

Endangered earth

SPRING 2010



Wildlands, Unleaded

What lead hunting ammunition leaves behind has humans and wildlife at risk. We're on the hunt for a national ban. 4

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Room to Roam

Habitat victory heralds new hope for homeward-bound jaguars

New sightings just 30 miles south of the Arizona-Mexico border signal the return of more jaguars to the United States. And thanks to a persistent Center for Biological Diversity campaign spanning more than a decade, these elusive big cats of the borderlands are poised to receive their most significant protection since they first encountered bullets, traps, and poisons centuries ago.

March 2, 2010 marked the first anniversary of a tragic milestone in the history of jaguars in the American Southwest—the death of “Macho B,” the last known jaguar in the United States, 12 days after his capture in a wire snare set by Arizona’s Game and Fish Department.

A little more than a year after that jaguar’s life—captured in glimpses by remote-sensor cameras beginning in 1996—came to its controversial end, a series of recent events signals new hope that jaguars are still the Southwest’s past *and* its future.

First, these elusive big cats of the borderlands are poised to receive their most significant protection since they first encountered bullets, traps, and poison centuries ago. Capping a 13-year battle by the Center for Biological Diversity, the Obama administration announced in January its decision to develop a recovery plan and set aside critical habitat for jaguars on U.S. soil.

A month later, new images released by Sky Island Alliance revealed a jaguar caught on film by remote camera in January, just 30 miles south of the Arizona-Mexico border.

For a jaguar, such a distance is insignificant, and the newly sighted animal could have soon after crossed into Arizona.

A significant threat, nonetheless, is the wall stretching across hundreds of miles of the U.S.–Mexico border. And throughout its range, jaguar habitat is under siege—by sprawl development,



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colossal copper mines, streamside cattle grazing, new roads, and expanding vehicle use.

The future of the jaguar in the United States and northern Mexico entirely depends upon the promised protection of its habitat from these threats, as well as a scientific recovery plan that could help redirect border policy and engineering toward creating permeability for jaguars rather than extending the wall.

The Center recently proposed that designated jaguar habitat include 53 million acres in Arizona and New Mexico, plus smaller areas in Southern California and west Texas, centered on the Sky Islands of southeastern Arizona and southwestern New Mexico and the Gila headwaters and Mogollon Rim of west-central New Mexico and central and eastern Arizona.

The Sky Islands are 27 mountain “islands” in Arizona and New Mexico separated by a desert “ocean” and supporting endemic life forms that in isolation evolved into separate subspecies from others of their kind. Jaguars, however, roam between mountain ranges in order to find

enough deer and javelina for sustenance in this arid land.

The Gila headwaters and Mogollon Rim consist of rugged mountains and a high forested plateau, a wetter region that also supports elk, which jaguars may prey on. Here, the habitat is less fragmented than in the Sky Islands.

Meanwhile, this spring, the story of Macho B—and the vigilante game management that killed him—continues to unfold. From the beginning, it appeared that what the Arizona Game and Fish Department claimed to be an accidental jaguar capture—in snares ostensibly set for a study of cougars and black bears—was actually intentional. This January, the U.S. Interior Department’s inspector general confirmed those fears, describing the events surrounding Macho B’s capture as “criminal wrongdoing” targeting a jaguar. A low-level game department employee was recently fired for participating in the cover-up, but how high up the misconduct goes has yet to be determined.

In addition to having pushed for the federal investigation, separately we’ve sued the Arizona Game and Fish Department to prevent injury or killing of another jaguar. The department avows that it has a right to place snares and traps where jaguars may still roam, an illegal stance that imperils jaguars and other endangered wildlife.

Scientists have affirmed that jaguars need U.S. habitat, and that our ecosystems need jaguars back. That’s why the Center has tirelessly campaigned, ever since we secured a place for jaguars on the federal endangered species list in 1997, to also safeguard the wildlands and corridors they need to survive. We’ll continue fighting to lessen dangers for jaguars as they return, to ensure management decisions are made on a scientific basis, and to protect and restore the cool dappled mountains, grasslands, and desert streams where these rare and beautiful predators can once more be at home. •



Michael J. Robinson is the Center’s lead advocate for the recovery of jaguars, wolves, and other large predators.

