

## Curious About Conservation? Summary: May 2019

Here's what you should do if you find a baby bird on the ground

<https://www.stgeorgeutah.com/news/archive/2019/05/04/prc-heres-what-you-should-do-if-you-find-a-baby-bird-on-the-ground/>

TRUMP ADMINISTRATION PLANS TO END PROTECTIONS FOR ENDANGERED SPECIES AFTER UN REPORT WARNS OF 'MASS EXTINCTION EVENT'

<https://www.newsweek.com/trump-climate-change-extinction-david-bernhardt-1422623>

Life as We Know It: Plant and animal species are disappearing faster than at any time in recorded history. We know who is to blame.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2019/05/11/opinion/sunday/extinction-endangered-species-biodiversity.html>

Lawsuits Challenge Trump Administration's Refusal to Release Documents on Pesticides

<https://biologicaldiversity.org/w/news/press-releases/pesticides-document-release-refusal-2019-05-07/>

How the West Virginia coal industry changed federal endangered species policy

[https://www.washingtonpost.com/national/health-science/how-the-west-virginia-coal-industry-changed-federal-endangered-species-policy/2019/05/10/56d28de0-4bf0-11e9-b79a-961983b7e0cd\\_story.html?utm\\_term=.4a2845030ba2](https://www.washingtonpost.com/national/health-science/how-the-west-virginia-coal-industry-changed-federal-endangered-species-policy/2019/05/10/56d28de0-4bf0-11e9-b79a-961983b7e0cd_story.html?utm_term=.4a2845030ba2)

Student Conservation Association

[https://secure2.convio.net/scai/site/SPageNavigator/Endangered\\_species\\_day\\_2019.html;jsessionid=00000000.app274b?NONCE\\_TOKEN=1323C8C9903E8E48A39E140D1B56CEE8](https://secure2.convio.net/scai/site/SPageNavigator/Endangered_species_day_2019.html;jsessionid=00000000.app274b?NONCE_TOKEN=1323C8C9903E8E48A39E140D1B56CEE8)

## Life : May 2019

### Here's what you should do if you find a baby bird on the ground

It is not unusual to find a baby bird on the ground during this time of year. Many birds are hatching and often leave their nests before they are able to fly.

“They usually spread along the branch of a tree and chirp and call, waiting for their parents to bring food to them,” said Blair Stringham, Utah Division of Wildlife Resources migratory game bird program coordinator.

“Sometimes, that results in them falling from their perch.”

The most common baby birds that people may discover are robins, which nest in trees, and swallows, which build their mud nests in eaves and on the sides of houses.

If you find a baby bird on the ground, there are a few things you should do:

### **Put it back in the nest if it doesn't have feathers**

If the bird is very small and still featherless, you should place it back in its nest. If you can't find the nest, put the bird on a branch safely out of reach of dogs and cats.

“The baby will squawk and its parents will find it,” Stringham said.

Don't be concerned about leaving your scent on the bird. Most birds do not have a good sense of smell so if you pick a baby bird up, its parents won't even know you've handled it.

Never take a baby bird home

### **Don't feed the bird**

While it's fine for its parents to feed the baby bird, you shouldn't attempt to give it food. Birds have a very specific diet and feeding them something that's not part of their diet can kill them.

“For example, many people are surprised to learn that robins are among only a handful of birds that can safely eat worms,” Stringham said. “Most birds can’t.”

Just place the bird back on its branch or in its nest, and let its parents feed it.

### **Leave it alone if it has feathers**

If the baby bird is hopping around, you’ve found a bird that almost isn’t a “baby” anymore. These young birds are called fledglings. They have most of their flight feathers and are very close to taking their first flight.

If the bird isn’t in danger, leave it where you found it

<https://www.stgeorgeutah.com/news/archive/2019/05/04/prc-heres-what-you-should-do-if-you-find-a-baby-bird-on-the-ground/>

## **TRUMP ADMINISTRATION PLANS TO END PROTECTIONS FOR ENDANGERED SPECIES AFTER UN REPORT WARNS OF 'MASS EXTINCTION EVENT'**

A United Nations report released this week found that one-eighth of the world’s animals and plants are at risk of extinction and that biodiversity was declining at an “unprecedented pace,” but David Bernhardt, U.S. Secretary of the Interior, said this dire portrait won’t stop the Trump administration from ending protections for endangered species in the United States.

