted due to recovery, as of December 23, 2010."

Costs Significant Taxpayer Dollars:

- According to the Government Accountability Office (GAO), **the average cost for the recovery of an endangered species is \$15.9 million**.
- The average cost of a complete listing decision is \$85,000.
- The U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service has designated 97.8 million acres and 40,000 miles of coastal rivers and streams as "critical habitat" for 603 listed species. The **cost of a single designation of critical habitat is \$515,000**.
- In the past ten years, Congress has appropriated \$1.4 billion to the U. S. Fish and

Wildlife Service to conduct ESA activities including listing, consultation and recovery efforts.

- In the past ten years, Congress has appropriated \$174.3 million to the National Marine Fisheries Service to undertake ESA related activities.

Excessive Litigation Costs Jobs, Takes Money Away From Recovery Efforts:

- **As of July 1, 2011, the Service was involved in 85 lawsuits and legal actions** concerning candidate listings, habitat designations, recovery plans and 90-day and 12-month species findings.
- According to the [Washington Post](#), “In fiscal 2010, the Fish and Wildlife Service spent so much of its \$21 million listing budget on litigation and responding to petitions that it had almost no money to devote to placing new species under federal protection, according to agency officials.”
- On March 16, 2011, Rowan Gould, Acting Director of the Fish and Wildlife Service, testified before the House Interior Appropriations Subcommittee and stated, “Since 2007, the Service has been petitioned to add more than 1,230 species to the list of threatened and endangered species, more species than the Service listed during the previous 30 years of Administering the Act.”
- On July 12, 2011 the Obama Administration agreed to a settlement with the Center for Biological Diversity and the WildEarth Guardians to make final listing decisions on 251 species on the list of candidates for protection, initial listing determinations on 488 species and an additional forty species will be considered for whether they warrant protection under the Act. **This agreement covered 779 species petitions and 85 lawsuits and legal actions.**

Information obtained from the [U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service](#)

###

House Natural Resources Committee Republican Press Office
Contact: [Jill Strait](#) or [Spencer Pederson](#) or [Crystal Feldman](#)
202-226-9019

<http://naturalresources.house.gov>
[Facebook](#) | [YouTube](#) | [Twitter](#)