

ENDANGERED

EARTH

CENTER FOR BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY • SUMMER 2018



Saving Life on Earth

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WILD & WEIRD



The Pallas's cat, or manul, is found in central Asia and has the longest and densest fur of any cat species.

Photo by Albinfo CC-BY-SA

Tell us what you think about
Endangered Earth:
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Photo of elephants in Serengeti National Park by Nici Keil



Fighting the Attack on Africa's Elephants

With intricate social networks, the ability to show empathy and mourn their dead, and a high level of intellect, elephants are a much-loved species. People's love for them was shouted from the rooftops last fall in a major explosion of public outrage over the Trump administration's decision to lift the U.S. ban on importing elephant-hunting trophies from Zimbabwe. People from both sides of the political aisle and many walks of life blasted the administration for sanctioning the killing of elephants for the thrill of it (and of course to bring an elephant part back to the United States as a trophy) while elephants are in the midst of a poaching crisis.

The result of the outcry was shocking, considering President Trump's past moves. Trump tweeted that trophy hunting is a "horror show" and said he was putting Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke's decision to lift the ban on hold. But as we all know, "tweet venting" doesn't equal policy, and without any real action from Zinke, elephants stayed under the gun.

So the Center and our allies filed a lawsuit in federal court challenging the decision to lift the ban on importing elephant trophies from Zimbabwe. The decision relied upon good governance and adequate management of elephants there, but it was announced in the midst of a coup d'état that sent the country into a tailspin from which it's still recovering.

What's more, the elephant population in Zimbabwe has already been in decline, with an estimated 18 percent of the country's elephants lost between 2007 and 2013. With elephant deaths outpacing their births, it's nothing short of outrageous for the Trump administration to sanction further elephant killing. Given that declining population, how can such killing enhance the species' survival under the Endangered Species Act? It can't — especially when poachers and trophy hunters target the biggest, strongest (mostly male) elephants, meaning their winning genes are lost forever to the species.

And the Trump administration didn't stop there. After we sued, it announced a shift to a so-called case-by-case approach, instead of a ban, in an effort get rid of our lawsuit. Meanwhile Zinke announced the formation of a "council" composed primarily of trophy hunters and NRA supporters that would advise the administration on increasing trophy hunting. But we love elephants as much as you do, and we're pulling out all the stops to do everything we can for them.

Tanya Sanerib is the Center's international legal director and a senior attorney. She leads the Center's international litigation work to protect imperiled species outside U.S. borders.





Whale in the Gulf of Mexico by BOEM/Nicolette Nye

Trump's Offshore Drilling Plan Threatens Wildlife and Coastal Communities

This year began with a bombshell: The Trump administration proposed to let oil companies drill in every U.S. ocean. Popular tourist beaches on the East and West coasts, remote Alaska shorelines, and vulnerable wildlife struggling against extinction could now be exposed to major oil spills.

Everyone expected the new five-year offshore leasing plan Trump had ordered to drastically expand drilling, but this draft proposal, unveiled Jan. 4, was even more extreme than we'd feared. Only one of 26 offshore planning areas was excluded from new drilling in a proposal unprecedented in its reach and recklessness.

Yet the public response has matched the threat, uniting coastal communities and conservation groups around the country to offer strong bipartisan opposition to the plan. More than 1.35 million comments were submitted during the 60-day comment period, and thousands turned out for rallies against offshore drilling from Sacramento to Albany and Anchorage to Tallahassee.

Through public speeches, newspaper editorials and online organizing, people nationwide have sent their political leaders the clear message that they don't want any new offshore drilling in our public waters. More than 60 West Coast cities and counties have passed resolutions opposing offshore drilling.

The message that dirty, dangerous offshore drilling threatens wildlife, coastal communities and our climate has never been sounded as strongly in this country.

