

ENDANGERED SPECIES ACT



Celebrating the 50th Anniversary of the Endangered Species Act in 2023

The Endangered Species Act of 1973 (ESA) has proven to be a landmark piece of legislation that institutionalized our national commitment to conservation and the protection of imperiled fish, plants and wildlife and the places they call home. The immensely popular and bipartisan bill passed in December, 1973 by a vote of 92-0 in the Senate and 355-4 in the House.

In 2023, we will celebrate 50 years since President Nixon signed the Endangered Species Act into law—half a century of protecting, conserving and recovering wildlife from the brink of extinction. The Act remains a long-lasting example of commitment, cooperation, and the conservation triumphs we can make when working together.

In 2023, the 50th anniversary provides a unique, year-long opportunity to build support for the Endangered Species Act and imperiled species by celebrating conservation achievements, highlighting conservation needs, and generally reminding the public and decisionmakers why plants, fish and wildlife are beloved and vital to the heritage we share as Americans. And just as in 1973, an unprecedented coalition of agencies, organizations and nonprofits are coming together to celebrate this conservation legacy.

In 2023 and for the next fifty years and beyond, we must continue to defend, fund and strengthen the Endangered Species Act, so that future generations of Americans can experience the world's diverse plants and animals, and the habitats upon which they depend.

[Join us!](#)

“Nothing is more priceless and more worthy of preservation than the rich array of animal life with which our country has been blessed. It is a many-faceted treasure, of value to scholars, scientists, and nature lovers alike, and it forms a vital part of the heritage we all share as Americans [and] which we hold in trust to countless future generations of our fellow citizens. Their lives will be richer, and America will be more beautiful in the years ahead, thanks to the measure that I have the pleasure of signing into law today.”

-- Statement of President Richard Nixon upon signing the Endangered Species Act, December 28th, 1973

the

Endangered Species Act

Protecting America's Wildlife



The Endangered Species Act is one of the strongest laws for protecting native plant, insect and animal species at risk of extinction and serves as a safety net for plants, birds, fish, and wildlife. By instituting protections for these species and the critical habitats in which they live, the Endangered Species Act has allowed for the recovery of such iconic species as the bald eagle, American alligator, and the humpback whale. There are over 1,600 plant and animal species listed as endangered or threatened in the United States under the Endangered Species Act.

How It Works

The Endangered Species Act, overseen by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the National Marine Fisheries Service, requires species of wildlife in danger of extinction to be listed as threatened or endangered and to receive protections to prevent the loss of the species and recover it so that the laws protections are no longer needed. An endangered species is one that is considered to be in danger of extinction in all or a significant portion of its range. A threatened species is likely to be endangered within the foreseeable future. Under the Endangered Species Act, it is unlawful for anyone to harm, endanger, or "take" a member of a listed species. This includes acts that may indirectly harm the species by damaging critical habitat or impacting other species that are vital to the listed species' survival. The Endangered Species Act also requires creation of plans for the recovery of these species and authorizes resources to aid the conservation efforts of landowners, tribes, and state agencies. Thanks to the Endangered Species Act, we have the opportunity to preserve America's natural heritage for future generations.

Polling

- 92% of Americans believe that decisions about wildlife management and which animals need protection should be made by scientists, not politicians ^[1].
- 90% of voters believe that they have a responsibility to be good stewards of the environment and to avoid causing species to go extinct ^[2].
- 84% of respondents nationwide support the Endangered Species Act ^[1].
- 70% of respondents believe that wolves are a vital part of America's wilderness and natural heritage ^[3].





Success Stories

Robbins' Cinquefoil

Although it was once close to extinction, today the original Robbins' cinquefoil population on a small, rugged site in New Hampshire's White Mountains numbers about 14,000 plants, with 1,500 to 2,000 flowering individuals. In a remarkable win for the Endangered Species Act, Robbins' cinquefoil was officially delisted in 2002.

Humpback Whale

The humpback whale population was greatly threatened by commercial whaling before the early 1900s. In 1966, the North Pacific humpback population was estimated to be around only 1,200 individuals [7]. Endangered Species Act protections allowed for a dramatic increase to a 2010 population estimate of 21,808 [8]. The population will continue to recover through efforts to protect and restore this species.

Bald Eagle

Before its listing as an endangered species under the Endangered Species Act, the bald eagle was missing in much of its range across the continental United States due to factors such as habitat loss and damage to egg shells because of the chemical DDT. Reintroduction into several states in the continental United States and the banning of DDT contributed to the recovery of the species, that was downlisted in 1995 and delisted in 2007, when its population had grown to 11,052 from 416 individuals in 1963 [10,11]. While the eagle once was missing from 13 of the states in its range in 1984, it was found nesting in each of the lower 48 states in 2006 [8].