Precarious Times for Florida Panthers

Deep in southern Florida, another native North American big cat struggles to maintain a precarious clawhold on survival. Representations of Florida panthers are ubiquitous throughout the state—license plates, school mascots, and professional sports teams capitalize on the cat’s undeniable grace and power—but with fewer than 100 individuals left, the one place you can’t find a panther, it seems, is in the wild.

Listed as a federally endangered species since 1967, the panther should be well on its way to recovery, but rather than protecting panther habitat as required by law, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service bent to the demands of developers. Shopping malls, parking lots, and housing developments for Florida’s exploding population—18 million-strong panther fans, and counting—buried cypress swamps and pinelands, and flesh-and-blood Florida panthers edged closer to extinction.

Today, a lethal network of highways and oppressive housing developments—each pushing further than the last into wild Florida—have rendered 95 percent of the cat’s historic range uninhabitable to panthers, and the remaining scraps of habitat pose deadly dangers ranging from aggressive, territorial males to disease vulnerability. There’s no escape: An increasing number of panthers die horrific deaths every year attempting to cross the roads that bisect even these last, imperfect havens, with a record 17 panthers struck and killed by cars in 2009.

Panthers need space to hunt deer, rear their young, and doze in the heat of the tropics. They need more than a hair’s breadth between them and two tons of steel roaring down the highway. Thanks to relentless human encroachment, it’s clear that the Florida panther cannot survive—let alone thrive—without federally designated critical habitat.

Unfortunately, the Fish and Wildlife Service recently met our scientific petition for a 3-million-acre panther preserve with more developer-friendly denial. The fate facing Florida’s iconic feline is too dire for business as usual, so we’re taking the agency to court. •



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Wildlands, Unleaded

Our Get the Lead Out Campaign resulted in historic legislation banning use of lead bullets for hunting throughout the critically endangered condor's California range. To save scores of other species, we're taking our campaign coast to coast and seeking a national ban.



IMAGES COURTESY THE PEREGRINE FUND

Lead rifle bullets used for big-game hunting are designed to “mushroom” on impact, creating a larger wound. But as they expand and travel through a shot animal, they also spray tiny lead fragments into tissues far from the point of entry. X-ray studies of hunter-killed deer have counted *several hundred* lead fragments littered throughout a single animal.

Yet it only takes a small amount of lead—just one or two fragments—to poison a California condor.

One of the most endangered species in the world, California condors were brought back from the brink of extinction through a heroic reintroduction effort that began returning the majestic birds to the wild in 1996.

But the normally long-lived scavengers began dying at unusually high rates. The culprit: lead poisoning—which an overwhelming body of scientific evidence traced back to the lead from hunting ammunition in carrion eaten by condors. Those telltale lead bullet fragments and lead shot pellets have been found in the digestive tracts of numerous reintroduced condors in California and Arizona.

Because condors feed on carrion and scavenge in groups, just one abandoned lead-ridden carcass or gut pile can poison several birds. And the results can be devastating: Lead poisoning is the leading cause of death for reintroduced condors, with at least 24 birds in California and Arizona known or suspected to have died from lead poisoning since 1992. Dozens more condors have required recapture to receive invasive, life-saving chelation therapy to “de-lead” their blood.

The most recent tragic deaths occurred this February, when three condors in the Grand Canyon area—a female, her yearling chick, and a young male—succumbed to lead poisoning. In the region surrounding Grand Canyon National Park, near the border of Arizona and Utah, a 2006 count turned up lead poisoning in a startling 95 percent of area condors.

Though California condors are among the most vulnerable species to poisoning from lead ammunition, they’re far from the only wildlife suffering the toxic and

dangerous effects of lead. Lead poisoning has been documented in dozens of other bird species, from those that scavenge or prey upon shot animals (such as vultures or eagles, hawks, and owls) to those that mistake small, spent lead shot or fishing tackle for seed or grit (such as pheasant, grouse, songbirds, waterfowl, and wading birds). Among birds found to be poisoned by lead ammunition and fishing tackle are a number of sensitive species besides the condor, from bald and golden eagles to sandhill cranes and trumpeter swans.