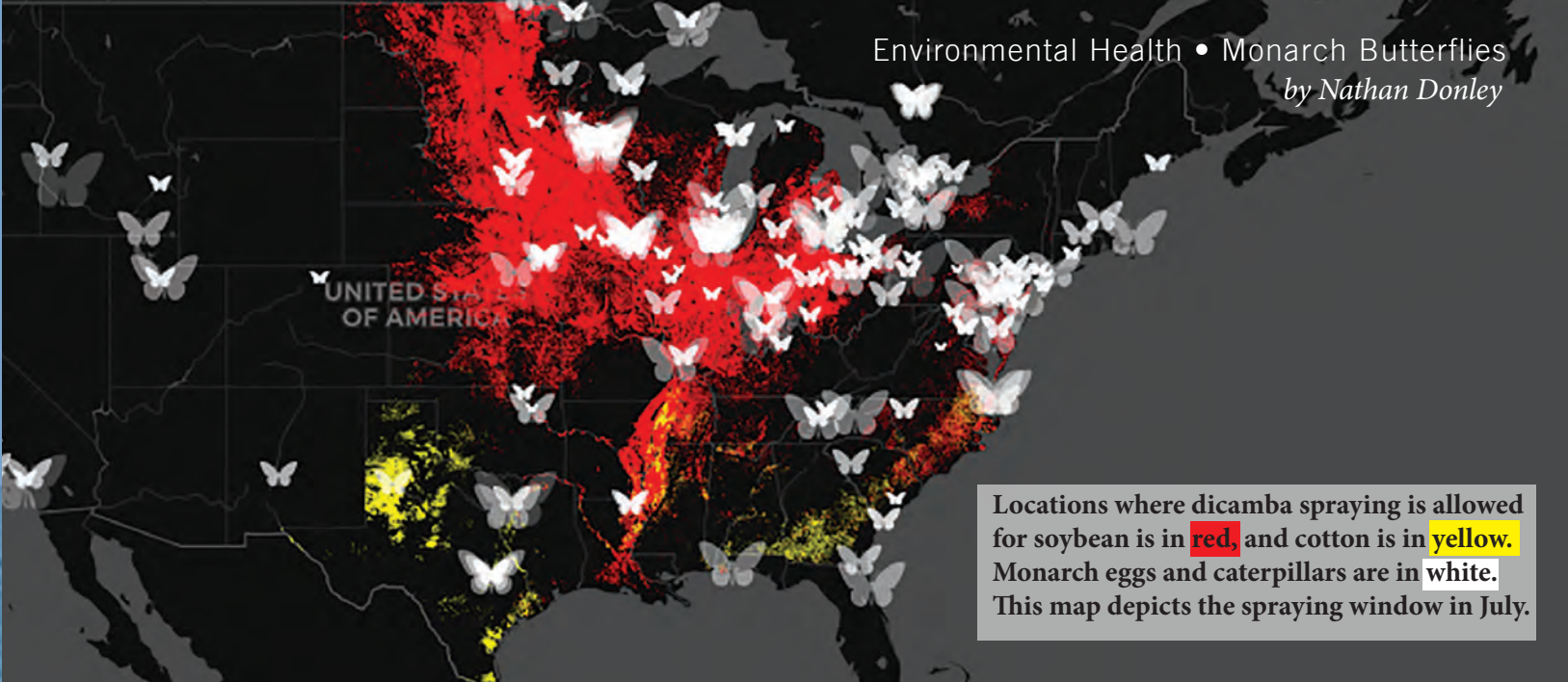
But expanding offshore drilling remains a major policy goal of the Trump administration, so this fight is far from over. Even worse, Trump's appointees are also pushing to weaken offshore-drilling safety rules adopted after the 2010 BP Deepwater Horizon disaster, the biggest oil spill in American history. Expanded drilling with reduced safety regulations is clearly a recipe for disaster.

The Arctic and its vulnerable wildlife — including endangered polar bears, ice seals and bowhead whales — face the most immediate threats from expanded offshore drilling. The Trump administration recently sought industry input on its proposal to offer leases in the Beaufort Sea next year. And the first offshore leases that would be offered under the new 2019–2024 plan would be in the Arctic Ocean.

Burning all the fossil fuels targeted in the draft leasing plan would create almost 50 gigatons of carbon dioxide pollution. The next draft of the plan isn't expected until November. So we'll be spending this year making the case — in court and in the court of public opinion — that Americans don't want any new offshore drilling.



Miyoko Sakashita is the Center's oceans director and senior counsel. She works with the Oceans team to secure protections for imperiled marine life from environmental threats.



Map by Curtis Bradley/Center for Biological Diversity

Monarchs and Drifting Dicamba

As monarch butterflies begin their remarkable multigenerational journey from Mexico to Canada, an escalating toxic threat looms across the American heartland.

Already the use of the pesticide glyphosate on crops genetically altered to resist it has played a significant role in the 80-percent decline of the butterflies over the past two decades because it kills milkweed, the only food their caterpillars eat.