The Endangered Species Act Today

Despite its success and vital importance for protecting America's wildlife, the Endangered Species Act has faced many attacks throughout its history and wildlife opponents continue to propose bills that undermine the Act. Some bills have attempted to prevent fragile species from receiving the protection they deserve, allow industry groups to degrade sensitive habitats, undermine the science behind wildlife protections, and remove citizen's rights to implement this important law. In addition, the agencies responsible for implementing and enforcing the ESA have been chronically underfunded. It is vital that we remind our lawmakers to uphold their duty to our nation's plants and animals by supporting the mission of the Endangered Species Act.

Citations: [1] Harris Interactive (2011). *Endangered Species Act Poll*. [Data set]. Harris Poll National Quorum. [2] Decision Research (2004). *Endangered Species Act Poll*. [3] Public Policy Polling (2013). *National Wolf Survey*. [4] U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. 1988. Black-footed Ferret Recovery plan. (Denver, Co). ecos.fws.gov/docs/recovery_plans/1988/880808.pdf ; [5] U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. 2008. Black-footed ferret 5-Year review, summary and evaluation. "Pierre, S.D." ecos.fws.gov/docs/five_year_review/doc2364.pdf ; [6] U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. 2012. Black-Footed ferret. www.fws.gov/mountain-prairie/species/mammals/blackfootedferret. [7] NOAA Fisheries. 2005. Stock Assessment Report. Humpback Whale (Megaptera novaeangliae): Eastern North Pacific Stock, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Washington, D.C.; [8] NOAA Fisheries. 2010. Draft Stock Assessment Report. Humpback Whale (Megaptera novaeangliae): Central North Pacific Stock, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Washington, D.C.; [9] U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. 1978. Determination of critical habitat for the whooping crane. 43 FR 20938. [10] U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. 2007. Bald Eagle Numbers Soaring. May 14, 2007 press release. [11] Suckling, K. and W. Hodges. Status of the bald eagle in the lower 48 states and the District of Columbia: 1963-2007. Center for Biological Diversity, Tucson, AZ. www.biologicaldiversity.org/species/birds/bald_eagle/report/index.html.

December 28, 2023 marks the 50th Anniversary of the Endangered Species Act
Help us Celebrate! Go to www.ESA50.org



ESA at 50 Committee Activities

Arts and Culture

Endangered Species Coalition Members are collaborating to create a series of murals in locations throughout the US, celebrating the 50th anniversary of the Endangered Species Act. The purpose of these murals will be to spotlight regional ecological and cultural diversity within ESA at 50 themes. We will do this to increase local, grassroots engagement around native species currently listed, proposed for listing, or recovered from the ESA. The target audience for this project will be local and national decision makers, as well as local community members and project partners.

Education and Youth Engagement

The purpose of the Education and Youth Committee is to connect educators, students, and youth to learning opportunities related to the celebration of ESA @ 50. Our committee has created a calendar that features both an endangered species quiz and a highlighted educational activity for each month of 2023. Additionally, we are organizing nationwide events including an essay contest for K-12 students, as well as a series of conservation career panels for high school and college students - with one panel specifically focused on uplifting current BIPOC conservation professionals and engaging with BIPOC students nationwide. We are excited to connect young people with the opportunities to learn about endangered species, the importance of conservation, and the Endangered Species Act, a landmark piece of legislation.

Events

There are several events we are participating in and/or organizing. In the Fall, we plan to hold an awards reception for individuals and groups actively working to protect threatened and endangered species work on the ground. We plan to coincide the ceremony with a fly-in to Washington, DC to educate Members of Congress about the importance and success of the Endangered Species Act. In addition, we will work with the Department of Interior and Department of Commerce on a series of site visits to highlight conservation success stories across the country. Finally, the Events committee has reached out to the White House in an attempt to get President Biden engaged in celebrating the 50th Anniversary (when a junior Senator from DE, President Biden was a signatory to the passage of the ESA in 1973).

ESA AT 50

EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES



JANUARY

January through April, classes or teams of K-12 students are invited to submit artwork to **Collaborating for Wildlife and Plants**, a nationwide art project honoring wildlife and the ESA!



JULY

Consider joining the nationwide **Great American Campout** and spend summer outside!

FEBRUARY



On March 2nd, Read Across America Day, teachers and students are encouraged to read an article, poem, or book about endangered species. **Click here for a recommended reading list!**

AUGUST

Teachers are encouraged to incorporate the **ESA 50th Anniversary Essay Contest** into their lesson plans and share the opportunity to enter with K-12 students. More information coming soon!

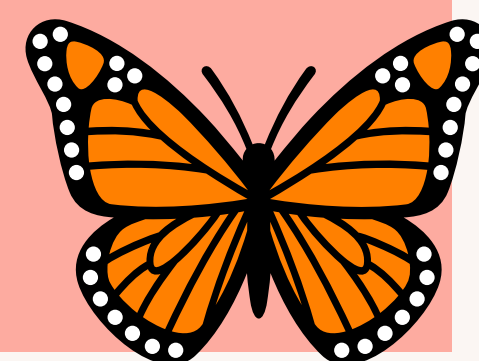
MARCH

Classrooms, families and individual students are invited to join the **Clean Earth Challenge**!