A number of mammals have been affected as well; a recent study in Yellowstone showed that grizzly bears have high blood-lead levels during hunting season from feeding on wounded elk shot with lead bullets. Cases of poisoning from ingesting lead ammunition have also been documented in aquatic reptiles—crocodiles and American alligators. All in all, studies show that at least 130 species of animals have suffered poisoning from ingesting spent lead ammunition.

Not surprisingly, recent studies are confirming that lead ammunition poisoning is also a danger to humans who eat wild game. It's long been widely believed that lead fragments can be removed during butchering of wild game for human consumption, rendering the meat safe—but that belief is fast being shattered by unmistakable radiograph evidence of hundreds of minute bullet fragments riddled throughout shot deer carcasses, many of them too small for easy detection by the human eye. Two recent studies by North Dakota state health officials revealed that 59 of 100 packages of venison prepared for human consumption contained tiny fragments from lead bullets, and that people who consume wild game shot with lead appear to have elevated levels of lead in their blood.

Lead is, of course, a dangerous neurotoxin that causes serious affliction to humans as well

as wildlife; even very low lead levels can cause nerve and brain damage—especially in children.

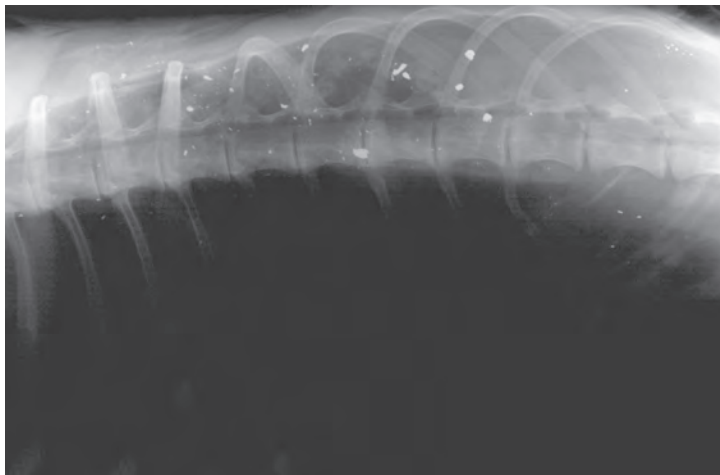
The Center launched our Get the Lead Out Campaign in 2004, with the initial goal of eliminating the lead-ammunition poisoning epidemic in condors. Our petition and subsequent litigation helped bring about historic legislation banning use of lead bullets for hunting throughout the condor's California range.

To protect condors in the Grand Canyon region, where poisoning may be most severe, we've requested that the Arizona Game and Fish Commission similarly prohibit lead bullet use by hunters, and we filed suit against the Bureau of Land Management and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for failing to protect Grand Canyon condors from toxic lead ammunition.

Despite the availability of non-lead ammunition, the National Rifle Association (NRA) has marshaled its forces to try to stop our lawsuit, and to continue to use toxic lead ammunition that will enter the food chain.

Given the threat to human health, and the severe impacts on dozens of species nationwide—including a number that are already imperiled—we're not backing down on lead poisoning. Instead, we launched a national campaign to address all lead poisoning of wildlife, both from lead ammunition and from lead fishing tackle and sinkers. While we may not have the deep pockets and lobbying might of the NRA, we're marshaling our own forces this spring—and in the weeks ahead, our supporters can expect to see our campaign to Get the Lead Out gain traction nationwide. •

Besides the California condor, sensitive bird species found to be poisoned by lead hunting ammunition include bald and golden eagles, sandhill cranes, and trumpeter swans. A number of mammals have been affected as well, including—recent evidence suggests—humans.



Lead hunting ammunition can spray hundreds of tiny fragments through a target, as shown in this image of a deer thorax from a radiograph study by The Peregrine Fund. All 30 hunted deer x-rayed for the study showed widely dispersed fragments, some smaller than a grain of table salt—but still plenty toxic to unsuspecting wildlife and humans.

On the Web: You can follow upcoming actions in our national campaign to stop the poisoning of wildlife from lead bullets at www.biologicaldiversity.org/get_the_lead_out/.

