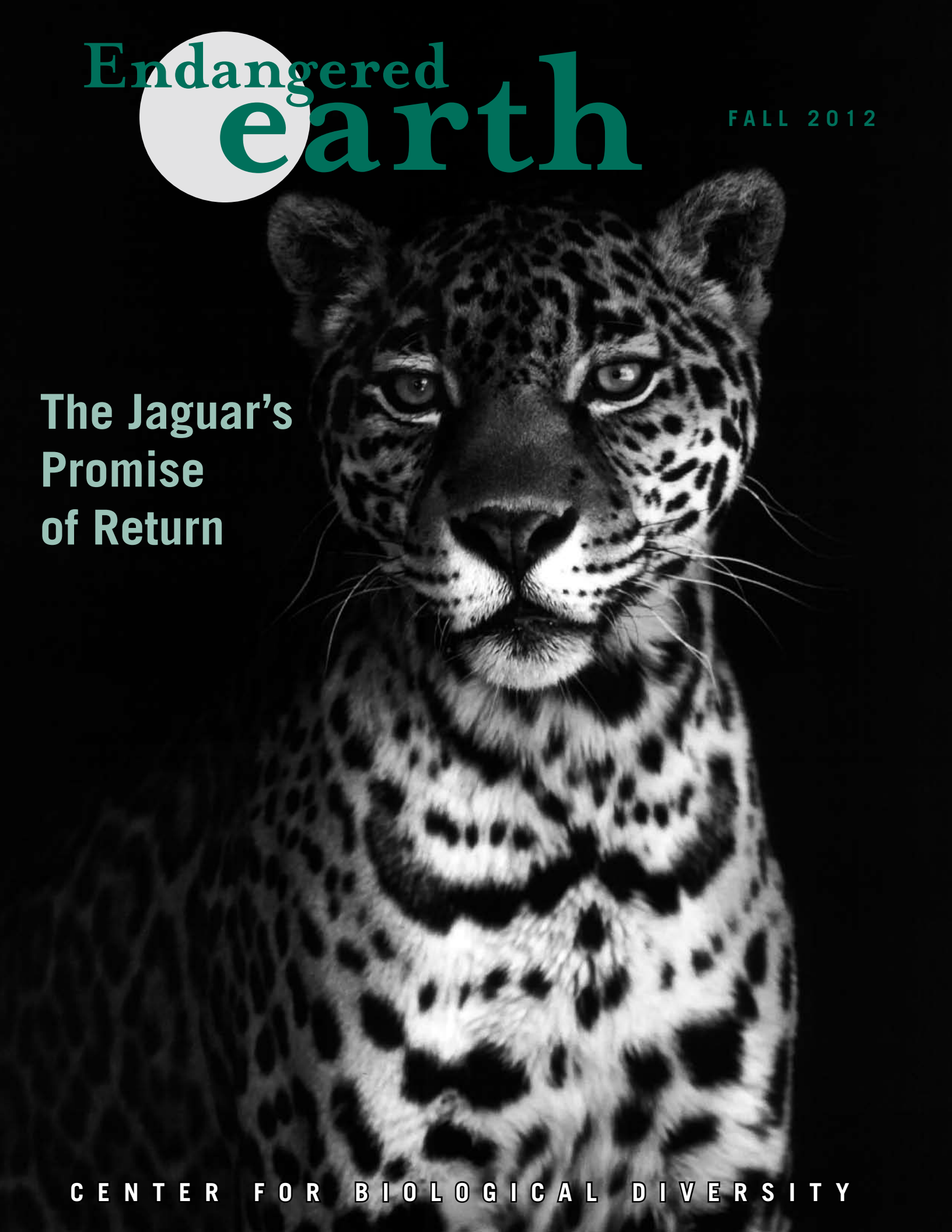
Endangered earth

FALL 2012



The Jaguar's Promise of Return

CENTER FOR BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

1 • A Sea of Debris

3 • Southern Biodiversity

4 • The Summer of Climate Change

5 • Battle for the Arctic

6 • Fracking in the Golden State

7 • The Jaguar's Promise of Return

8 • Howls of the Hunted

9 • On Chorus Frogs, Flying Squirrels and California Condors

ON THE WEB

Endangered Species Ringtones:

Hear the call of the wild? Or want to, whenever your cell phone rings? At the Center's **RareEarthtones.org**, you can download free ringtones of the songs, roars, chirps and howls of nearly 100 imperiled animals — and wallpaper, too. (Check out **LlamadasSalvajes.org** for ringtones with descriptions in Spanish.)

Find Species Where You Are:

Ever wonder which endangered species may be lurking nearby? Visit **biologicaldiversity.org/speciesfinder** to to download our free "Species Finder" app for the Android phone, and find out in the blink of an eye.

Cover photo by Robin Silver

by Emily Jeffers

A Sea of Debris

New Campaign Will Protect Sea Life and Shorelines From Plastic

The first decade of the 21st century saw the production of more plastic than the rest of history up to the year 2000. Every year now, billions of pounds of plastic trash end up in the world's oceans, where it hurts or kills almost 300 species of sea turtles, marine mammals, fish and seabirds. To protect these creatures from a deadly threat that has no place in their marine environment, the Center for Biological Diversity has just launched a campaign to get plastic out of our oceans.

