**Executive Order on Halting the Global Extinction Crisis and Restoring Wildlife**

By the authority vested in me as President by the Constitution and the laws of the United States of America, it is hereby ordered as follows:

**Section 1. Policy.** The world is in the midst of an extinction crisis. Wildlife and plant populations are crashing around the world, with one million species facing extinction in the coming decades due to threats of habitat loss, climate change, wildlife exploitation, pollution and other human activities. More than 1,800 species are now protected in the United States under the Endangered Species Act, and thousands more are likely to need protection if action is not taken to address these threats.

The global extinction crisis represents a fundamental threat to humanity, which depends on the services and processes that the natural world provides. The unsustainable exploitation of wildlife can have profound consequences, as evidenced by the COVID-19 pandemic, which almost certainly came about due to the trade in wildlife. Accordingly it is the policy of the Biden administration to prioritize the protection of biodiversity, stem the extinction crisis and restore abundant wildlife and plant populations both in the United States and around the world.

**Sec. 2. Declaration of a National Emergency with Respect to the Global Extinction Crisis.** I, JOSEPH BIDEN, President of the United States of America, find that the global extinction crisis and the destruction of the planet’s natural life-support systems constitute an extraordinary threat to humanity and an emergency of the highest order. Each extinction brings closer the unraveling of our planetary life-support systems, including pollination, water purification, oxygen production and disease regulation. Therefore, by virtue of the authority vested in me under the National Emergencies Act, 50 U.S.C. § 1601 *et seq*., I hereby declare a national emergency with respect to the global extinction crisis.

**Sec. 3. Protection of 30% of America’s Lands and Waters by 2030.** Habitat loss and degradation remain the largest drivers of extinction both globally and in the United States. To confront the rapid loss of America’s natural heritage, it is in the national interest to protect 30% of U.S. terrestrial, freshwater and marine ecosystems by 2030 and to protect 50% by 2050. Accordingly the Secretary of the Interior, Secretary of Agriculture, Secretary of Commerce and Secretary of Defense shall prioritize the establishment of new protected areas, the expansion of existing protected areas, and increased connectivity between protected areas to preserve biodiversity hotspots in the United States, the habitat of critically endangered species, and the diversity of habitats found across the nation.

To make significant progress toward achieving this national goal, the Secretary of the Interior, Secretary of Agriculture and Secretary of Defense are each ordered to identify by December 2023 at least 25 iconic, important areas containing objects of scientific interest within lands under their respective jurisdiction for elevation to the status of National Monuments, pursuant to the authority granted under the Antiquities Act, 54 U.S.C. §§ 320301-320303.

Furthermore the Secretary of the Interior, through the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, is ordered to establish 50 new national wildlife refuges by December 2024, pursuant to the authority granted in the National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act of 1997, Pub. L. No. 105-57. These national wildlife refuges should prioritize the protection of habitats and biodiversity that are underrepresented within existing public lands.

The Secretary of Commerce, through the National Marine Fisheries Service, is ordered to identify and propose for protection at least 50 new marine protected areas through either the designation of marine national monuments pursuant to the authority granted under the Antiquities Act, 54 U.S.C. §§ 320301-320303, or national marine sanctuaries under the authority granted in the National Marine Sanctuary Act, 16 U.S.C. § 1431 *et seq*.

**Sec. 4. Recovering Endangered Species and Rebuilding Wildlife Populations.** The Secretary of the Interior, through the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, is ordered to expeditiously assess species found in the United States that have already been identified by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature as critically endangered, endangered or vulnerable, or by NatureServe as critically imperiled or imperiled to determine if they need protection under the Endangered Species Act. The Secretary shall use their emergency authority to protect any native species at risk of imminent extinction and to otherwise propose and finalize protections for all other species that warrant protection under the Endangered Species Act no later than Dec. 31, 2023.

The Secretary of the Interior, Secretary of Agriculture and Secretary of Defense are ordered within 12 months to identify and temporarily protect all potential critical habitat on their lands and manage those lands primarily for the recovery of endangered species. Upon identification of all potential critical habitat, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and National Marine Fisheries Service are ordered to evaluate and formally designate all such lands that meet the statutory requirements as critical habitat no later than Dec. 31, 2023. For all areas within their jurisdiction, the Secretaries are ordered to propose and finalize regulations no later than Dec. 31, 2023 that reform management practices to ensure that all public lands elevate and prioritize the protection of wildlife and plants, as well as minimizing greenhouse gas emissions, as the highest priority for public lands.

All federal agencies are ordered to prioritize the recovery of endangered species and rebuild healthy wildlife and plant populations. Within 180 days each federal agency shall undertake a comprehensive review of its programs, activities and actions to determine the extent to which they have the potential to harm endangered species or reduce wildlife and plant abundance. Within one year all federal agencies shall finalize proactive conservation programs pursuant to Section 7(a)(1) of the Endangered Species Act, 16 U.S.C. § 1536(a)(1), that advance the conservation of endangered species and help to restore declining wildlife and plants.

The Secretary of the Interior and Secretary of Commerce are ordered to fully integrate climate change into the conservation and recovery of endangered species. The Secretaries are ordered to develop and propose regulations that require science-based, programmatic consultations on the actions of every federal agency under Section 7(a)(2) of the Endangered Species Act, 16 U.S.C. § 1536(a)(2), to determine how those agencies’ actions that increase greenhouse gases affect any listed species, including Arctic and other climate-change imperiled species, that are geographically remote from the agency action. The Secretaries are ordered to develop regulations and guidance to avoid, minimize and mitigate climate-driven impacts on listed species and update or develop recovery plans that integrate greenhouse gas emissions reductions to avoid species extinctions.

**Sec. 5. Wildlife Trade.** Wildlife exploitation is the second leading driver of extinction, and the global wildlife trade — both legal and illegal — continues to push thousands of species closer to extinction each year. Wildlife trafficking remains one of the world’s most lucrative criminal enterprises and a source of funds for terrorists.

Therefore I direct the Secretary of the Interior and the Secretary of Commerce, under the authority granted in Section 8 of the Pelly Amendment to the Fishermen’s Protective Act, 22 U.S.C. § 1978, to conduct an expedited review of each nation’s compliance with the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) and all other international wildlife programs, to be concluded within one year of this Order and every two years thereafter, and publish the reviews in the Federal Register. Immediate sanctions will be imposed on any nation found to be diminishing the effectiveness of such programs, particularly nations failing to adequately address illegal wildlife trade or deforestation.

**Sec. 6. General Provisions.** Nothing in this order shall be construed to impair or otherwise affect the authority granted by law to an executive department or agency or the head thereof. This order shall be implemented consistently with applicable law and subject to the availability of appropriations. This order is not intended to, and does not, create any right or benefit, substantive or procedural, enforceable at law or in equity by any party against the United States, its departments, agencies, or entities, its officers, employees or agents, or any other person.