Your Watersheds on Drugs



FLICKR CREATIVE COMMONS/MATT KNOTH

The Center's Pesticides Reduction Campaign has reined in dangerous pesticide use in habitat for the California red-legged frog and a host of other Bay Area species. Now we seek to safeguard human health and habitat for hundreds of species nationwide from pesticide impacts.

Campaign reins in habitat-poisoning pesticides

Deformed frogs with extra limbs. Male frogs chemically castrated and unable to reproduce.

Although this sounds like bad science fiction, researchers are increasingly documenting these and other disturbing effects of pesticides on amphibians. The implications for human health should make you squirm.

Up to 30 percent of the frogs surveyed recently in Pennsylvania ponds were found to be deformed, victims of increased infection by parasites after their immune systems were weakened by exposure to pesticides. Imperiled

mountain yellow-legged frogs at high elevation in remote and “pristine” areas of the Sierra Nevadas are affected by pesticides that drift from agricultural areas hundreds of miles away. University of California research has extensively documented that exposure to minute doses of atrazine, the most commonly used herbicide and contaminant of groundwater and drinking water in the United States, disrupts the endocrine systems of frogs and interferes with their reproduction. Atrazine pollution, even well below levels the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) claims are safe,

“assaults” male sexual development in amphibians.

It's no wonder, then, that pesticides are one of the factors driving the amphibian extinction crisis. Of roughly 6,000 amphibian species in the world, 32 percent are in danger of extinction, and 129 species have winked out of existence in the last three decades. Amphibian extinction is an early warning system for ecosystems, since amphibians are particularly sensitive to environmental changes. The porous skin of amphibians and their eggs makes them exceptionally vulnerable to toxins and pollutants.

Of course, contaminated watersheds aren't just bad news for amphibians and other wildlife. The millions of pounds of toxic and poisonous chemicals that find their way into our waterways each year, including known carcinogens and endocrine disruptors, cause significant and unnecessary threats to both endangered wildlife and human health.

There are some encouraging signs—for example, the campaign to ban atrazine in the United States is heating up and 16 Midwestern cities near agricultural fields recently banded together to file suit over unsafe levels of this poison in their drinking water.

The Center for Biological Diversity has worked to highlight the link between protecting wildlife habitat from toxins and safeguarding human health. And through our aggressive Pesticides Reduction Campaign, we've been successful in beginning to rein in use of toxic pesticides in habitat for endangered

amphibians. We forced evaluation of pesticide impacts and won pesticide use restrictions in habitat for the threatened Barton Springs salamander in Texas in 2005, the California red-legged frog in 2006, and the California tiger salamander in 2009. Sweeping Center victories last year stopped spraying of 74 pesticides in habitat for a host of San Francisco Bay-area threatened and endangered species and herbicide spraying on 1.5 million acres of New Mexico public lands.

Now we're ramping up to protect hundreds of endangered species throughout the nation from pesticide impacts, including a score of rare frogs, toads, and salamanders ranging from California to Arizona, Wyoming, Texas, Mississippi, Florida, and Virginia.

Earlier this year, we filed notice of intent to sue the EPA for failing to adequately evaluate and regulate hundreds of pesticides harmful to endangered species throughout the

country, and this spring, we'll file suit to secure restrictions on pesticide use in and adjacent to critical amphibian habitats. Our campaign will force systematic changes in the way the agency authorizes pesticide use—and, we hope, help restore our nation's waterways for wildlife and human health. •



Jeff Miller spearheads the Center's Pesticides Reduction Campaign from California's Bay Area.

Endocrine Disruptors: Fighting Frankenfish



JOHN RINNE

Desert pupfish

The lineup of toxic and poisonous chemicals wreaking havoc on our aquatic ecosystems is chock full of unsavory characters, but endocrine disruptors—chemicals that interfere with species' natural hormone functions—are a special breed of nasty. These toxins, which permeate waterways across the country, impair reproductive, developmental, neurological, and immune functions in wildlife and humans alike.