“We didn’t start doing them to not do them,” Bernhardt said of the Department of the Interior’s policy revisions to limit protections for threatened animals and to factor the cost to corporations into protecting endangered species, in an interview with *The Washington Post* published Friday.

Bernhardt said that he had not yet been fully briefed on the United Nations report, but that he was aware of it.

The report, written by 145 researchers from 50 countries over the last three years, warned that the planet was already in the midst of a “mass extinction event” with more than 1 million species eradicated because of human actions. Climate change, a lack of environmental stewardship and mass industrialization have all contributed to the loss, said the report.

“Biodiversity and nature’s contributions to people are our common heritage and humanity’s most important life-supporting ‘safety net,’” Sandra Diaz, co-chair of the report, said in a statement. “But our safety net is stretched almost to breaking point.”

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### **Life as We Know It**

### **Plant and animal species are disappearing faster than at any time in recorded history. We know who is to blame.**

Our planet has suffered [five mass extinctions](#), the last of which occurred about 66 million years ago, when a giant asteroid believed to have landed near the Yucatán Peninsula set off a chain reaction that wiped out the dinosaurs and roughly three-quarters of the other species on earth. A few years ago, in a book called [“The Sixth Extinction,”](#) the writer Elizabeth Kolbert warned of a devastating sequel, with plant and animal species on land and sea already disappearing at a ferocious clip, their habitats destroyed or diminished by human activities.

This time, she made clear, the asteroid is us — and we will pay heavily for our folly.

Humanity’s culpability in what many scientists believe to be a planetary emergency has now been reaffirmed by a detailed and depressing report compiled by hundreds of international experts and

Humanity’s culpability in what many scientists believe to be a planetary emergency has now been reaffirmed by a detailed and depressing report compiled by hundreds of international experts and based on thousands of scientific studies. A [summary was released last Monday](#) in Paris, and the full 1,500-page report will be available later in the year. Its findings are grim.

“Biodiversity” — a word encompassing all living flora and fauna — “is declining faster than at any time in human history,” it says, estimating that “around 1 million species already face extinction, many within decades,” unless the world takes transformative action to save natural systems. The at-risk population includes a half-million land-based species and one-third of marine mammals and corals.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2019/05/11/opinion/sunday/extinction-endangered-species-biodiversity.html>

## What Is the Endangered Species Act and How Does It Work?

May is Endangered Species Month, so now's a great time to look more closely at the Endangered Species Act. The [ESA's purpose](#) is “to protect and recover imperiled species” and the habitats they need to survive, according to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. And it's a law that works: [99 percent](#) of all plants and animals listed as “endangered” actually avoid extinction.

Congress passed the ESA in 1973. The intent of the law was to protect animals and plants from extinction because certain “species of fish, wildlife, and plants have been so depleted in numbers that they are in danger of or threatened with extinction [and] these species of fish, wildlife, and plants are of esthetic, ecological, educational, historical, recreational, and scientific value to the Nation and its people,” the [U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service](#) says.

[Try watching this video on www.youtube.com](#)

What Is the Endangered Species Act and How Does It Work?



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- By: Susan Bird
- May 6, 2019

Many people have heard of the [Endangered Species Act](#). But do you know what it does and how successful it has been?

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[Try watching this video on www.youtube.com](#)

The ESA is administered by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for terrestrial and freshwater species and by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's National Marine Fisheries Service for marine species.

#### HELPING SPECIES RECOVER AND THRIVE

The ultimate goal of protection, of course, is to allow the plant or animal to recover from the brink of extinction — and hopefully to thrive thereafter. Almost 1,700 species are currently listed under the act, according to [National Geographic](#).

We can easily identify the many successes of the ESA. The world [still has animals](#) — including the American bald eagle, the American alligator, the brown pelican, the humpback whale, the grizzly bear, the peregrine falcon, the Florida manatee and the gray wolf — thanks to the protections of the act.

