# [***The Trump Administration's Assault on Wildlife Conservation***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5TC6-FFR1-DYG2-R22H-00000-00&context=1516831)

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**Body**

The ***Defenders of Wildlife issued*** the following news release:

The Trump administration has mounted an unprecedented assault on our wildlife and wild lands, according to a new report released today by Defenders of Wildlife.

The report - The Trump Administration's Assault on Wildlife Conservation, Assessing the damage of the first 20 months - revisits the eight conservation priorities Defenders of Wildlife outlined for an incoming administration in January 2017, then briefly summarizes the Trump administration's assaults on each priority during its first 20 months, our responses and the anti-conservation actions we expect next.

Jamie Rappaport Clark, President and CEO of ***Defenders of Wildlife***, ***issued*** this statement:

"We are in the fight of our lives to protect imperiled wildlife and the save the bedrock environmental laws that protect species and their habitat. Less than half-way through this administration, we can unequivocally state: The Trump administration fundamentally does not value wildlife, wild places, clean air and water, and a livable climate.

"Instead of building on America's conservation legacy, this administration has given the power of the federal government to those who seek to exploit and degrade our land, water, air and wildlife. We are determined to win this fight - we must win for the sake of wildlife, wild lands and us."

Background:

This report revisits the eight conservation priorities we outlined in "A Wildlife Conservation Agenda for the Next Administration," briefly summarizing the Trump administration's attacks on each one during its first 20 months, our responses and the anti-conservation moves we expect next. Our agenda envisioned working together to protect and restore wildlife and habitat for current and future generations. Instead, we are in the fight of our lives to defend the Endangered Species Act and other bedrock environmental laws, protect federal lands, waters and our climate, and maintain science-based, public decision-making and management of our natural resources. Defenders of Wildlife's eight conservation priorities are listed below, along with a short description of how the Trump administration has ignored these requests. More detail can be found in the report.

Imperiled Species: Protect and restore our endangered and threatened plants and animals. The Trump administration has completely ignored our recommendations for protecting imperiled species. Defenders is vigorously opposing the administration's attacks on the Endangered Species Act (ESA), as well as the endless legislative attempts to undermine the law. The Department of the Interior has proposed sweeping changes to the regulations implementing the ESA. The proposals will weaken rules governing species listing and designation and regulation of critical habitat, diminish wildlife agencies' ability to provide feedback, or "consultation," on actions that could impact listed species, and open the door for the consideration of economic impacts of listing species. These provisions are the heart and soul of the ESA. The Trump administration has also canceled a rule that would have placed limits on the number of endangered whales, dolphins and sea turtles that can be killed or injured by sword-fishing nets in the Pacific Ocean; made controversial listing decisions, denying ESA protections to the Pacific walrus and the Northern Rocky Mountain fisher; and issued a seriously flawed recovery plan for the Mexican gray wolf, among others.

Public Lands: Defend and responsibly manage our federal public lands. Completely ignoring our recommendations, the Trump administration has focused with almost monomaniacal intensity on turning our public lands and waters over to fossil fuel development and other extractive uses in the name of "energy dominance." Defenders challenged the Trump administration's spurious "review" of more than 30 national monuments and national marine sanctuaries; sued in federal court challenging President Trump's illegal downsizing of Bear's Ears National Monument, his withdrawals of President Obama's protections for offshore waters, and his waivers of environmental laws to construct his border wall; and responded to assaults on the National Wildlife Refuge System with commentary and advocacy, among others.

Renewable Energy: Invest in responsible renewable energy development that minimizes impacts to wildlife. The Trump administration's actions threaten to undermine comprehensive planning and partnerships that are key to advancing low-impact renewable energy development. The president signed a Congressional resolution rescinding a new planning regulation that improved Bureau of Land Management (BLM) resource management approaches to planning for renewable energy and other uses; revoked and is now revising new mitigation policies creating uncertainty among planners and renewable energy companies; and reversed the century-old Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA).

Climate Change: Protect wildlife from the impacts of climate change. Rather than accept the evolving and unequivocal findings of climate scientists and build on the progress of the previous administration, the Trump administration has ignored the facts and moved to systematically dismantle those achievements, reversing years of work on policies to reduce greenhouse gas pollution and prepare for and respond to the current climate change impacts. President Trump and his administration announced his intention to withdraw from the Paris Climate Agreement; issued an executive order that cripples our ability to take action on the global threat of climate change; moved to weaken the Clean Power Plan; and weakened methane pollution rules, among others.

Collaborative Conservation: Encourage initiatives by private landowners, states and 5 ***tribes*** to conserve imperiled species and habitats. President Trump has ignored tribal priorities from the start. He's ordered expedited review and approval for the Dakota Access pipeline and downsized Bears Ears National Monument in Utah by 85 percent. His administration rejected calls from the Gwich'in to protect the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge from drilling and ignored the Tohono O'odham Nation's opposition to building a wall on tribal lands along the U.S.-Mexico border. Additionally, the Trump administration is unraveling a multi-state, collaborative conservation strategy protecting greater sage grouse and hundreds of other species.

International Wildlife Conservation: Strengthen our role as an international leader in imperiled species conservation. Contrary to the course we advised, President Trump has forfeited American leadership and extended his administration's isolationist tendencies to international conservation. Trump has announced his intent to withdraw from the Paris Climate Agreement, which will make the U.S. the only country in the world not part of the accord, and the administration is pushing an international agenda that is building barriers, not bridges, to neighboring countries, like Trump's proposed wall along the more than 1,200 miles of our southern border. Trashing years of collaborative planning, the Department of the Interior's proposed revision of greater sage-grouse conservation plans not only jeopardizes habitat conservation and restoration on public lands but also federal and partner investments on adjacent private lands valued at $760 million. The Trump administration disbanded the U.S. Advisory Council on Wildlife Trafficking, a panel of experts to advise the U.S. government in its fight against illegal trafficking and replaced it with the International Wildlife Conservation Council, an advisory group entirely comprised of big-game hunters and representatives of the firearms and ammunition industries.

Youth and Community Engagement: Join our youth and diverse and changing communities in connecting with our public lands and wildlife conservation heritage. Rather than embracing a diverse America, President Trump's inflammatory and divisive rhetoric has divided the nation. The Trump administration is doing much more to expand public lands access for mining and drilling companies than for people and communities. The National Park Service is increasing entrance fees at many of our most popular national parks, even as the administration has reduced the amount that drilling companies pay in offshore oil and gas royalties. Secretary of the Interior Ryan Zinke even proposed to terminate the highly popular "Every Kid in a Park" program to encourage children and their parents to visit national parks and other public lands and waters, only to relent after facing overwhelming public criticism.

Science-based Conservation: Maintain our commitment to conservation based on sound science. The Trump administration has not only stalled scientific progress on biodiversity conservation, it has also undermined science-based decision-making throughout federal departments and agencies, with grave implications for the health and safety of all species, including humans. This administration is erasing science, systematically banning scientific language in government documents, ignoring scientific facts in its decision-making, rescinding America's high-priority, international, science-based commitments and attacking core environmental policies that do not align with the president's agenda. The past 20 months have also seen unprecedented efforts to sideline or outright disband federal science advisory committees, which provide invaluable, objective advice to federal agencies and decision-makers responsible for resolving complex management challenges, ranging from environmental to medical crises.

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