But because overuse of the pesticide has fueled the growth of glyphosate-resistant superweeds across millions of U.S. acres, farmers are now starting to dump a pesticide called dicamba on their fields.

And that's very bad news for monarchs. As described in a recent Center analysis, dicamba may be even more harmful to these familiar backyard beauties than glyphosate. Peer-reviewed research has shown that just 1 percent of the minimum recommended dicamba application rate is enough to drastically reduce milkweed growth and severely wither the leaves hungry monarch caterpillars need to survive.

As visually demonstrated by the map above that we produced earlier this year, the timing and geographical distribution of dicamba use coincides precisely with the presence of monarch eggs and larvae on milkweed.

One of the biggest problems with dicamba is that it's notorious for drifting beyond the fields where it's sprayed. In 2017 alone, dicamba sprayed on crops genetically altered to resist it spurred thousands of reports of drift damage to more than 3 million

acres of nearby crops and untold stretches of forests and natural areas.

And dicamba use is about to increase 100-fold on soybean and cotton crops as farmers across the Great Plains and Midwest look to spread it over 60 million acres over the next two years. That's an area larger than Minnesota.

By the time we discovered glyphosate's harm to monarchs, the pesticide's use was firmly entrenched. But with dicamba we have a unique opportunity to limit much of the damage before it happens.

Those of us who care about the future of monarchs must step up and let the Environmental Protection Agency know that rather than bowing to the wishes of chemical companies it must refuse to re-approve dicamba in November.

To protect these beautiful butterflies from the dangerous threat posed by dicamba, the EPA needs to hear from all of us. We can't be silent when faced with the possibility of this new threat wiping out monarchs forever.

Nathan Donley is a senior scientist at the Center. He works with the Environmental Health program on issues surrounding the increasing exposure of people and wildlife to toxics.





Grizzly bear with her cubs in Yellowstone National Park by Frank van Manen/USGS

Yellowstone's Grizzlies Under Fire

Yellowstone's grizzly bears are an icon of the American West, and people come from all over the world for a chance to see these magnificent animals in their natural habitat. Scientists believe about 50,000 grizzlies once lived across the western United States, but a federally funded bounty program aimed at eradication nearly wiped them off the map. When grizzly bears were first protected as a threatened species in 1975, scientists believed only 136 of them inhabited the Yellowstone area. Now, about 700 of the great bears survive on these wild lands. Their population increase is cause for celebration, but our work isn't over.

In total only approximately 2,000 grizzly bears live in the lower 48 states in just five isolated populations, inhabiting less than 5 percent of their historic range. Yellowstone bears remain isolated and face emerging and ongoing challenges, including the loss of traditional food sources and increasing death rates.

Despite these challenges, last summer the Trump administration stripped federal protection from Yellowstone's grizzlies. Taking those bears off the Endangered Species Act's list of threatened species paved the way for states to implement trophy-hunting seasons, and Wyoming and Idaho aren't wasting time.

Wyoming has approved an aggressive hunting season to start this September. Hunters are allowed to use any hunting weapons permitted under state law to kill grizzlies, all so they can hang a head on their wall or put a rug

on their floor. Hunters could kill up to 23 grizzly bears, including up to 13 females.

In Idaho, where grizzly bears remain rare, the state approved a hunting season for one grizzly. Idaho contains important connectivity corridors for grizzly bears, giving these bears an opportunity to connect with other populations — an important step for protecting the long-term genetic health of Yellowstone's bears. But this connection will never occur if grizzlies are shot the second they step outside park boundaries.

We won't let these grizzly bears die at the hands of bloodthirsty trophy hunters without a fight. The Center and allies have filed a lawsuit to challenge the Trump administration's removal of federal protection for these bears, and we're engaging the public to let Wyoming and Idaho know our bears are worth more alive than dead.

Andrea Santarsiere is a senior attorney focused on carnivore protection in the Center's Endangered Species program.



Climate Goes Viral

an interactive map produced by *The Revelator* shows where scientists predict tick- and insect-borne diseases can spread due to climate change.

As average temperatures across the United States and the rest of the world climb, disease-carrying ticks and insects have started spreading farther north, reaching places where winters were previously too long and cold for them to survive.

