

Ongoing Wildlife Extinction Across America: Numerous Animals and Plants

23 Species from 19 States Lost to Extinction

By [Center For Biological Diversity](#)

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The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service [proposed](#) today to remove 22 animals and a plant from the endangered species list because of extinction. They join the [list of 650 U.S. species](#) that have likely been lost to [extinction](#).

Species being proposed for delisting include the ivory-billed woodpecker, Bachman’s warbler, Scioto madtom, San Marcos gambusia, eight species of [Southeastern freshwater mussels](#), eight birds and a flower from Hawai’i, and a bird and bat from Guam.

“The Endangered Species Act has prevented the extinction of 99% of the plants and animals under its care, but sadly these species were extinct or nearly gone when they were listed,” said Tierra Curry, a senior scientist at the Center for Biological Diversity. “The tragedy will be magnified if we don’t keep this from happening again by fully funding species protection and recovery efforts that move quickly. Delay equals death for vulnerable wildlife.”

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has been exceedingly slow to protect species. A [2016 study](#) found that species waited a median of 12 years to receive safeguards. Several of the species in today’s announcement went extinct during a delay in the listing process, including the Guam broadbill, little Mariana fruit bat, and the southern acornshell, stirrupshell and upland combshell mussels. In total, at least 47 species have gone extinct waiting for protection.

“We’re at risk of losing hundreds more species because of a lack of urgency,” said Curry. “The Endangered Species Act is the most powerful tool we have to end extinction, but the sad reality is that listing still comes too late for most species. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service badly needs to reform its process for protecting species to avoid further extinctions, and it needs the funding to do so. We can’t let bureaucratic

delays cause more extinctions.”

Nine months into his term, President Biden has yet to nominate a director for the Fish and Wildlife Service. He did request more than a \$60 million increase for endangered species — the largest increase requested for the program in history — but the House Appropriations Committee undercut the president’s budget request by \$17 million.

A [2016 study](#) found that Congress only provides approximately 3.5% of the funding that the Service’s own scientists estimate is needed to recover species. Roughly 1 in 4 species receives less than \$10,000 a year toward recovery.

Two bills moving through Congress would increase protection and funding for endangered species.

The Extinction Prevention Act (H.R. 3396) would create four grant programs that would provide \$5 million per year to fund crucial conservation work for each of the most critically imperiled species in the United States, including butterflies, freshwater mussels, desert fish and Hawaiian plants.

The Extinction Crisis Emergency Act would direct President Biden to declare the global wildlife extinction crisis a national emergency. The legislation would spur action across the entire federal government to stem the loss of animals and plants in the United States and around the world.

“Extinction is not inevitable. It is a political choice. Saving species isn’t rocket science. As a country we need to stand up and say we aren’t going to lose any more species to extinction,” said Curry.

Species Background

Bachman’s warbler: Bachman’s warbler was a small yellow and black songbird that once bred in swampy thickets in Alabama, Florida, Georgia, North Carolina, South Carolina and Tennessee and overwintered in Cuba, where it was seen for the last time in 1988. It was lost to habitat destruction and collection.

Bridled white-eye: A green, yellow and white tropical lowland forest bird from Guam that was 4 inches long, with a prominent ring around its eye. It became extinct because of predation from the invasive brown tree snake.

Ivory-billed woodpecker: The third largest woodpecker in the world, the ivory-billed woodpecker once flew in old-growth forests in 13 states, including Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee and Texas. It declined because of logging and collection, and the last verified sighting was in 1944 despite extensive searches.

Little Mariana fruit bat: Also known as a flying fox, the little Mariana fruit bat lived on Guam and foraged on tropical fruits. It was last seen in 1968 and went extinct because of habitat loss from agriculture and military activity, brown tree snake predation, and overharvesting for use as food. It had a 2-foot wingspan, gold on the sides of its neck and yellowish-brown fur on the top of its head.

San Marcos gambusia: The San Marcos gambusia was a 1-inch-long fish that ate small invertebrates and gave birth to live young instead of laying eggs like many species of fish. It lived in clear spring water from the headwaters of the San Marcos River in Texas. Last seen in 1983, its extinction is due to water overuse that depleted groundwater and spring flow.

Scioto madtom: The Scioto madtom was a small catfish found only in Big Darby Creek in Ohio. It was listed as endangered in 1975 but was last seen in 1957. It was lost because of silt accumulation from dams and runoff.

The eight freshwater mussels proposed for delisting include the **flat pigtoe, green-blossom pearly mussel, southern acornshell, stirrupshell, tubercled-blossom pearly mussel, turgid-blossom pearly mussel, upland combshell** and **yellow-blossom pearly mussel**. [Freshwater mollusks](#) are the most endangered group of organisms in the United States, with 36 mussels and more than 70 freshwater snails already lost.

[Click here](#) for background on the lost Hawaii species including eight birds and a flower.

Extinctions by State or Territory

Alabama: Bachman's warbler, southern acornshell, stirrupshell, tubercled-blossom pearly mussel, turgid-blossom pearly mussel, upland combshell, yellow-blossom pearly mussel

Arkansas: ivory-billed woodpecker, turgid blossom pearly mussel

Florida: Bachman's warbler, ivory-billed woodpecker

Georgia: Bachman's warbler, ivory-billed woodpecker, southern acornshell, upland combshell

Guam: bridled white-eye, little Mariana fruit bat

Illinois: ivory-billed woodpecker, tubercled-blossom pearly mussel

Hawai'i: Eight birds and one flower ([click here](#) to read more)

Indiana: tubercled-blossom pearly mussel

Kentucky: ivory-billed woodpecker, tubercled-blossom pearly mussel

Louisiana: ivory-billed woodpecker

Mississippi: flat pigtoe, ivory-billed woodpecker

Missouri: ivory-billed woodpecker

North Carolina: Bachman's warbler, ivory-billed woodpecker

Ohio: Scioto madtom

Oklahoma: ivory-billed woodpecker

South Carolina: Bachman's warbler, ivory-billed woodpecker

Tennessee: Bachman's warbler, green-blossom pearly mussel, ivory-billed woodpecker, southern acornshell, tubercled-blossom pearly mussel, turgid-blossom pearly mussel, upland combshell, yellow-blossom pearly mussel

Texas: ivory-billed woodpecker, San Marcos gambusia

Virginia: green-blossom pearly mussel

West Virginia: tubercled-blossom pearly mussel

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