Conveying the scope of the plastic pollution in our oceans is difficult; the problem is so large it defies ordinary terms of description. Imagine: In the Los Angeles area alone, 20 tons of plastic fragments — like grocery bags, straws, and soda bottles — are carried into the Pacific Ocean *every day.* That's 40,000 pounds daily. In the Great Pacific Garbage Patch, an area of the North Pacific where a spiral of currents results in the convergence of marine litter, plastic particles outweigh zooplankton six to one. Forty percent of the world's oceans are covered in similar swirling gyres of garbage.

Thousands of animals, from small finches to great white sharks, die grisly deaths from eating and getting caught in plastic. Sea turtles mistake floating plastic garbage — plastic bags, Styrofoam, monofilament lines — for food, leading to blockages in the gut, ulceration, internal perforation and death. Hawaiian monk seals and stellar sea lions suffer a growing rate of plastic entanglement injuries and deaths, while seabirds and fish ingest tens of thousands of tons of plastic annually.

Plastics have an array of unique properties; their versatility has revolutionized human life. Advances in information technology, electrical goods, breakthrough medical devices and transportation would not be possible without such inexpensive, lightweight, durable and corrosion-resistant materials. Tragically, many of plastic's

PHOTO COURTESY OF NOAA

Nearly 300 wildlife species, from corals and sea turtles to whales and birds are threatened by growing amounts of plastic pollution in our oceans.

PHOTO BY JAMES WATT COURTESY OF USFWS

Can the Hawaiian monk seal survive in an ocean full of plastic?

most touted attributes also make it a serious environmental hazard, especially once it's waterborne. And because most plastic produced is permanently discarded within one year of manufacture, the problem is growing rapidly. The persistence of plastic debris is illustrated by this case study: A piece of plastic swallowed by an albatross originated from a plane shot down 60 years beforehand, almost 6,000 miles away.

Plastic pollution has a direct and deadly effect on wildlife. Hundreds of thousands of seabirds and sea turtles, seals and other marine mammals are killed each year after ingesting plastic or getting entangled it. Even those animals that aren't killed by ingesting plastic can experience gastrointestinal blockages, internal infection, organ damage and reduced reproductive output. Toxic plasticizers and organic pollutants, such as PCBs and DDT, concentrate on plastic fragments at levels far greater than in the surrounding marine environment and have been shown to affect both the development and reproduction of a wide range of marine organisms. Plastics also degrade important foraging and nursery habitats, and are further imperiling endangered species such as the Pacific loggerhead sea turtle.

To reduce the presence of plastic contamination in our oceans, the Center has launched our Ocean Plastics Pollution campaign to tackle the legal barriers to reducing marine plastic pollution. This summer we petitioned the Environmental Protection Agency to begin regulating plastic as a pollutant under the Clean Water Act. As the nation's strongest law protecting water quality, the Act's toolkit can protect our marine wildlife from the effects of plastic pollution if we make sure it's implemented fully.

Getting the EPA and the states to set strict water-quality standards for plastic pollution will help promote early detection and prevention of plastic waste as well as the cleanup of our beaches and oceans. It will encourage states and towns to develop new, inventive ways to limit the plastic entering the waste stream, and incentivize creative solutions to a pervasive problem. Plastic pollution in the oceans poses a daunting problem, but by making it a priority to commit to clean waters and healthy ecosystems, we can reduce that waste. We can begin to turn the tide on the plastic debris that's cutting such a vast swath through vulnerable wildlife in our oceans. Check out BiologicalDiversity.org/Plastics for more.

Emily Jeffers is a staff attorney at the Center's Oceans program.

by Jaclyn Lopez

Southern Biodiversity

Center's New Florida Office Tackles Growing Extinction Crisis in the Southeast



There are few places in the world where you can dive with ancient sea turtles amidst centuries-old coral, explore freshwater caves where blind crayfish hunt their unsuspecting prey, and hike across hardwood hammocks still trodden by panthers and bears — all in the same day. Florida is as wellknown for these breathtaking experiences as it is for its golfing, fishing, urban sprawl and tourism. Home to more than 19 million people and counting, this top travel destination in the world also supports thousands of species of amphibians, reptiles, fish, birds, mammals, invertebrates and plants often hurt by development. Recognizing the rich biological diversity of the region — as well as the mounting threats against it — the Center recently opened a Southeast regional office, headquartered in St. Petersburg, Fla.

While the St. Pete address on our letterhead may be new, the Center's presence in the region already spans a decade. We authored a scientific petition that got elkhorn and staghorn coral listed under the Endangered Species Act in 2004 — the first species protected under the Act because of global warming. We worked with local groups to protect Florida panthers and manatees against habitat degradation and death by vehicle strikes. We've worked to protect all five local species of endangered sea turtles from fishing gear, oil dispersants and diminishing nesting habitat — throughout the Gulf of Mexico and southern Atlantic. In the aftermath of the BP Deepwater Horizon oil spill and cleanup, we filed more than a dozen lawsuits aimed at holding the corporation accountable and reforming the oil and gas industry; we continue to keep up the pressure. We also campaign to reduce southeastern species' exposure to pesticides and other poisons through toxics petitions and lawsuits that are national in scope.

