



Endangered Species Act Reform

SCI Supports Modernizing the Endangered Species Act

Safari Club International requests that Congress work to modernize the Endangered Species Act (ESA) to focus on species recovery and address the Act's numerous failures.

Current Problems with Endangered Species Act

Species Recovery: The primary goal of the ESA has been to recover species at risk of extinction. Unfortunately the ESA has failed in its species recovery efforts. Currently there are over 2000 species listed as “threatened” or “endangered” while only 20 recovered species have been removed from these lists since the ESA was enacted.

Management by Litigation: Presently, the vast majority of the scientific decisions for species conservation are inappropriately being made by the courts and not by the wildlife professionals within the federal agencies tasked to administer the ESA. Litigation is dictating the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) and National Marine Fisheries Service's (NMFS) priorities for dealing with species in jeopardy and is depleting the agencies' personnel and financial resources.

Economic Impact: The ESA detrimentally impacts jobs and the economy, particularly in rural communities. There are numerous examples of sustainable human development projects with carefully planned wildlife mitigation measures being blocked and private property rights being infringed by the ESA.

Enhancement Permits: The FWS imposes a burdensome requirement that trade in a species “enhances the survival of that species” before it will issue import permits for threatened and endangered species even if such import would be allowed under the Convention on Trade in Endangered Species. The additional enhancement finding requirement by FWS is a significant burden to international hunting, which has been shown to be the most effective means of funding sustainable wildlife conservation in developing countries.

Climate Change: Radical anti-hunting and protectionist organizations have spent millions of dollars in an effort to manipulate the mandates of the ESA to list animals for the express purpose of regulating greenhouse gases. The ESA is not the correct vehicle for regulating greenhouse gas emissions. These efforts distort the purpose of the ESA and stretch the administrative capacities and scientific expertise of the FWS and NMFS far beyond their limits.

Since the late 1980s, there have been over one hundred Congressional hearings on the ESA, and dozens of public “listening sessions” in all geographic regions of the country. Secretary Salazar has called for the ESA to be reformed, saying the Act is “unmanageable and unproductive.” **It is time to update and modernize the Endangered Species Act so that we can do a better job in recovering species.**