



At-Risk Species Conservation

Pacific Southwest Region

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Overview

The Pacific Southwest Region of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) is working with states, federal agencies and other partners to evaluate more than 50 fish, wildlife and plant species for potential listing under the Endangered Species Act (ESA). These evaluations are required due to litigation and petitions and are scheduled to occur over the next six years.

Our Goal

The Service is working private and public partners to protect working lands and our outdoor heritage by precluding the need to federally list as many at-risk species as possible through proactive conservation and the best available science.

Definition of At-Risk Species

Biologists commonly refer to species as “at-risk” if they face grave threats to their survival. For the purposes of this conservation strategy, the Service has defined “at-risk species” as those that are:

- Proposed for listing under the ESA by the Service;
- Candidates for listing under the ESA, which means they are in the queue to be listed; or
- Petitioned for listing under the ESA, which means a citizen or a group has requested the Service to add them to the list of protected species.

As the Service develops proactive conservation strategies with partners for at-risk species, species identified by states as conservation priorities will also be considered.

Our Partners in Conserving At-Risk Species

The Service is working closely with the three states within the Pacific Southwest Region — California, Nevada and Oregon — to conserve at-risk species. Other partners include, the Department of Defense, U.S. Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, Natural Resources



California spotted owl. Credit: Tim Demers

Conservation Service, private landowner groups and corporations.

Pacific Southwest Regional Strategy for Conserving At-Risk Species

Five action areas have been identified to accomplish the goal of conserving at-risk species:

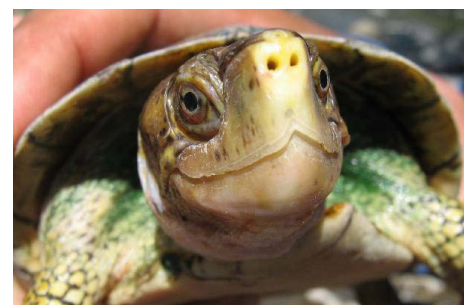
- Prioritize species in need of conservation;
- Promote voluntary conservation actions;
- Work with partnerships;
- Improve data collection and sharing; and
- Outreach

Working with Private Landowners

The Service recognizes the enormous contribution private landowners make to wildlife conservation. To more fully engage private landowners in managing their lands and waters to benefit these species, we have developed several voluntary tools that both protect private land interests and provide incentives.

These tools, which include conservation agreements and conservation banks or mitigation lands, can be used in combinations to cover both listed and at-risk species.

Early conservation — before a species requires listing under the ESA — maximizes management options for landowners, minimizes the costs of conservation and reduces potential land use conflicts by addressing the needs of the species before regulatory requirements for listed species come into play.



Western pond turtle. Credit: James Bettaso, USFWS

Conservation Successes

- A population of greater sage-grouse living along the California- Nevada border was not listed due to commitments from both states and five federal agencies to implement the Bi-State Action Plan.
- The San Fernando Valley spineflower, a rare plant found only in Southern California, avoided listing because of a Candidate Conservation Agreement with Assurances with the Newhall Land and Farming Company.
- Tahoe yellow-cress is a yellow flowered plant that lives on the sandy beaches around Lake Tahoe. As a result of conservation efforts by state and federal partners, the Service was able to remove this plant from the list of candidate species.
- Pacific Lamprey are eel-like fish that occur in western streams. The Service is working with partners to implement research and conservation actions to benefit lamprey across five states.



Greater sage-grouse. Credit: Jeannie Stafford, USFWS



Monarch butterfly. Credit: Joanna Gilkeson, USFWS

Next Steps

In order to do enough proactive conservation to the point that ESA protection is not needed for as many at-risk species as possible, the Service and its partners will:

- Target resources (partners, staff time and funding) to proactive conservation actions in the Pacific Southwest, such as developing conservation strategies and implementing habitat restoration projects.
- Conduct essential research and surveys to determine the habitat and life history requirements of priority at-risk species. Better information will enable the Service and its partners to maximize conservation impact.
- Improve the use of existing tools and programs, and explore new ways to provide regulatory flexibility to landowners for proactive conservation actions.



Foothill yellow-legged frog. Credit: Amy Lind, USDA



Pacific lamprey. Credit: Steve Martarano, USFWS

Contact

For more information about the Pacific Southwest Region's efforts to conserve at-risk species, please contact:

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San Fernando Valley spineflower. Credit: Nathan Hale and Anuja Parikh



Humboldt marten. Credit: Keith Slauson, USFWS