The Southeast has unparalleled aquatic biodiversity, home to 62 percent of U.S. fish species, at least 91 percent of U.S. mussel species, 241 dragonflies and damselflies (48 percent of all those in North America), more than two-thirds of North America's species and subspecies of crayfishes, and more amphibians and aquatic reptiles than any other region. Unfortunately the area's staggering variety of freshwater life forms and their habitat make up one of the most imperiled ecosystems on the planet. Pollution, growth, logging, poor agricultural practices, dams, mining, invasive species and other factors have brought the looming threat of extinction to the South's rich biodiversity. To beat back extinction, the Center is launching a series of targeted species-saving campaigns.

In 2011 we petitioned wildlife management agencies to protect more than 400 critically imperiled freshwater species in the Southeast, including Black Warrior waterdogs (large, spotted salamanders in Alabama), western chicken turtles (turtles, not chickens) and several species of darters. We've begun to study the impacts of increasing sea-level rise on the Southeast's most vulnerable species and will soon mount an effort to reduce those impacts as well.

As a longtime Center staffer (I started at the Center back in 2002, working part-time in our membership department) and Florida native, I'm proud the Center has taken this momentous step by opening an office in St. Pete. I know it will make a life-or-death difference to wildlife and precious habitats stretching from the southernmost point of Key West to the marshlands of Louisiana and East Texas. To learn more, check out BiologicalDiversity.org/Southeast.

Jaclyn Lopez is a staff attorney at the Center in St. Petersburg, Fla. She coordinates campaigns in the Southeast and Caribbean, focusing her work on protecting imperiled species and ecosystems.

by Kassie Siegel

The Summer of Climate Change

Record Heat, Melting Sea Ice, Droughts Add Up to Unmistakable Sign of Climate Crisis

One-hundred and eight degrees Fahrenheit in St. Louis. 110 in Wichita Falls. 113 in Oklahoma City. As Americans sweated out one of the hottest summers in history, record-breaking daily temperatures roasted cities across the country.

The extreme heat claimed scores of human lives. Wildlife also suffered: As Illinois streams and rivers grew hotter, for example, fish died by the thousands. A record-breaking drought withered endless acres of crops, pushing the federal government to declare natural disasters in more than half the nation's counties. As rising temperatures alter high-elevation coniferous forests, the endangered Bicknell's thrush is hard-pressed to find breeding ground. Farther north, sea-ice melt means less habitat for polar bears, walruses and seals.

Scientists have long warned that global warming is loading the dice in favor of extreme weather. But the experts are now going even further, saying the link between destructive weather events and our greenhouse pollution is incontrovertible: Global warming is the only possible explanation for many specific weather catastrophes.

American popular opinion — which in the past has been, in the view of scientists and advocates, shockingly weighted toward denial — is also beginning to shift. Our cruel summer has given a terrific boost to the number of Americans who accept the scientific consensus on global warming: About two-thirds of respondents to a *Washington Post* poll in July want the United States to be a world leader in addressing the problem.

That grassroots concern is one reason more than 35 U.S. communities — including Los Angeles, Chicago and Miami — have now joined the Center for Biological Diversity's Clean Air Cities campaign calling on President Barack Obama and the Environmental Protection Agency to take urgent action on climate change.

The diverse communities supporting the campaign have at least two things in common: From Gary, Ind., to Tampa, Fla., these cities will be hit hard by climate change. And they want to fight back.

But they're simply not getting enough help at the federal level. Even as global warming symptoms multiply — from our hellish summer to the recently announced record melting of Arctic sea ice — most national politicians are either denying the problem or refusing to fix it.

Yet a powerful federal law already exists that could help. Through our Clean Air Cities campaign and litigation, the Center's urgently pressing the feds to use the Clean Air Act to reduce atmospheric carbon to 350 parts per million — the level needed to avoid catastrophic climate change.

Courts have repeatedly upheld use of the Act to reduce greenhouse gases, but the EPA is being far too timid in deploying this major U.S. law against global warming.

That lax approach to the climate crisis is exemplified by new fuel-mileage and emissions standards for cars and trucks, recently announced by the EPA and Department of Transportation. As Center Attorney Vera Pardee wrote in an op-ed in *The Huffington Post* that the new rules require only modest fuel-economy improvements and will still allow total emissions from cars and light trucks to increase over the long term. They even expand the existing loopholes for gas-guzzling SUVs.

Climate change is having impacts that will only get more far-ranging and devastating as time passes. Denial and debate have had their day; this is the moment to act.

Kassie Siegel is senior counsel and director of the Center's Climate Law Institute in San Francisco.

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by Rebecca Noblin

Battle for the Arctic

Obama Green-lights Arctic Drilling, Shell Falters; Polar Bears, Ice Seals and Rich Coral Beds Still Threatened

It's been a summer of firsts for the Arctic. On Aug. 26, the region's sea ice hit its lowest level in recorded history, melting more and faster than ever before — and reaching that low point weeks early. This is a major milestone for the planet — and one that, so far, hasn't gotten the public attention it deserves. Polar bears and walruses are struggling to survive in the changing climate; meanwhile, oil giant Shell is pushing forward with a new Arctic-drilling plan that will make life even more dangerous for Arctic animals. The Obama administration seems to be right on board.