Endocrine disruptors occupy seemingly disparate, banal places in modernized society: from a pesticide-sprayed strawberry to sunscreen and laundry suds. Antibiotics, contraceptives, cleaning agents, cosmetics, and caffeine round out the headliners. They're menacing enough on their own, but when these substances seep into the environment as wastewater effluent and agricultural and urban runoff, they mix and form a toxic soup of Frankenfish chemicals that sickens at-risk wildlife, decimates riparian ecosystems, and contaminates drinking water.

A survey of the endocrine-disruptor-laden Potomac River found more than 80 percent of fish there to be “intersex,” with both male and female parts and unable to reproduce. The federally listed and highly vulnerable desert pupfish and razorback and Santa Ana suckers ply similarly toxic waters in the West. Beset on all sides by encroaching development and invasive species, California red-legged frogs and other amphibians must also contend with endocrine disruptors flooding their sensitive, porous skin and triggering abnormalities.

Lack of regulation has left the door—and many drains—wide open for these hormone-altering poisons. Early this year, the Center petitioned the Environmental Protection Agency to set national water-quality criteria for endocrine-disrupting chemicals under the Clean Water Act so that these toxins will be regulated as the unsafe pollutants they are. •

Contamination on the Colorado Plateau

Just west of the Grand Canyon's south rim—where millions of people visit each year—is the old Orphan uranium mine. A fence around its rusted remains keeps out the public and contains soil that's 450 times more radioactive than natural levels. Park officials have documented endangered condors rummaging in the mine's debris there. Far beneath the rim, near the base of the mine's shaft, uranium in Horn and Salt Creeks—which drain into the Colorado River—far exceeds federal drinking water standards.

The Orphan Mine isn't unique; it seems everywhere uranium is mined, contamination follows. A U.S. Geological Survey study released this winter showed elevated soil uranium at every mine and exploration site measured around the Grand Canyon. Water in the Hermit Mine, north of the national park, contained uranium 1,200 times federal standards. East of the park, hundreds of old mines lay exposed on the Navajo Nation, where uranium renders wells undrinkable.



© BILL FERRIS

Beneath beauty lies radioactivity, at the site of the old Orphan Mine

U-238, the most abundant form of uranium in mining operations, has a half-life of 4.5 billion years—and radiation released in its decay can affect the survival, growth, and reproduction of plants, insects, snails, birds, fish, people, and other mammals. Similar effects attend other pollutants released by mining, like selenium, arsenic, molybdenum, lead, and mercury.

Fueled by speculator markets and federal nuclear subsidies, a new wave of uranium development now threatens the air, water, soil, and biological diversity of the Colorado Plateau. Thousands of new claims have been filed over the past decade in areas around Grand Canyon National Park and its watersheds, while public-lands mining claims in Colorado jumped from roughly 120 to more than 10,000 over a recent five-year period.

Mining claims within 10 miles of the Colorado River—the primary water supply for some 25 million people in seven western states—more than doubled from 2003 to 2008.

This new “boom’s” promise of more pollution has provoked potent resistance from scientists, conservation groups, local governments, and tribal governments and activists—many of whom have seen firsthand the toxic legacy of earlier uranium mining rushes manifest itself in their communities.

Near the Grand Canyon, new mining threatens to pollute and deplete aquifers feeding seeps, springs and caves—places that harbor species found nowhere else on Earth. Center litigation blocked a first wave of exploratory drilling adjacent to the park, and the Interior Department followed by temporarily protecting 1 million acres of area public lands from new mining. It's now analyzing stronger protections across 20 years.

But old mines may not be covered by those protections, and despite a change in administration, the Bureau of Land Management remains steadfast in its favor for the mining industry. The re-opening of the Arizona 1 uranium mine near Kanab Creek last fall, absent updated environmental reviews, prompted two more Center lawsuits—one to block the re-opening, and another to force the Bureau to give up public records about it.

Along the Dolores and San Miguel Rivers in southwestern Colorado, a 42-square-mile Department of Energy uranium lease threatens pollution where past mining has already contributed to the decline of endangered fish. With a judge's go-ahead to expand the scope of our existing lawsuit in that region, the Center will focus the coming year on holding the department accountable to laws protecting those fish. And along Utah's Green River, we've protested water rights applications for a new nuclear facility that, if granted, would withdraw 50,000 acre-feet of water and preclude recovery flows for four endangered fish—thereby upending their recovery throughout the entire Upper Colorado River Basin.

