



Written by [Rebecca Terrell](#) on September 30, 2011

Obama Admin. Expands Endangered Species Act

Caving in to pressure from environmental groups, the Obama Administration's U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) is set to expand the Endangered Species Act (ESA) to include more than 800 new species of plants and animals. FWS signed two agreements in federal court, one with the Center for Biological Diversity (CBD), and another with WildEarth Guardians (WEG) in which the parties agreed to a timeline for review of the individual species' cases through 2018. The agreements end a number of lawsuits against FWS by various environmental organizations, including CBD and WEG, over species they claim FWS has ignored.



FWS is acting quickly to hold up its end of the bargain. On Monday it approved 374 new species for possible ESA inclusion, based on review of an ongoing 60-day public comment period. Some of the candidates for federal protection have obscure names like the Florida sandhill crane, the green floater mussel and the black rail bird. Others are more familiar, including the American wolverine, the Mexican gray wolf and the Pacific walrus.

If all the animals, sea life and plants included in the two agreements are approved, their numbers will significantly increase the more than 1,800 already protected under ESA. "This has been one of the highlights of my career," beamed CBD Executive Director [Kierán Suckling](#) (above), "and certainly one of the most important achievements of the Center for Biological Diversity."

WEG quoted author Joe Roman's [enthusiasm](#) over the agreements. "For too long, the Fish and Wildlife Service has been slow to list plant and animals in need of endangered species protection," criticized Roman. "Reducing the backlog of endangered species listings and the conflicts over how best to save them will benefit wildlife and people."

Not so, according to U.S. Representative [Mike Simpson](#). "Today the ESA is a tool for controlling land and water, not for preserving species," says the Idaho Republican. Though he acknowledges the importance of preserving wildlife and the environment, he claims ESA is outdated and ineffective. "Nearly 2,000 species have been listed as threatened or endangered, but only 21 have been recovered. Any other program with such a poor success rate would long since have been terminated," he points out.

Simpson explains ESA authorization expired nearly two decades ago, but the Appropriations Committee continues to fund the unconstitutional agency. As Chairman of the House Interior and Environment Appropriations Subcommittee, he stripped its funding from this year's Department of the Interior (DOI) appropriations bill. "At a time of record financial deficits and significantly reduced federal spending, we cannot afford to continue funding outdated and unauthorized government programs," states Simpson.

There are many examples to prove his accusation of ESA enabling government control. In August federal agents armed with automatic weapons made off with \$1 million in property from Gibson Guitar



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Corporation based on [rumors](#) the company imported endangered wood. Then there is the \$112 million [federal payout](#) to farmers restricting their land use to protect a wild bird DOI says exists in such numbers it would take up to 100 years for it to be threatened by extinction. And the controversial Arctic National Wildlife Refuge (ANWR), where drilling would significantly boost the economy and reduce both America's foreign oil dependence and skyrocketing fuel prices, is [off limits](#) due to pressure from radical environmentalists.



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