Since 2007 the Center and allies have protected the Arctic Ocean from Shell's drilling ambitions. In 2012, though, the company turned up the heat, with a more aggressive, risky drilling schedule. Tragically the Obama government approved the bulk of Shell's permits, and the company was poised to launch a new era of industrial oil drilling in the Arctic. As part of its approach, Shell brought a series of lawsuits against the Center and other advocates for Arctic wildlife.

Then came a series of blunders and broken promises on Shell's part. First the company announced it couldn't comply with air-pollution rules and asked the EPA simply to waive Clean Air Act requirements for its drillship *Noble Discoverer.* Days later *Discoverer* slipped her moorings in Dutch Harbor, Alaska, drifting perilously close to shore. At the end of August, Shell's promised oil-spill containment vessel Arctic Challenger still couldn't pass U.S. Coast Guard inspections and remained in Bellingham, Wash.

Despite Shell's inability to meet legal requirements for drilling, on Aug. 30 the Obama administration green-lighted its exploration of the Chukchi Sea — home to amazing cold-water coral, as well as polar bears, ice seals and walruses. Fortunately the elements, and the oil giant's own blunders, will buy us some time. On Sept. 17, after announcing a temporary hold on drilling due to the quick and unanticipated return of sea ice, Shell cancelled plans to drill for oil in the Arctic Ocean until next year.

We've been pulling out all the stops, filing half a dozen lawsuits with allies against Arctic drilling; we've thrown our organizing weight into the battle. Our collective efforts have inspired more than a million people to speak out against Arctic drilling. In June, Center supporters in San Francisco greeted President Obama with a rally of "polar bears" asking him to save the Arctic from Shell's summer drilling.

True to our roots, we've kept the pressure on the president to protect Arctic species under the Endangered Species Act. The Center expects to see listings for ringed and bearded seals (we filed petitions for both), giving us more tools for fighting offshore drilling. Thanks to a Center lawsuit and settlement agreement, the National Marine Fisheries Service will reconsider its previous decision not to list the ribbon seal, conducting a fresh status review and publishing a new decision by the end of 2012. In 2017, thanks to our petition and a landmark settlement last year, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service will determine whether to list another Arctic animal, the Pacific walrus, under the Act. Once species are listed, the Center will work to ensure they get critical habitat and recovery plans as quickly as possible. We're also in the midst of fending off an industry effort to strike down polar bear critical habitat.

The deck may seem stacked against us, but the Arctic Ocean is too precious — and far too important to the planet's life-support system — to willingly sacrifice to Big Oil. We'll keep fighting as hard as we can to protect it.

PHOTO COURTESY OF USFWS

Rebecca Noblin is a staff attorney and the Alaska Director at the Center, based in Anchorage. She focuses on protecting marine species from oil and gas development and global warming.

by Patrick Sullivan

Fracking in the Golden State

Campaign Takes On Unregulated Fracking in California

Soaring above California's magnificent central coast, massive birds that were driven to the brink of extinction a short time ago and made a famous comeback — California condors — now face a new threat: A hydraulic fracturing boom that threatens to destroy habitat essential to the survival of some of the state's most endangered species.

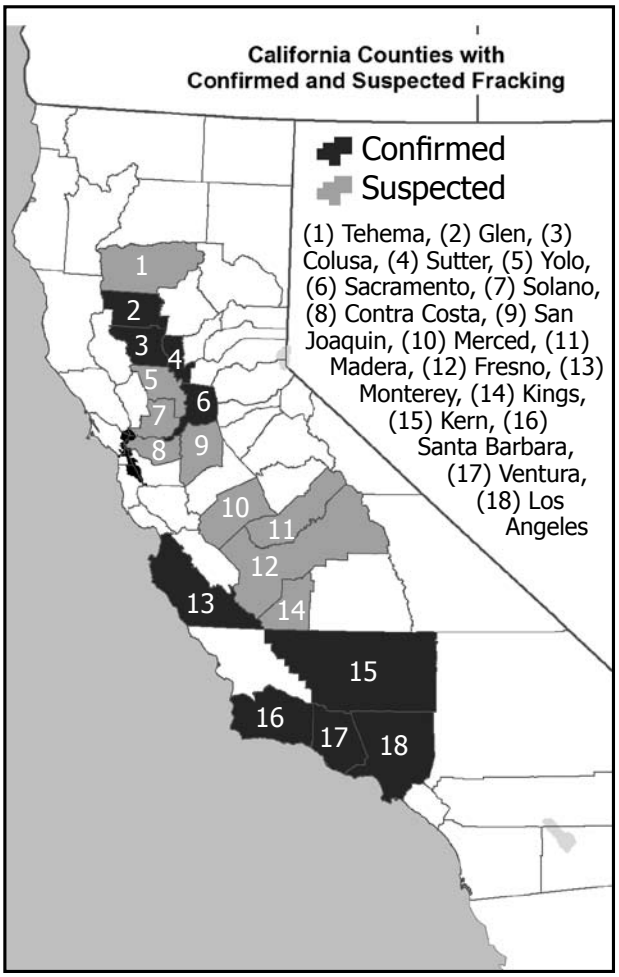
Fracking is a dangerous oil- and gas-drilling technique that involves blasting millions of gallons of water, mixed with sand and toxic chemicals, deep into the earth to break up rock formations and release fossil fuel. The resulting air and water pollution also threaten the climate and human health; but as of yet, fracking has gone both unregulated and unmonitored in California.