Wherever such decisions stand to poison our wildlife, watersheds, and the people of the West, the Center will stand ready to fight it out in court. Dirty energy exacts too heavy a price on our public lands, rivers, and imperiled species. The need to quickly and comprehensively clean up that act can be no more starkly communicated, perhaps, than by the haunting spectacle of critically endangered California condors picking through uranium mine waste inside one of our most cherished national parks. •

Taylor McKinnon, the Center's public lands campaign director, lives and works near Grand Canyon country in Flagstaff, Arizona.



Clean Air Act can get us to 350

For 40 years, the Clean Air Act has powerfully done its job: curbing air pollution to protect public health and welfare. Thanks to the Act—through which the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has capped allowable levels of ozone, particulate matter, carbon monoxide, nitrogen oxides, sulfur dioxide, and lead—America’s air quality is better today than in 1970, despite major growth in our economy and industrial production. As a result, thousands of lives are saved *each year*—and the agency estimates that due to savings in medical care and pollution cleanup, the economic benefits of the Act have exceeded its costs by 42 times.

This proven law is now our strongest tool to take on the gravest air pollution threat of our time: the greenhouse gas pollution that’s causing rapid global warming. The EPA’s responsibility to regulate carbon dioxide as an air pollutant under the Clean Air Act was affirmed by the U.S. Supreme Court in 2007 and by the agency itself last December, when it declared six greenhouse gases dangerous to the environment and public health, and signaled plans to begin regulating them.

But with a climate crisis already making its impact felt around the globe, there’s no time to lose in getting *specific* about the steps we need to take. The week before the agency announced its “endangerment finding,” the Center already had at the ready a clear, concrete proposal, carrying the mandate of consensus by the world’s leading climate scientists. That consensus: Reduce atmospheric carbon dioxide from current levels approaching 390 parts per million down to 350 parts per million, or face catastrophic change that would threaten life as we know it. So in December, along with our partners at 350.org, the Center launched an historic petition asking the EPA to do just that—use the Clean Air Act to cap atmospheric CO₂ at 350 parts per million or below.

More than 100 environmental, social justice, and faith groups, along with prominent climate scientists including NASA’s Dr. James Hansen, endorsed the Center’s legal petition. Now, we’ve stepped up our campaign with a “People’s Petition” urging the EPA to take swift action to enact a CO₂ cap at no more than 350 parts per million. More than 28,000 people added their names in the petition’s first few weeks, alongside the signatures of award-winning author Barbara Kingsolver, musician Bonnie Raitt, and well-known actor and environmental activist Ed Begley, Jr.

The science speaks for itself—but with politics in the mix, we need as many voices as possible speaking out for a strong scientific standard, and for the preservation of a strong Clean Air Act. Not surprisingly, the clear success of the Act and its potential to rein in large-scale greenhouse gas pollution has industry running scared—and thus, pressuring our political leaders and the EPA to make dangerous compromises that won’t curb global warming fast enough to protect life on Earth.



FILICKR CREATIVE COMMONS/TROY HOLDEN

Help snuff out runaway greenhouse gas pollution from smokestacks and other air-fouling offenders: Sign our People’s Petition to Cap Carbon Dioxide Pollution at 350 Parts Per Million at www.biologicaldiversity.org/peoples_petition_for_350/.

Case in point: On April 1, the EPA and Department of Transportation finalized improved fuel-economy standards for cars, light-duty trucks, and sport-utility vehicles. Though the new standards for mobile sources still leave the United States lagging far behind other countries in fuel economy, they mark an important step that also should have triggered the agency to quickly move forward with establishing emissions standards for stationary sources, like smokestacks. Instead, the agency announced further delays in setting those regulations—as well as plans to lower the bar on the polluters it will target, allowing thousands of major industry polluters to slip below the radar.

And while the Obama administration continues to drag its feet, Congress also trips over its own baby steps. As many of our readers know, neither the pledges delivered by Obama in Copenhagen in December, nor the emissions-targets set by the House climate bill passed last year, nor the only marginally better targets in the current Senate bill, come anywhere near getting us back to 350. And as we go to press, reports abound that the Senate will attempt to gain the required votes to pass its already woefully weak bill by gutting the Clean Air Act as a tool to regulate greenhouse pollution.