SEPTEMBER

September activities and events TBD. More information will be added to this calendar in the coming months!



APRIL



High school and college students are invited to attend **career panels** with wildlife professionals to learn about job opportunities in conservation, and to attend the **EcoCareers Summit!**

OCTOBER

October activities and events TBD. More information will be added to this calendar in the coming months!

MAY

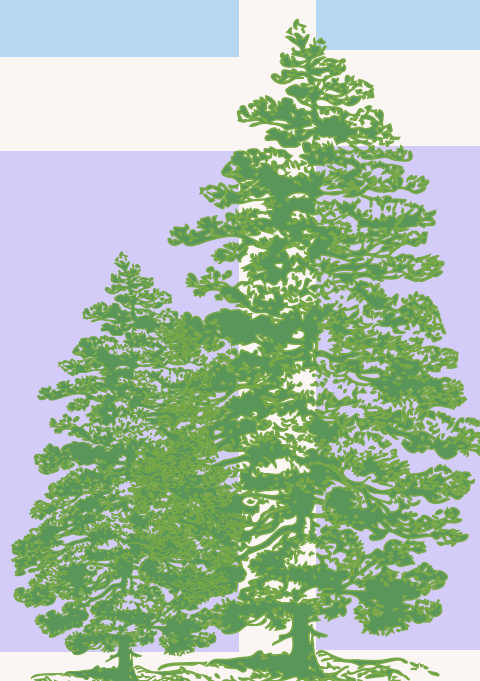
Friday, May 19th is Endangered Species Day! Teachers and students are encouraged to organize an activity or find an event near you. **Click here for lesson plans, resources, and events!**

NOVEMBER

Classrooms, families, students, and young people everywhere are once again invited to join the **Clean Earth Challenge**. Help keep our wild places safe and beautiful for people and wildlife!

JUNE

June is Great American Outdoors month! **Use this link** to find a national park, state park, or wildlife refuge in your state to visit and enjoy.



DECEMBER

December 23rd is the official anniversary of Endangered Species Act! **Endangered Species 50th Anniversary Essay Contest** winners will be announced in December.

THIS CALENDAR CHANGES! UPDATES: WWW.ESA50.ORG/YOUTH



ENDANGERED SPECIES DAY 2023

Friday, May 19th

Founded by David Robinson (former ES Day Director) and the Endangered Species Coalition in 2006, Endangered Species Day is an annual event for people around the world to learn about, celebrate, and take action for endangered species. 2023 also marks the 50th Anniversary of the Endangered Species Act (ESA), a landmark piece of legislation that institutionalized our national commitment to the conservation of fish, plants and wildlife. Join us in celebrating Endangered Species Day and the 50th Anniversary of the ESA on Friday, May 19th and throughout May!

Organize an event

Nonprofits, community groups, schools, libraries, museums, parks, zoos, aquariums, and individuals are encouraged to host Endangered Species Day events! From film screenings, guided tours, and service days to arts and educational activities, there are many types of special events that you can organize. Visit our website for ideas, resources, and national event map.

Post on social media

Raise awareness of this special occasion and the importance of conservation by posting on social media using #EndangeredSpeciesDay and #ESA50.

Spread the word

Pass this flyer on to other organizations and individuals in your network who may want to participate in Endangered Species Day 2023 and the 50th Anniversary of the ESA. An unprecedented coalition of agencies, organizations and nonprofits are coming together to celebrate this conservation legacy – no one will want to miss out!



Learn more:

WWW.ENDANGEREDSPECIESDAY.ORG

Levels of Engagement

Sponsor: Corporations, institutions, agencies, foundations, and individual donors contributing \$25+ K

Participant: NGO Partners: Use sliding scale based on organizational budget

Required Commitment:

- Monetary support: *
 - \$15 K for groups with \$5 + mil budget
 - \$10 K for groups \$1-5 mil budget
 - \$5 K for groups \$500,000- 1 mil budget
 - \$1 K for groups w/budget below \$500,000.
- Amplify via SM and send alerts to your members for all national actions and events

Encouraged Support:

- Engage in planning and support for national events/activities
- Organize (or help co-organize) an event or activity in support of ESA @ 50

Benefit:

- Logo on ESA@50 website
- Administrative access to website
- Organizational name/Logo on all outward facing materials
- List sharing: names/contact information of sign-ups**

Supporter: NGO Allies: No monetary support provided

Required Commitment:

- Amplify via SM

Encouraged Support:

- In-kind support (e.g., assistance with events, design, communications, etc.)

Benefit:

- Name on Website

To join us in celebrating the 50th Anniversary of the Endangered Species Act, contact Tara Thornton, Deputy Director, Endangered Species Coalition, at tthornton@endangered.org or visit our webpage at www.ESA50.org

**If the monetary contribution hinders your participation, contact us to see if we can accommodate your needs*

***Groups interested in a list swap will need to sign a MOU*