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Save the Redwoods League Urges Support for the Endangered Species Act—Comment by May 19

Statement in response to the federal proposal to rescind the regulatory definition of “harm” in the Endangered Species Act of 1973.

San Francisco, Calif. (April 18, 2025) — [Save the Redwoods League](#) urges U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the National Marine Fisheries Service to uphold the [Endangered Species Act](#) (ESA) of 1973. The League strongly encourages everyone to voice their support for the ESA on [Regulations.gov](#) before the public comment period ends on May 19.

A newly proposed federal revision to the ESA would rescind the long-standing definition of the word “harm,” so that habitat protection would no longer be recognized as a method for saving imperiled animals and plants. The current regulatory definition—upheld for decades and supported by scientific consensus—recognizes that when a species loses the ability to breed, feed, or shelter due to habitat destruction, it is harmed.

ESA protections have long been a cornerstone of redwood forest conservation—safeguarding the northern spotted owl and marbled murrelet under the ESA led to permanent protections for iconic old-growth groves. The ESA remains vital to our work today and is one of the strongest tools we have to ensure the long-term health of redwood forests and the species that call them home. The history of the redwood conservation movement is inextricably linked with the ESA, and the ecological health of redwood forests would not be the same without this foundational environmental law.

ESA’s conservation successes over the last 50 years are clear. An estimated 99% of the species protected under the ESA survive today, according to the [Center for Biological Diversity](#). That’s due in large part to habitat protection. While coast redwood and giant sequoia trees themselves are not listed under the ESA, the forest ecosystems they anchor are vital habitat for many animals and plants that are federally protected. Imperiled salmon that rely on cool, clean streams, threatened birds, salamanders and rare plants found only in these forests could not survive without their homes, making habitat protection inseparable from species survival.

This change would undercut one of the ESA’s most effective tools: its ability to prevent species loss before direct injury occurs. Stripping this protection runs counter to

ecological science, legal precedent and the core intent of the ESA—to conserve species and the ecosystems upon which they depend.

“There will be many words said about the proposed revision to the ESA, but it all comes down to one: harm,” said Ben Friedman, government affairs officer for Save the Redwoods League. “At Save the Redwoods League, we believe a fundamental strength of the ESA is in its proactive, habitat-based approach to conservation. We urge everyone to raise their voices in support of science-based environmental protections.”

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the National Marine Fisheries Service are accepting public comments on this proposed change until May 19. [Public comments can be submitted here on the Regulations.gov website](#). Save the Redwoods League encourages everyone to express support for maintaining the full scope of protections under the Endangered Species Act before the deadline.

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Save the Redwoods League

One of the nation’s longest-running conservation organizations, Save the Redwoods League has been protecting and restoring redwood forests since 1918. The League has connected generations of visitors with the beauty and serenity of the redwood forests. Our supporters have enabled the League to protect more than 220,000 acres of irreplaceable forests in 66 state, national, and local parks and reserves. For information, please visit [SaveTheRedwoods.org](#).

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