The Center steadfastly opposes any climate legislation that does away with the proven regulatory power of the Clean Air Act in the fight against global warming. As long as Congress and the administration continue to lower the bar on defending the public welfare from catastrophic climate change, it’s clear we need a strong and enforceable Clean Air Act now more than ever—and there’s no reason to wait to put it to use. •

Endangered Species Protection, Redefined

Humans, one might say, are *common*—about 10,000 times as common as we would be without agriculture and technology, which have allowed us to spread out and consume like no other species. In fact, if human population and consumption trends continue, we'll need two Earths to sustain us by 2050. Already, we absorb half our planet's fresh water and develop half its landmass.

And we're getting more and more common every second.

Meanwhile, of course, animal and plant species are getting rarer and rarer. With 6.8 billion people taking over the land and devouring its resources—leaving waste and pollution in their wake—other life forms are being pushed off the planet, with less and less intact habitat to allow their survival at all.

More and more humans, fewer and fewer other species. The connection is clear, but it's one most people never think about.



ARTWORK © ENDANGERED SPECIES PRINT PROJECT
DESIGN BY LORI LIEBER

The slogans are whimsical, but the message is dead serious: An ever-growing human population is crowding species into extinction, and it's time to get real about solutions.

The Center for Biological Diversity has set out to boldly bridge that gap in our collective consciousness. Since launching our Overpopulation Campaign last year, we've moved on to carry out one of the most unconventional, daring, and chuckle-inspiring endeavors to save species ever undertaken: our Endangered Species Condom Project, a push for mass education on overpopulation.

Through the project, we're distributing free condom packages depicting six separate species—the polar bear, snail darter, spotted owl, American burying beetle, jaguar, and coquí guajón rock frog—with lighthearted

slogans, from “Wrap with care, save the polar bear” to “Cover your tweedle, save the burying beetle.” But inside the packages, the message is direct, memorable, and anything but a joke, explaining how an ever-growing human population crowds species into extinction, and what people can do about it.

Yet even we at the Center couldn't anticipate just how effective a conversation-starter our Endangered Species Condoms would be. For the project's launch on Valentine's Day, we produced 100,000 condoms, hoping to enlist the help of a hundred or so volunteers across the country to help distribute them. But not long after we announced the project, enthusiastic responses poured in, with more than 5,000 people from all walks of life—from ministers, grandmothers, and schoolteachers to college students and biologists—jockeying to distribute Endangered Species Condoms at concerts, in bars, at universities and spiritual groups across the nation. Faster than we can say, “Wear a jimmy hat, save the big cat,” those first 100,000 condoms had taken to the streets.

Not only did our project resonate with our members and supporters—it also made a big splash in the media. After the Valentine's Day launch, Endangered Species Condoms generated hundreds of discussions—sometimes astounded, usually funny, and always powerful—about overpopulation and the extinction crisis in newspapers including *The New York Times*, *Los Angeles Times*, *Miami Herald*, and *Boston Globe*. More than 300,000 blogs and Web sites covered the issue.

Two months later, we used the project's incredible momentum to focus Earth Day on overpopulation—which is, after all, at the root of all threats to our Earth (a dynamic well understood and discussed on the first Earth Day 40 years ago). Distributing a whopping quarter-million condoms, the Center made Earth Day 2010 one of the biggest overpopulation campaigns in U.S. history.

We'll continue to distribute Endangered Species Condoms across the country, with concerted outreach campaigns planned for strategic moments throughout the year. We have a lot of people to reach—6.8 billion, no less—but with the incredible support of our members and volunteers propelling the project forward, we hope overpopulation awareness will burgeon as rapidly as the population has, itself. •

On the Web: Learn more about this novel project and the connection between overpopulation and species extinction at www.endangeredspeciescondoms.com.

Rebels With a Cause



© E.J. PEIKER

If you're reading this, you're probably familiar with the Center's unparalleled success rate in protecting species and wildlands—and you know we don't fear to tread ground that others won't. We've defended California condor habitat on Tejon Ranch (while other groups ceded to developers), demanded a climate bill that would cut atmospheric CO₂ to 350 parts per million or below (while many say any climate bill is better than none), and confronted the undeniable but controversial connection between species extinction and overpopulation (while most groups balk at the topic).