That's why the Center for Biological Diversity is fighting for a fracking ban in the Golden State.

Recent advances in fracking technologies have oil companies salivating over the Monterey Shale, a huge geological formation underlying several counties that holds an estimated 14 billion barrels of shale oil. Fracking has now been documented in Monterey, Ventura and seven other California counties.

Oil companies are even fracking on public land that's supposed to be carefully managed and protected by the federal government; in August the Center launched a lawsuit challenging the Bureau of Land Management for failing to properly evaluate fracking's threat to endangered species on California public land.

From the BLM to the state's Department of Conservation, many government officials are turning a blind eye toward the risks fracking poses to California. That's disturbing, because fracking fluid often contains chemicals that are known to cause cancer and disrupt hormonal and reproductive development.



Throughout the country, evidence is mounting that these chemicals are seeping into aquifers and drinking water.

Studies and reports from states where fracking is already common have also found links between the controversial process and harm to wildlife. In Pennsylvania, fish kills have been associated with contamination of streams, creeks and wetlands by fracking fluid. Birds and other wildlife have been poisoned by chemical-laced water in wastewater ponds and tanks used to dispose of fracking fluids.

The nine California counties with documented fracking are home to more than 100 rare and endangered species. Of these, the San Joaquin kit fox may face the most immediate danger from fracking, which requires intense industrial development and endless truck traffic that destroys its habitat and increases the risk of roadkill. But California's fracking boom also poses big risks to condors, blunt-nosed leopard lizards and many other species.

Of course, fracking also worsens climate change. In part that's because fracking often releases large amounts of methane, a highly potent greenhouse gas. But the technology also allows access to huge fossil fuel deposits once beyond the reach of drilling. Solving the climate crisis requires leaving these fossil fuels in the ground and transitioning to clean, renewable energy forms.

The fight to protect California from fracking will be tough: Oil interests have already shot down several attempts by state legislators to regulate the practice. But the battle has to be won — for the sake of our public health, our wildlife and our climate.

Patrick Sullivan is a media specialist for the Center's Climate Law Institute in San Francisco.

by Michael Robinson

The Jaguar's Promise of Return

More than 838,000 Acres of Critical Habitat Protected in Southern Arizona and New Mexico

The canyons and escarpments of the Southwest, where the famed jaguar "Macho B" once stalked deer, coatis and javelinas, will be designated as critical habitat for jaguars, according to a U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service proposal in August.

The proposal is the latest result in a decades-long campaign by the Center for Biological Diversity and our allies to save and protect North America's largest native cats. It will make a significant difference on the ground.

The move will protect 838,232 acres of jaguar habitat in southern Arizona and New Mexico, including portions of the Tumacacori, Atascosa, Pajarito and Baboquivari mountains as well as other "sky island" mountain ranges in the region where jaguars have been confirmed in recent decades.

The Santa Rita Mountains south of Tucson, where federal predator exterminators killed their first jaguar in 1918, make up the largest swath of that habitat: 343,033 acres. Last year a Border Patrol helicopter pilot spotted (and chased) a jaguar in the Santa Ritas. In its proposal, the Fish and Wildlife Service noted that critical habitat designation would require a reevaluation of the planned 4,400-acre Rosemont open-pit mine in the Santa Ritas, a disastrous project the Center continues to battle.

Other areas that should be acknowledged as critical habitat were omitted, including the red-rock-dotted Chiricahua Mountains, near where a jaguar was killed in 1986, and most troublingly the remote Gila headwaters/Mogollon Rim country — which abounds with prey and has been identified as good jaguar habitat by five separate studies.

Paleontological remains show that jaguars evolved in North America before colonizing Central and South America. In the 1700s and 1800s the great cats were reported across much of the southern United States, from the Carolinas to California. But clearing of forests, draining of wetlands, hide-hunting and persecution to protect livestock eliminated the stealthy and powerful animals from the United States. Any jaguars in the Southwest today likely walked here from Mexico.

It was Center litigation that led to the jaguar's placement on the endangered species list in the United States in 1997. (The species was already listed as endangered internationally; the Fish and Wildlife Service admitted as early as 1979 that jaguars should be listed domestically, but the agency failed to act.) After the 1997 listing, our work with scientists, the interagency Jaguar Conservation Team and three successive (and successful) lawsuits led Fish and Wildlife to reluctantly begin developing a jaguar recovery plan and propose protecting habitat.

The proposal came too late for Macho B, a jaguar who died in 2009 in a botched snaring operation by the Arizona Game and Fish Department. But it will help future generations of jaguars gain a vital toehold in the United States near the border with Mexico, when they first wander in. The Center will continue advocating for the jaguars' recovery — including in the vast precincts of the Gila, where far more jaguars could live and flourish.

Learn more about America's largest cat at BiologicalDiversity.org/Jaguar

PHOTO BY PASCAL BLACHIER / WIKIMEDIA COMMONA

Based in New Mexico, Michael Robinson is a conservation advocate at the Center.

Howls of the Hunted

America's Wild Wolves Face Long Road to Recovery

Once virtually exterminated in the lower 48 states, wolves have benefitted tremendously from protection under the Endangered Species Act, making substantial recoveries in the western Great Lakes and northern Rockies. They've also begun to come back on the West Coast and in the Southwest.

