



EVERGLADES COALITION

Everglades Coalition Resolution Recommending the Strongest Endangered Species Act Regulations to Secure a Future for Endangered and Threatened Wildlife and Plants in the Greater Everglades Ecosystem

WHEREAS, the health and integrity of the Greater Everglades Ecosystem depends on the health and wellbeing of the native species of plants and animals who live there;

WHEREAS, the Greater Everglades Ecosystem is home to many endangered and threatened species including the Aboriginal prickly-apple, American crocodile, Audubon's crested caracara, Avon Park harebells, Bachman's warbler, Bartram's scrub-hairstreak butterfly, beach jacquemontia, beautiful pawpaw, Big Pine partridge pea, Blodgett's silverbush, blue-tailed mole skink, Britton's beargrass, Cape Sable seaside sparrow, Cape Sable thoroughwort, Carter's mustard, Carter's small-flowered flax, crenulate lead-plant, deltoid spurge, Eastern black rail, Everglades bully, Everglade snail kite, Florida bonamia, Florida bonneted bat, Florida brickell-bush, Florida bristle fern, Florida grasshopper sparrow, Florida leafwing butterfly, Florida panther, Florida pineland crabgrass, Florida perforate cladonia, Florida prairie-clover, Florida scrub-jay, Florida semaphore cactus, Florida ziziphus, four-petal pawpaw, fragrant prickly-apple, Garber's spurge, Garrett's mint, green sea turtle, gulf sturgeon, hawksbill sea turtle, highlands scrub hypericum, Kemp's ridley sea turtle, Key tree cactus, Lakela's mint, leatherback sea turtle, Lewton's polygala, loggerhead sea turtle, Miami blue butterfly, Miami tiger beetle, Okeechobee gourd, papery whitlow-wort, pigeon wings, pineland sandmat, piping plover, pygmy fringe-tree, red knot, red-cockaded woodpecker, sand flax, sandlace, sand skink, Schaus swallowtail butterfly, scrub blazingstar, scrub buckwheat, scrub mint, scrub plum, short-leaved rosemary, small's milkpea, snakeroot, southeastern beach mouse, tiny polygala, wedge spurge, West Indian manatee, wireweed, and wood stork;

WHEREAS, scientists predict that globally more than 1 million species are on track for extinction in the coming decades;¹

WHEREAS, the Endangered Species Act is a landmark environmental law that "represent[s] the most comprehensive legislation for the preservation of endangered species ever enacted by any nation";²

WHEREAS, this year marks the 50th Anniversary of the Endangered Species Act;

WHEREAS, when enacting the Endangered Species Act, Congress set out to "provide a program for the conservation of . . . endangered species and threatened species" and "to provide a means whereby the ecosystems upon which endangered species and threatened species depend may be conserved";³

¹ IPBES (2019). Summary for Policymakers of the Global Assessment Report on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services. IPBES secretariat, Bonn; Finn, C., Grattarola, F., & Pincheira-Donoso, D. (2023). More losers than winners: investigating Anthropocene defaunation through the diversity of population trends. *Biological Reviews*.

² *Tenn. Valley Auth. v. Hill*, 437 U.S. 153, 180 (1978).

³ 16 U.S.C. § 1531(b).

The Everglades Coalition is a 501(c)3 alliance of local, state, and national conservation organizations dedicated to the full protection and restoration of America's Everglades.

WHEREAS, the Endangered Species Act has successfully prevented the extinction of 99% of species under its care and guided hundreds of species toward recovery;

WHEREAS, in 2019 and 2020, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and National Marine Fisheries Service (collectively, the Services) revised their Endangered Species Act regulations, significantly limiting their ability to provide the same historic level of protections that has helped save thousands of species from extinction;

WHEREAS, on June 21, 2023, the Services proposed rules to revise Endangered Species Act regulations and restore crucial protections for species;⁴

WHEREAS, the proposed rules restore some important Endangered Species Act protections, including extending automatic protection from take to threatened species, affirming species listing decisions should be based on the best available science—not economic or other factors, and removing barriers to designating critical habitat for climate-impacted species;

WHEREAS, the proposed rules fail to reinstate strong protections for critical habitat and comprehensive conservation requirements for federal consultation that had been rolled back during the previous administration; and

WHEREAS, the Services have solicited public comments through August 21, 2023, and will subsequently finalize new Endangered Species Act regulations.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED ON AUGUST 10TH 2023:

The Everglades Coalition appreciates the work the Services have done to improve the life-saving measures of the Endangered Species Act regulations and now strongly urges the Services to finalize the strongest regulations possible to secure a future for endangered and threatened species in the Greater Everglades Ecosystem. Therefore, we urge the Services to finalize proposals to extend automatic take protection to threatened species, affirm species listing decisions should be based on the best available science—not economic or other factors, and remove barriers to designating critical habitat for climate-impacted species. The Everglades Coalition further urges the Services to strengthen the final rules, including by fully protecting critical habitat from destruction and adverse modification, and requiring federal agencies to account for all harms to listed species during consultation.



Mark Perry
Co-Chair



Kelly Cox
Co-Chair

⁴ 88 Fed. Reg. 40,742 (June 22, 2023); 88 Fed. Reg. 40,753 (June 22, 2023); 88 Fed. Reg. 40,764 (June 22, 2023).