



## FACTSHEET

# The Recovering America's Wildlife Act

## WHY WILDLIFE NEED US TO TAKE ACTION

Today, one third of all wildlife species in the United States are at increased risk of extinction. All types of wildlife across the country are declining, in many cases dramatically.

America needs a 21<sup>st</sup> century model of conservation funding that will proactively—and cost-effectively—address these widespread drops in our wildlife populations. We need to fund state-led actions to conserve these species of wildlife and their habitats so we can pass on America's natural heritage to future generations.

### CONTACT

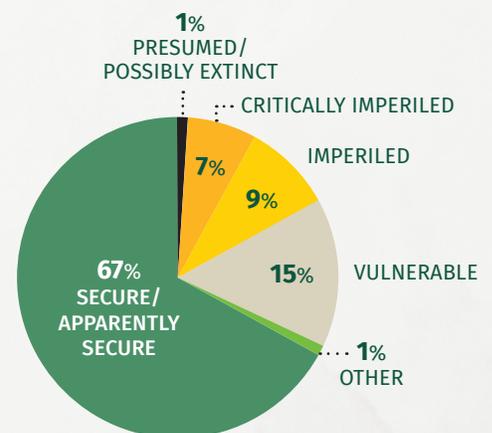
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### Status of U.S. Plant and Animal Species

Number of Species Assessed: 20,439



*Precious Heritage: The Status of Biodiversity in the United States. 2000*



The following examples highlight America's wildlife crisis and the need to take action.

Information sources can be found at: [nwf.org/RecoveringAmericasWildlife](http://nwf.org/RecoveringAmericasWildlife).

## Birds

One third of bird species in North America are in need of urgent conservation action.

- » The **eastern meadowlark** has suffered a 71 percent decline in North America over the last 40 years.
- » **Chimney swift** populations declined in the United States by 53 percent from 1966 to 2007.
- » The number of **wood thrush** that breed in the United States has decreased more than 60 percent over the last 50 years due to loss of breeding habitat in North America.
- » The **Bachman's sparrow** is now absent over most of its northern range and uncommon in most of the south.
- » The **cerulean warbler** declined 75 percent between 1996 and 2012.
- » The **golden-winged warbler** has declined 64 percent over the last 40 years.

## Fish

More than 40 percent of freshwater fish species are at risk in North America.

- » The **sicklefin chub** only inhabits about 54 percent of its former range.
- » Of 28 native species and subspecies of **U.S. trout**, three are extinct and 13 of the other 25 species occupy less than a quarter of their historic habitat

» The **sicklefin redhorse** currently inhabits only 41 percent of its historical range..

- » The **desert pupfish** lost 95 percent of its habitat in the past century. The fish's present historical range represents only a small, peripheral, and fragmented portion of the species' former distribution within the lower Colorado and Gila River systems.
- » The **shovel-nosed sturgeon** has been extirpated from five states, is rare to imperiled in four states, stable in 10 states and has undetermined status in five states.
- » The **turquoise shiner's** historical range included 12 Tennessee River tributaries, but current distribution includes only five of those, and it is only stable in three.

## Amphibians

Approximately 42 percent of U.S. amphibian species (frogs, toads, salamanders) are threatened or declining.

- » The Rocky Mountain populations of the **boreal toad** in Colorado and Wyoming have declined dramatically.
- » The **Peaks of Otter salamander**, which is found only in a 12-mile stretch of Virginia's Blue Ridge Mountains, has one of the most restricted ranges of any salamander in the U.S.
- » **Northern leopard frogs** have disappeared from or become rare across much of their western range, and have nearly disappeared from the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem.
- » The **striped newt** has suffered a long term decline of 30-90 percent. The Florida Panhandle population in the Apalachicola National Forest has nearly been extirpated.
- » The **frosted flatwoods salamander** has declined by more than 30 percent in recent years, due to habitat destruction and degradation.



## Reptiles

One third of U.S. turtle species are threatened or vulnerable and five percent of other reptiles are threatened or vulnerable.

- » The **spot-tailed earless lizard** has declined 10-30 percent since the early 1970's.
- » The **eastern box turtle** has experienced a widespread, persistent and ongoing gradual decline of over 30 percent over the last 50 years.
- » The **gopher tortoise** has lost most of its historic habitat across the Southeast. The longleaf pine community, the ecosystem primarily inhabited by this species, has been reduced to less than 5 percent of its historical range.

## Butterflies and Bees

Of the roughly eight hundred butterfly species in the United States, 17 percent are at risk of extinction. More than one-quarter of North American bumblebee species are facing some degree of extinction risk.

- » One of the best known insect conservation efforts is for the **monarch butterfly**. In recent years, monarchs have decreased by 90 percent in North America since peak populations in the mid-90s.
- » Over half of known populations of the **Hermes copper butterfly** are gone and only 30 percent are known to still exist. Overall, the species has declined 50-80 percent over the long term.
- » The **Morrison bumblebee** has declined in relative abundance by 82 percent over the past ten years.
- » The **regal fritillary butterfly**, which historically inhabited 32 states, has disappeared from 14 states and is classified as imperiled or vulnerable in 15 others. This butterfly has declined by 99.9 percent based on habitat loss and range contraction.