These areas represent just a small fragment of the wolves' ancestral home, yet federal officials are already eager to call wolves recovered and open the door to large-scale wolf killing again. But it's crystal-clear to scientists and advocates that much remains to be done to restore these majestic animals to the American landscape, and the Center for Biological Diversity is fighting on every front to keep wolves protected.

Fortunately, in early October we got some promising news: The California Fish and Wildlife Commission unanimously agreed to make gray wolves in the state a candidate for protection under the California Endangered Species Act. The decision was in response to a petition filed by the Center and allies just a few weeks after a wolf, for the first time in more than 80 years, wandered into California late last year. Protecting wolves in California is a crucial step toward ensuring sustainable wolf populations along the West Coast.

In August, the Interior Department stripped Endangered Species Act protections away from wolves in Wyoming — the last federally protected packs in the Rockies. That decision turned wolf management over to the state, which plans to make 80 percent of its area a kill zone, where wolves can be shot and trapped at will — effectively cutting off any chance of wolves returning to the southern Rockies of Colorado and Utah. The very day the rule was issued, we announced plans to challenge the decision.

Montana and Idaho quickly ramped up wolf killing after Congress stripped their wolves of protections in 2011; we're trying to stop that tragedy from being replicated in Wyoming.

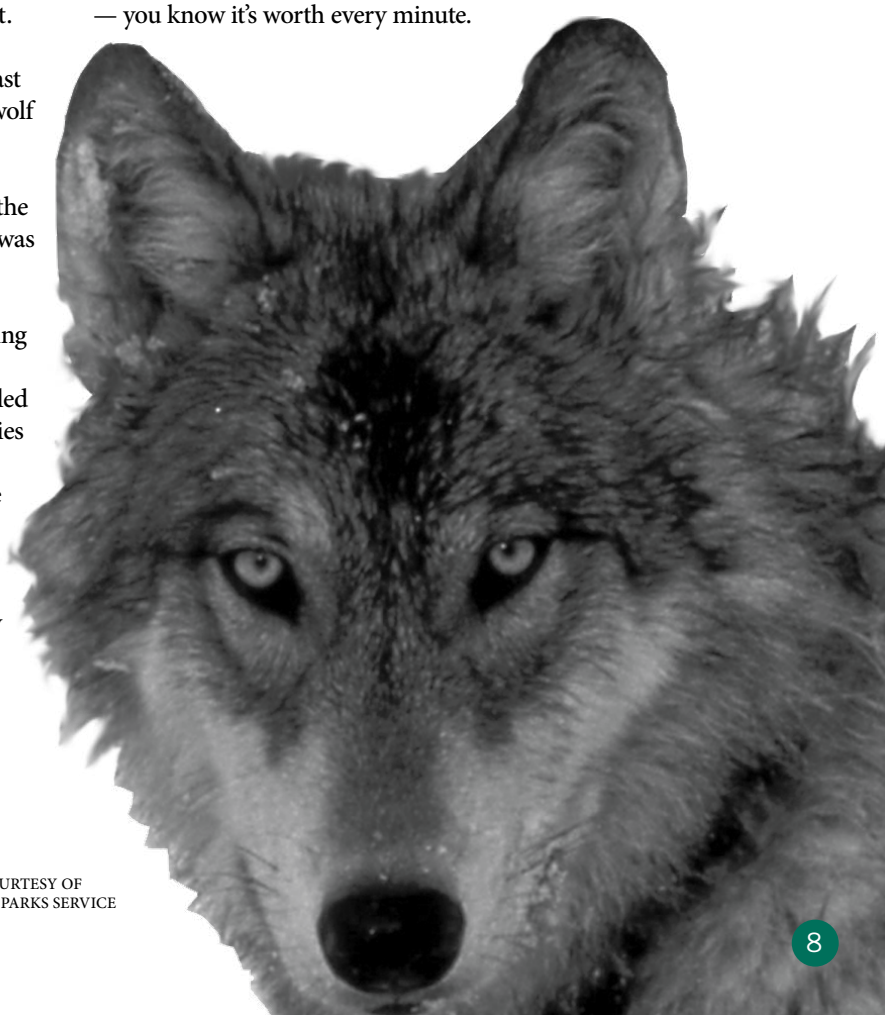
Also this summer, along with many partner groups, we called on the Obama administration to keep federal Endangered Species Act protections for wolves in western Oregon and Washington, where fledgling packs are just beginning to raise families. In the eastern part of the two states federal protections have already been removed, and we've been battling state officials. Last year we won an injunction prohibiting Oregon from killing wolves, which is still in place now; late this August we won a temporary reprieve for four wolves from Washington's Wedge pack, put on a kill list after reports of livestock depredations. Sadly, despite our work and a public outcry, that kill order later went back into effect.

We're also fighting for the Southwest's Mexican gray wolves. This summer the feds announced plans to kill the alpha female of the Fox Mountain pack in New Mexico. Responding to swift, vocal opposition from the Center and others, federal officials decided to trap the alpha female instead and let her live in captivity. We'd much rather see her thriving in the wild, but were glad to see her life saved in the nick of time.

In Minnesota we filed a lawsuit to stop the state from enacting its first-ever wolf hunt. Our litigation was unsuccessful and the state is selling 6,000 licenses to kill 400 wolves starting Nov. 3. We are currently seeking a review of the decision through the Minnesota Supreme Court.