Under the ESA, a species may be listed as “endangered” or “threatened,” which are defined in this way, per the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service:

- **Endangered:** “A species is in danger of extinction throughout all or a significant portion of its range.”
- **Threatened:** “A species is likely to become endangered within the foreseeable future.”

There is little practical difference in how the government enforces endangered species protections compared to protections for threatened species.

Try watching this video on [www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com)

It is illegal under the ESA to “take” a protected species or to engage in interstate or international trade of listed plants and animals, including their parts and products, except when authorized via federal permit. “Take” means more than killing a species. It also means to “harass, harm, pursue, hunt, shoot, wound, kill, trap, capture, or collect or attempt to engage in any such activity,” according to the Fish and Wildlife Service.

Species are listed as either threatened or endangered on the basis of their biological status and threats to their existence. [Threats to a species](#) typically come from habitat destruction, pollution, over-harvesting, disease, predation and other natural or man-made influences.

The government evaluates a species on these five factors:

1. Damage to, or destruction of, a species’ habitat
2. Overutilization of the species for commercial, recreational, scientific, or educational purposes
3. Disease or predation
4. Inadequacy of existing protection
5. Other natural or manmade factors that affect the continued existence of the species

Social and economic factors are never part of this analysis.

The ESA also protects the “critical habitat” of imperiled species. This “includes geographic areas that contain the physical or biological features that are essential to the conservation of the species and that may need special management or protection,” according to the Fish and Wildlife Service.

#### WHAT ABOUT THE IUCN RED LIST?

When one thinks about endangered species, the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Red List also comes to mind. According to the IUCN, more than 27,000 species around the globe are facing extinction.

The [IUCN Red List](#) calls itself “the world’s most comprehensive information source on the global conservation status of animal, fungi and plant species.”

Although categorization by the IUCN as Not Evaluated, Data Deficient, Least Concern, Near Threatened, Vulnerable, Endangered, Critically Endangered, Extinct in the Wild or Extinct doesn’t carry a legally enforceable status, the information provided is critically important. The IUCN’s data is often used to make Endangered Species Act listing decisions, National Geographic reports.



The Red List provides up-to-date indications of the health of the world's biodiversity, which conservationists can use to guide their decisions. According to the [IUCN](#):

“The IUCN Red List shows us where and what actions need to be taken to save the building blocks of nature from extinction. It provides a straightforward way to factor biodiversity needs into decision-making processes by providing a wealth of useful information on species.”

The IUCN has assessed the status of more than 98,500 species for the Red List. And according to the organization, it's working to assess 160,000 species by 2020.

### SUCCESS OR FAILURE?

Is the Endangered Species Act a success? It depends on whom you ask.

[Scientists estimate](#) at least 300 species would have been lost to extinction without this law. Critics say the law isn't working because we still have so many species listed, while supporters respond that the ESA has kept 99 percent of those species from dying out.

I'm a fan of the Endangered Species Act. I don't want to live in a world without it. If we can keep politicians from gutting the ESA as a favor to business interests, we might just bring a few more species back from the brink.

It's a noble effort. And it needs to continue, unobstructed by greed or carelessness.

<https://www.care2.com/causes/what-is-the-endangered-species-act-and-how-does-it-work.html>

## Lawsuits Challenge Trump Administration's Refusal to Release Documents on Pesticides

WASHINGTON— The Center for Biological Diversity filed four lawsuits today challenging the Trump administration's failure to release a trove of documents detailing how the administration is regulating dangerous pesticides, especially as they relate to endangered species. Today's lawsuits, involving 20 separate Freedom of Information Act requests, were filed in federal district court in Washington, D.C. The suits seek documents the Center requested from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Department of the Interior, Fish and Wildlife Service, Department of Agriculture, Department of Commerce, National Marine Fisheries Service and Council on Environmental Quality.

“Federal agencies that are supposed to be protecting human health, wildlife and our environment from dangerous pesticides have fallen into a terrible pattern of withholding critical information from the American people,” said Lori Ann Burd, director of the Center's environmental health program. “It's ridiculous we have to sue to obtain public documents that are key to helping us understand how these dangerous poisons are, and are not, being regulated.”