Location: New York City
Predicted disease: Dengue fever
Symptoms: Fever, fatigue, organ dysfunction, neurological disorders, death

UNITED STATES
OF AMERICA

Location: San Francisco Bay
Predicted disease: Plague
Symptoms: Fever, pain, pneumonia, organ damage, death

MEXICO

Location: King County, Texas
Predicted disease: Meat allergy
Symptoms: Itching, hives, gastrointestinal upset, and anaphylaxis upon consumption of meat

Location: Mar-a-Lago, Florida
Predicted disease: Trypanosomiasis
Symptoms: Fever, arthritis, blood in urine, personality changes, seizures

BELIZE
GUATEMALA

EL
SALVADOR

NICARAGUA

COSTA
RICA

PANAMA

VENEZUELA

Darker colors on the map correspond to higher numbers of predicted diseases.

View the interactive map at TheRevelator.org/climate-goes-viral.





Image design by Russ McSpadden

Shining a Light on Anti-solar Policies

The future's looking bright for renewable energy. No matter how much money fossil fuel companies pump into dirty energy campaigns, clean energy progress keeps shining through. We know that an ideal clean energy future — one that benefits not only people, but the planet — is possible. And we're working to stop the fossil fuel dinosaurs and other special interests trying to hold that future back.

The Center is pushing for a rapid transition to a 100-percent clean energy system that challenges assumptions about how electricity can be generated. Our energy future must be not only renewable, but democratic, equitable and wildlife friendly. Distributed solar, such as solar panels placed on rooftops or in community solar gardens, plays a pivotal role in this future.

But much of our ability to realize that a wildlife-friendly energy future rests in the hands of state policymakers.

State-level policy largely determines how utilities can price and distribute electricity, as well as how feasible it is for individuals and businesses to invest in solar power. Yet instead of allowing solar markets to thrive, state policies often actively interfere with distributed solar growth.

The Center's report *Throwing Shade: 10 Sunny States Blocking Distributed-solar Development* calls out the states that are the worst offenders — those with high technical potential for rooftop solar but poor policy landscapes. Florida and Texas, for example, should have booming solar markets, but they're falling far behind their potential due to a combination of weak, obstructive and nonexistent policies.

It's not just fossil fuel companies and their allies in state government standing in the way of solar progress. In many states monopoly utilities are fighting rooftop solar in order to cling to their control of energy profits and pricing. These utilities influence regulatory agencies to prevent people from going solar by imposing discriminatory rates on solar customers and preventing solar companies from operating in their service areas. The Center is fighting these anti-solar efforts by taking legal action against utilities abusing their power, promoting awareness through outreach efforts, and supporting pro-rooftop-solar campaigns across the country.

We're going to continue to fight those attempting to keep our energy future in the dark until clean, wildlife-friendly energy is not only available to everyone, but is part of a system in which people share in decision-making and ownership of their energy.



Greer Ryan is the Center's renewable energy and research specialist. She provides scientific and policy support to the Population and Sustainability program.



Border wall by Russ McSpadden; jaguar by Cburnett CC-BY-SA

The Border Wall Hurts Us All

El Rio Sonora runs through my veins, and the Santa Cruz River sustains me. My family has lived in the Sonoran desert for six generations, seeing firsthand how the borderlands have been carved up, militarized and fenced in. Destructive border walls teeming with troops and armaments hurt communities and wildlife alike.

So I joined the “No Border Wall” team here at the Center gladly. Our strategy has been to fight against wall construction with litigation and action, and to organize communities to make their opposition known with “No Border Wall” resolutions.

The U.S. Border Patrol has doubled in size since 2001, and the impacts of related heavy traffic on our wilderness areas and wildlife habitat have not been studied — and won’t be anytime soon if the Trump administration keeps invoking the REAL ID waiver. The 2005 REAL ID Act allows the Department of Homeland Security to “waive all legal requirements to ensure expeditious construction of the barriers and roads” in the borderlands. It can build all kinds of new infrastructure without complying with laws that protect clean air, clean water, cultural resources and endangered wildlife.

In 2008 the border wall in Nogales, Ariz., created a debris dam that flooded the town on both sides of the border with 8 feet of water, causing two deaths and damaging 578 homes, 45 cars and numerous businesses. Damages came to \$8 million. That same year, months after construction of pedestrian fencing in Organ Pipe Cactus National Monument, debris buildup made waters rise to seven feet and flood the Lukeville port of entry.

The REAL ID waiver eliminates opportunities for community input and consultation with scientists, land managers, public health officials, and local jurisdictions that know the flooding patterns and infrastructure needs of their cities and towns. It also strips away the rights of people and wildlife just because they happen to live along the border.