Unfortunately, wolves still suffer from many of the same prejudices and fears that drove them to the brink of extinction in the first place. They're coming back in fits and starts, with our help, but it's a long, hard fight. Still: If you've ever heard a wolf call out in the wild — a thrilling, unmistakable howl that's impossible to forget — you know it's worth every minute.

Noah Greenwald is the Center's Endangered Species program director in Portland, Ore.



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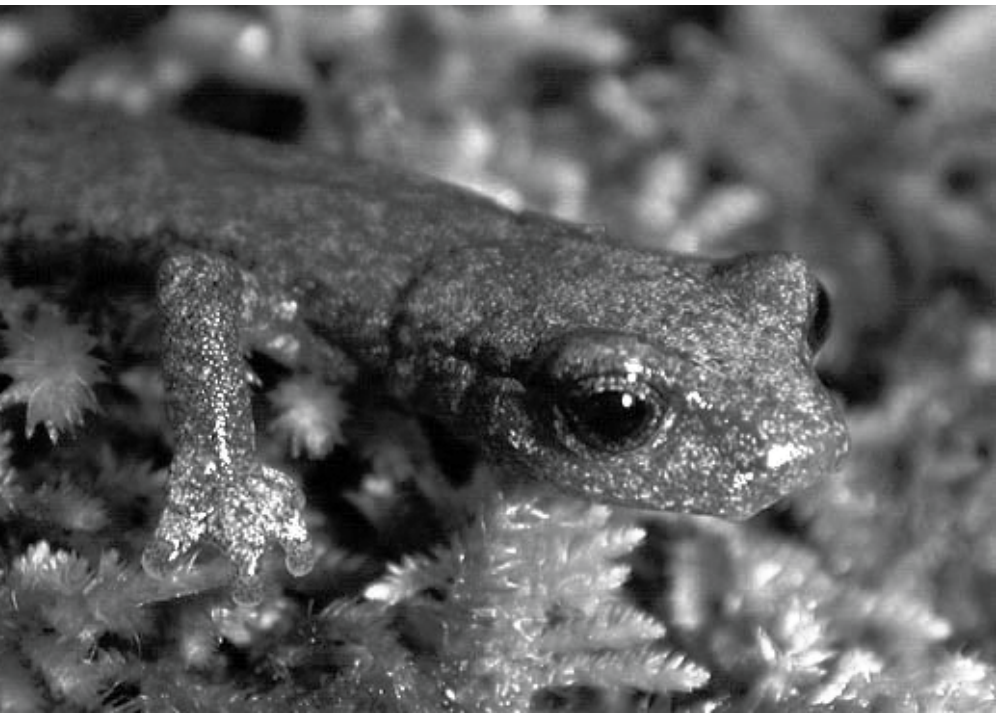

PHOTO COURTESY OF USFWS

This summer the Center made the biggest-ever move to protect amphibians and reptiles in the United States, including the Shasta salamander pictured above.

Protection sought for 53 turtles, snakes, lizards and salamanders

The Center for Biological Diversity in July petitioned for Endangered Species Act protections for 53 turtles, frogs, snakes, lizards and salamanders. The petition, the largest of its kind, is the latest in our commitment to protect often-overlooked-but-critically important amphibians and reptiles.

Filed with renowned scientists E.O. Wilson and Thomas Lovejoy, our petition targets species in 45 states.

According to the 2011 Red List, 20 percent of the world's reptiles and 30 percent of amphibians are threatened by extinction. Toxins, global warming, nonnative predators, overcollection, habitat destruction and disease are key factors leading to their demise. Many species are slipping away faster than scientists can study them.

Stemming the herpetofauna extinction crisis means attacking it on every front. The Center's conservation efforts are almost as diverse as the animals we're working to protect, from tackling toxic pesticides with the EPA and securing the prohibition of 66 toxic substances to highlighting the devastating effects of fish-stocking and cattle-grazing on reptiles.

Among the species in our latest petition are the alligator snapping turtle in the Southeast, the wood turtle in the Northeast, Florida's Key ringneck snake, the Illinois chorus frog, the Pacific Northwest's Cascade torrent salamander and California's western spadefoot toad.

To help save our amphibians and reptiles visit us at BiologicalDiversity.org/herps

Landmark agreement yields life-saving protections

Our historic 2011 agreement with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service—promising protection decisions under the Endangered Species Act for 757 species by 2016—continues to pay dividends. So far, 442 species have received initial positive decisions and will now receive full status reviews placing them nearer full protection.

This year alone we've seen positive decisions on dozens of species: the San Bernardino flying squirrel, the Oregon spotted frog, Hawaii's scarlet honeycreeper, the Northeast's Bicknell's thrush, two Washington plants, four Texas salamanders, two Eastern mussels, six West Texas invertebrates and two Southwest springsnails. And just since summer we've seen full protection under the ESA finalized for the Chupadera springsnail, eight freshwater mussels in the Southeast and the coqui llanero frog in Puerto Rico.

In the coming years, we hope to see dozens more species set on the path to protection, including the Pacific walrus, the American wolverine, Rio Grande cutthroat trout, Montana grayling, New England cottontail rabbit, and greater sage grouse.