Recently, our singular no-holds-barred approach has earned us a place in the history books, so to speak—first with the release last year of Edward Humes' *Eco Barons*, and now with a new book by sociologist Douglas Bevington, *The Rebirth of Environmentalism: From the Spotted Owl to the Polar Bear*.

Rebirth offers an in-depth examination of the rise of grassroots eco-groups in the last two decades and their sweeping reinvigoration of the modern environmental movement. Not only does the book place a special focus on the Center's rise and substantial

*The Rebirth of
Environmentalism: From the
Spotted Owl to the Polar Bear*

Douglas Bevington
Island Press

accomplishments in those same two decades; it also specifically celebrates our transformation from a small, sparsely funded but fiercely devoted handful of individuals to an internationally recognized, nationally present, and highly successful organization—one that's still fiercely devoted to our ideals, and still unwilling to compromise them.

Easier said than done, *Rebirth* argues, because the path from small grassroots troupe to large national group is fraught with obstacles, and along the journey many groups veer off course—swayed by the prevailing winds of politics and public opinion, or by the coffers of corporate funders.

Willing to remain outsiders on the national scene, free from the burden of courting corporations and currying favor with politicians, the Center navigated an alternate course—instead continuing to build on unconventional methods and independent support. Including, of course, plenty of unswerving support from a rapidly growing body of members and activists.

As a result, Bevington notes, we weren't "readily deterred by controversy" during our rise: "The Center took the lead on pursuing contentious campaigns and litigation that more moderate groups would not initiate . . . [and] grew quickly within the spaces left vacant by the nationals."

Gaining powerful influence as one of the strongest players in the environmental game, without losing the grassroots edge that propelled us in our nascent years, the Center succeeded, *Rebirth* asserts, in embodying cofounder Robin Silver's call for a "group that isn't afraid." •

How to make your gift LAST ALL YEAR

One of the most effective ways to support the Center for Biological Diversity is to become a Monthly Sustaining Member. Your recurring gift, automatically charged to your credit card or checking account each month, provides dependable funds we can count on to protect imperiled species and the lands, waters, and climate they need to survive.

Please call our membership team at (866) 357-3349 x. 316 to contribute regularly to the Center as a Monthly Sustaining Member, or simply sign up online today at www.sustain.biologicaldiversity.org/spring. •

You can LEAVE A LEGACY for endangered species conservation

The Center for Biological Diversity's Legacy Society honors individuals who have expressed their commitment to protecting endangered species for future generations by making a gift to the Center in their estate plans.


There are several ways to provide a gift to the Center for Biological Diversity that will endure beyond your lifetime, and also provide you and your loved ones with significant tax and financial advantages. A commitment made through your will, living trust, retirement plan, or life insurance policy will entitle you to membership in the Center's Legacy Society.

To learn more about making a lasting gift, please call us at (866) 357-3349 x. 318 or email us at tjanes@biologicaldiversity.org. •



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Across the board, the primary threat driving species extinction is loss of habitat due to human activity and encroachment—but it's not rocket science to recognize that what's bad for wildlife habitat is also bad news for *ours*. In this issue of *Endangered Earth*, we highlight the Center for Biological Diversity's work on a number of fronts to fight toxic pollution in our air, water, and wildlands that not only degrades habitat for already severely imperiled plants and animals, but also directly threatens human health as well as our planet's future. Turn inside for articles on the Center's current efforts to rid our wildlands and watersheds of poisons from pesticides, endocrine-disrupting chemicals, uranium mining, and lead, and to regulate greenhouse gas pollution of our atmosphere under the Clean Air Act.

Our work on these and dozens of other campaigns unfolds at a fast and furious pace throughout the year. Fortunately, there's a way you can get the most up-to-date news on our most recent wins for wildlife and opportunities to take action, delivered straight to your inbox: Join the ranks of more than a quarter-million readers who subscribe to *Endangered Earth Online*, the Center's weekly e-newsletter, at www.biologicaldiversity.org/EEO/. •

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