## Mammals

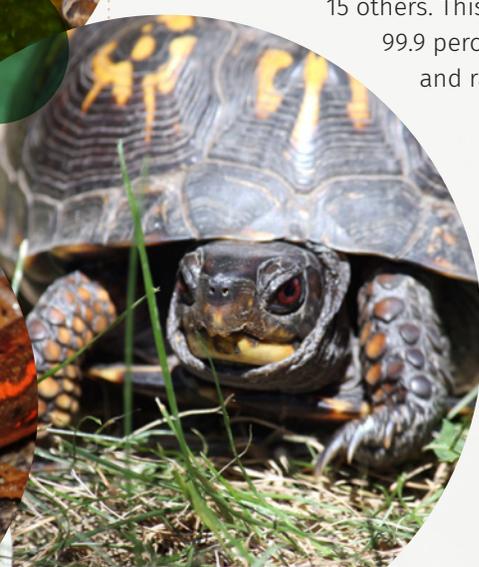
Nine percent of U.S. mammals are threatened or vulnerable.

- » Very specialized species like the **American pika** are particularly sensitive to small changes in their environments. When temperatures exceed approximately 70 degrees Fahrenheit, American pikas that are adapted to high alpine environments can die within hours if they cannot escape the heat.
- » The **little brown bat** has experienced dramatic declines due to White-nosed Syndrome. This fungal disease could lead to its virtual extirpation from eastern North America.
- » The **Sherman's fox squirrel**, a subspecies found in Georgia and Florida, has had the habitat area it occupies decline by up to 85 percent.
- » The **swift fox** only occupies 40 percent of its former range.

## Freshwater Mussels

Overall, 70 percent of freshwater mussels in North America are extinct or imperiled.

- » Excluding a few populations, the **pyramid pigtoe** has experienced great reductions in distribution and abundance. Overall the species has declined 10-30 percent.
- » The **Louisiana pearlshell** has declined by 80 percent over the last 25 to 50 years.
- » The **Alabama heelsplitter** is a regional endemic that has shown 30-50 percent decline.
- » The **round hickorynut** mussel has been extirpated from most of its historic range.



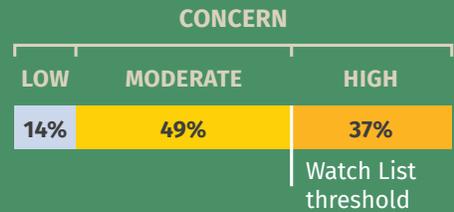
## THE SOLUTION

# Dedicated Wildlife Funding

Each state wildlife agency is responsible for developing a State Wildlife Action Plan, which identifies imperiled or declining species in the state and lists actions that would assist with their protection and recovery. Currently, these plans have identified approximately 12,000 species in need of conservation efforts.

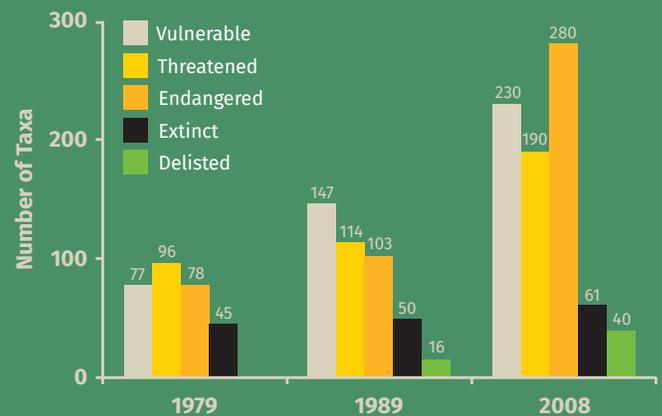
Implementing 75 percent of actions identified in the plans will cost an estimated \$1.3 billion in annual funding. This money will be an investment into the rapidly growing outdoor economy and a safety measure to prevent species from declining to where there is a need for listing under the Endangered Species Act, a far more expensive solution in the long term.

**1/3** of all North American Bird Species need Urgent Conservation Action



432 species on the Watch List are most at risk of extinction without significant action

*State of North America's Birds Report 2016*



**Numbers of imperiled North American freshwater and diadromous fish taxa in each status category.**

*American Fisheries Society's Endangered Species Committee 2008.*

## References

For a complete list of references, please go online to: [nwf.org/RecoveringAmericasWildlife](http://nwf.org/RecoveringAmericasWildlife)

## Photo Credits

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**PAGE 3:** *Eastern Box Turtle* - Flickr - Jamie1002; *Regal Fritillary Butterfly* - Flickr - USFWS - Laura Hubers; *Pika* - Tom & Pat Leeson