The agreement is the result of years of work by the Center and its supporters to secure protection for some of America's most imperiled but least protected plants and animals. Some of these species have waited decades to get the protection they need to survive, recover and ultimately thrive.

We'll keep you updated as this momentous agreement to protect endangered species unfolds.

For more information check out BiologicalDiversity.org/757

Getting the lead out of Arizona's rare condors

North America's largest bird, the California condor, is also one of its most endangered. Nearly extinct by the mid-1980s, a captive breeding program increased the wild population from 22 to 140 in California and northern Arizona by 2007. Unfortunately around the Grand Canyon, lead poisoning is a leading cause of death for condors. They ingest it when they scavenge on carcasses that have been shot by hunters using lead ammunition.

In September the Center for Biological Diversity sued the U.S. Forest Service for failing to protect condors from lead poisoning.

The recovery of these incredible birds remains fragile. Since reintroduction, more than 40 percent of all released condors have died or been returned to captivity. In 2006, 95 percent of all Arizona condors had lead exposure, and 70 percent of the Arizona population has to be treated. These deaths are completely preventable since nonlead alternatives are now readily available and should be used. That's why we sued the Forest Service and why we continue to press the Environmental Protection Agency to finally take steps to regulate lead hunting ammunition.

It's simple: get toxic lead ammunition out of the wild and condors, eagles, swans and scores of other wildlife will have a far fairer chance at surviving and thriving.

Find out more and learn about ways you can help Arizona's condor population at GetTheLeadOut.org

PHOTO BY ZAKVTA / FLICKR

Your support saves species great and small.

This year endangered species and the laws that protect them came under attack like never before. But under that onslaught the Center for Biological Diversity helped secure positive protection decisions for hundreds of species under the Endangered Species Act.

Next year the Act turns 40, and we'll celebrate that milestone by continuing our strong, record-setting defense of this vital law and the wildlife it's saving from extinction. For 40 years the Act has protected more than a quarter-billion acres of land and water, kept close to 1,500 species from going extinct and put the United States at the forefront of the fight against the global extinction crisis.

Without it the Center wouldn't have been able to win 200 million acres of federal wildlife reserves; end old-growth logging on millions of acres of public land; or stop industrial fishing from killing sea turtles and monk seals. We wouldn't have been able to avert extinction for the Alaskan sea otter, Sierra Nevada bighorn sheep, Atlantic salmon or Miami blue butterfly.

But this isn't the time to sit back and cheerlead. That's not our style, and that's not why you support us. Climate change, overpopulation and shortsighted decision-making continue to threaten species with extinction, while profiteers and industry politicians scramble to weaken the Act. We're not only fighting to protect individual animals and plants, after all; we're fighting for the principle of protection itself — and therefore for the future of this planet's biological life-support systems.

With your help the Center has grown into a legal and scientific powerhouse, now backed by more than 450,000 members and online activists. Together we'll aggressively defend the Endangered Species Act and other crucial safety nets. Help us celebrate 40 years of success under the Act: Stay with us in the fight by mailing a gift to the Center in the enclosed envelope; give online at Donate.BiologicalDiversity.org; or call us toll-free at (866) 357-3349. Your donation before the end of the year will make a difference in how many species and acres of habitat we can save. Thank you. •

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CENTER for BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY
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Scan the QR barcode with your smart phone to read breaking news on Center campaigns.

The Rewards of Perseverance

From the Director

Kierán Suckling

One of the thrills of living and hiking in the Southwest is knowing that somewhere out there jaguars are roaming the grasslands and mountains, trying to recolonize their ancient homelands.

Like so many large predators, jaguars once wandered over vast swaths of the United States. They were ruthlessly pursued and exterminated by federal killing programs in the late 1800s and early 1900s. The animals that are sighted — rarely — in the United States today are almost certainly coming up from Mexico. But they are coming.

Last year a jaguar was spotted in the Santa Rita Mountains, just south of Tucson. Another jaguar, Macho B, roamed the region for more than a decade before it died in a botched snaring operation by Arizona Game and Fish.

The Center for Biological Diversity has been fighting to save America's jaguars for nearly 20 years, first to get them protected under the Endangered Species Act and then to safeguard viable habitat for them. That work took a big step forward in August when the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service — following a 2009 court order secured by the Center — proposed to protect 838,232 acres of critical jaguar habitat in southern Arizona and New Mexico.

This protected area, larger than Rhode Island, will certainly help return jaguars to their rightful place in the American landscape.

The decision for jaguars is a powerful reminder of the importance of long, sustained campaigns that tirelessly keep the pressure on. It isn't enough to declare victory the first chance you get and then move along; saving plants and animals can be a protracted process that takes years or decades to bring to fruition. Jaguars were listed as an endangered species in 1997 and are just now on the verge of getting their habitat protected.

The Center will always be a rapid-response operation that's willing to tackle new and emerging threats. But we also know that part of our strength is having the stamina to see these campaigns through, no matter how long it takes.

Thanks for keeping the faith.

Endangered earth is the membership newsletter of the Center for Biological Diversity. With the support of more than 450,000 members and online activists, the Center works through science, law and creative media to secure a future for all species, great or small, hovering on the brink of extinction. *Endangered Earth* is published three times yearly in January, July and October and printed on 100% post-consumer recycled paper with solvent-free vegetable-based inks.

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