

Endangered Species in America: “Moose, Western Bumblebee, Venus Flytrap, ... Plants and Animals in Desperate Need of Help”

Lawsuit Attacks Trump Failure to Protect 241 Species from Extinction

By [Center For Biological Diversity](#)

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The Center for Biological Diversity sued the Trump administration today for failing to decide whether 241 plants and animals across the country — from the Midwest’s golden-winged warbler to Venus flytraps in the Carolinas — should be protected under the Endangered Species Act.

The [lawsuit](#), filed in district court in Washington, D.C., is one of the largest ever under the Act and seeks to undo years of illegal inaction by the Trump administration.

Among the species in today’s suit are spotted turtles in the Great Lakes and on the Eastern Seaboard, moose in the Midwest, a western bumblebee that has declined by 84%, and a tiny freshwater fish in Chesapeake Bay that flips stones with its nose to find food. (A full list is below. An interactive map [here](#) shows which species are living in each state.)

“As moose and golden-winged warblers and hundreds of other species fight the rising tide of the extinction crisis, Trump officials won’t lift a finger to help,” said Noah Greenwald, the Center’s endangered species director. “This administration’s ugly contempt for wildlife and the Endangered Species Act threatens our country’s entire web of life. Every day of delay brings these incredible, irreplaceable plants and animals one step closer to extinction.”

In 2016 the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service developed a [workplan](#) to address a backlog of more than 500 species awaiting protection decisions, including those in today’s lawsuit, but the Trump administration has kept the agency from completing decisions for dozens of species every year.

Today’s suit seeks to ensure that all the remaining species awaiting protection in the workplan get decisions as soon as possible. Under the Endangered Species Act, decisions about species’ protection are supposed to take no more than two years, but most of the species in today’s lawsuit have been waiting 10 years or more.

So far the Trump administration has protected only 21 species under the Endangered Species Act — the lowest of any administration at this point in the presidential term. By comparison, during the Obama administration, 360 species were protected under the Endangered Species Act. Under Clinton 523 species were protected, while 232 species were

protected under George H.W. Bush, 62 species under George W. Bush and 254 under Reagan.

“The extinction crisis gets worse by the day, but Trump officials are twiddling their thumbs as plants and animals fade away,” said Greenwald. “It’s a moral failure of epic proportions. And it’s hurting future generations in ways that can never be undone.”

Earlier this year the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services, known as IPBES, warned governments around the world that [1 million species are now at risk of extinction](#) because of human activity. IPBES scientists said that urgent actions are needed to avert mass extinction in the coming decades.

In January the Center released a plan for [Saving Life on Earth](#). The plan calls for the United States to become a global leader in protecting wildlife by declaring the extinction crisis a national emergency, creating new protected areas, and prioritizing wildlife protection over other uses of public lands.

The 241 species occur [across the lower 48 states](#) and include birds, amphibians, insects, fish and mammals. All of the species face serious threats to their survival ranging from habitat destruction to climate change to disease.

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