Our “No Border Wall” team has been working with cities, counties and towns throughout the Southwest to pass formal resolutions against Trump’s wall. The example was set by the Tohono O’odham Nation in Jan. 2017. Since then, 34 jurisdictions and tribal entities have passed resolutions. Elected officials representing more than 10 million people and more than 140 organizations, ranging from ACLU to Southern Border Communities Coalition to the Wilderness Society, have endorsed this effort. And by the time you read this, no doubt resolutions and endorsements will have grown in number even more.

Valuable biodiversity only found in the borderlands will not be bulldozed without resistance from the Center.

Regina Romero is the Center's director of latino engagement. She helps build partnerships with Latino advocacy groups and elected officials to elevate the Center's environmental mission within the Latino community.





Ringed seal pup by Shawn Dahle/NOAA

Center Files 70th Lawsuit Against Trump Administration

This May the Center filed our 70th lawsuit opposing the Trump administration's negligence in fighting climate change, crusade against wildlife, endangerment of public health and destruction of public lands.

We have steadily brought lawsuits against the Trump administration since the first one was filed in March of last year, maintaining an average pace of one lawsuit every week since Trump was sworn in. Here are a few of our suits so far:

- April 30, 2018 – targeted Trump oil, gas leases threatening sage grouse in five states
- Feb. 14, 2018 – challenged Trump administration's refusal to release records on pesticide harms to endangered wildlife
- May 3, 2017 – challenged Trump reversal of Arctic, Atlantic drilling ban

(Note: By the time you read this, we will have filed several more suits.)

Victory for Ringed Seals

We celebrated this February when the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals upheld Endangered Species Act protections for ringed seals and Arctic ice seals threatened by climate change. The ruling reversed a 2016 lower-court decision that rejected protection for the seals, which give birth in snow caves built on top of sea ice. Global warming is causing caves to collapse and leaving pups vulnerable to death by freezing or predation.

The Center petitioned to protect these seals in 2008. Four years later they were put on the endangered species list — but the oil industry and the state of Alaska challenged that.

“This court decision underscores the recklessness of the Trump administration's proposal to open up the Arctic Ocean to oil drilling,” said the Center's Kristen Monsell. “Ringed seals have a shot at survival thanks to the Endangered Species Act, but only if we rapidly reduce the greenhouse pollution destroying their habitat.”

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JOIN THE OWLS CLUB

The Center for Biological Diversity is fighting in courts now for Africa's elephants. But it'll be a long battle, and we need your help. By giving a transformational gift and joining the Center's Owls Club, you'll ramp up our fight to protect African wildlife and stop the importation of animal body parts for trophies. This is the time to act with an accelerated bequest or a special distribution from your IRA or trust.

To speak with a Center representative about legacy and philanthropic giving, or to receive more information on joining the Owls Club, call (520) 345-5712 or email owlsclub@biologicaldiversity.org.



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Living Wildlife, Not Dead Trophies

From the Director

Kierán Suckling

One of the easiest ways to save endangered species: *Don't kill them.* Either for ego or for sport.

Over the past few years, we've seen a disturbing push to enable more trophy hunting, including for bears, wolves, elephants and giraffes.

Not surprisingly the Trump administration is a driving force. Take what happened in Alaska. In his first days as President, Trump rolled back Obama-era protections of wolves and bears in national refuges there, a step allowing wolf pups to be killed in their dens and bears to be gunned down at bait stations.

The Center sprang into action with a lawsuit. With that still playing out in the courts, Trump's interior secretary just paved the way for cruel and brutal hunting practices in other parts of Alaska. We're fighting that move too.

In the lower 48, Trump's decision to end Endangered Species Act protection for Yellowstone grizzlies allowed Wyoming to plan for trophy hunters to kill more than 20 of the great bears this fall. We have a pending court case challenging the delisting decision and will be organizing against the hunt.

The Trump administration also reversed an Obama ban on trophy imports of elephants — a step that allows for more thrill-killing in the midst of the poaching crisis that's pushing them toward extinction. And who's Trump

turning to for advice on how to treat elephants? Friends of the NRA and sport-hunting groups.

For a small minority of people, elephants, bears and wolves are trophies to be mounted and displayed as a testament to masculinity and dominance. But to the rest of us, these extraordinary creatures are worth far, far more alive than dead.

We've got our work cut out for us, but I know the law's on our side. In the end, our deep and abiding love for the wild will prevail.



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Girl with monarch butterfly:
Image by Brenda Hawkins

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Because life is good.