<https://biologicaldiversity.org/w/news/press-releases/pesticides-document-release-refusal-2019-05-07/>

*Date:*

May 9, 2019

Source:

Michigan State University

Summary:

Lands that shelter forests have value often readily tallied by developers, but until now it's been more difficult to prove the success of protecting those forested lands in pursuit of sustainability. That can put conservationists on the defense. Scientists have focused on what makes a protected area the most effective at preventing deforestation. Preserving forests means more trees to suck up greenhouse gasses, as well as prevent erosion, mitigate flooding, purify water and quell sandstorms.

<https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2019/05/190509105336.htm>

## **Fossil Fuels May 2019.**

### **How the West Virginia coal industry changed federal endangered species policy**

LENORE, W.Va. — Donna Branham was grilling steaks in her backyard when she felt the tremors. She was two miles away from the coal mine, but she could feel the blasts.

“Oh my god, not again,” she thought.

In 2017, blasting at the surface mine had cracked her ceiling, her mirrors and her fireplace. When the mine was shut down amid complaints that its waste was encroaching on crayfish, a threatened species, she thought she had caught a break.

Now the mine is back in business, thanks to the intervention of Trump appointees at the Department of the Interior and West Virginia officials who allowed the resumption of drilling at Twin Branch and about a half-dozen other mines under a June 2017 policy, according to documents obtained under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA).

President Trump’s pro-coal stance is not surprising, but the documents offer a rare glimpse into how state and industry officials have tapped the president’s political appointees to advance their economic interests over the objections of the agency charged with protecting endangered wildlife — in this case, two crayfish species that help keep the state’s creeks and rivers healthy. A United Nations panel warned in a report Monday that human activities have [pushed one-eighth of the world’s species to the brink of extinction](#) and urged governments to protect them. Meanwhile, the emails show that the Trump administration has moved in the opposite direction:

Federal, state and industry officials bypassed the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to win approval for operations near sensitive habitat

[https://www.washingtonpost.com/national/health-science/how-the-west-virginia-coal-industry-changed-federal-endangered-species-policy/2019/05/10/56d28de0-4bf0-11e9-b79a-961983b7e0cd\\_story.html?utm\\_term=.4a2845030ba2](https://www.washingtonpost.com/national/health-science/how-the-west-virginia-coal-industry-changed-federal-endangered-species-policy/2019/05/10/56d28de0-4bf0-11e9-b79a-961983b7e0cd_story.html?utm_term=.4a2845030ba2)

## Student Conservation Association

Endangered Species Day 5.17

Species loss continues to increase globally due to the effects of human activities, so it's never been more important to support wildlife conservation efforts. You can help by spreading the word to recognize Endangered Species Day on Friday, May 17.

[https://secure2.convio.net/scai/site/SPageNavigator/Endangered\\_species\\_day\\_2019.html;jsessionid=00000000.app274b?NONCE\\_TOKEN=1323C8C9903E8E48A39E140D1B56CEE8](https://secure2.convio.net/scai/site/SPageNavigator/Endangered_species_day_2019.html;jsessionid=00000000.app274b?NONCE_TOKEN=1323C8C9903E8E48A39E140D1B56CEE8)

## Renewable Energy: May 2019

### FERC Eases Small Residential Solar QF Filing Burden for Sunrun

On April 18, 2019, the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) granted Sunrun, Inc. (Sunrun) limited waivers of FERC's filing requirements for obtaining qualifying small power production facility (QF) status under the under the Public Utility Regulatory Policies Act of 1978 (PURPA). FERC's determination applies to a limited class of separately-interconnected 20 kW or smaller projects in Sunrun's residential solar portfolio that, when aggregated under FERC's so-called "one-mile rule," exceed the 1 MW threshold above which a FERC Form 556 would be required to self-certify QF status. While the order is limited in application to Sunrun's specific petition for waivers, it invites developers of small-scale residential solar portfolios and others contemplating distributed energy resource (DER) aggregation to seek similar waivers.

<https://www.jdsupra.com/legalnews/ferc-eases-small-residential-solar-qf-58807/>

## Climate Change May 2019

### THE 2020 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION IS THE LAST, BEST CHANCE FOR THE U.S. TO CONFRONT THE CLIMATE CRISIS.

**Change the Climate 2020**, a project of the [League of Conservation Voters](#), is elevating climate action in the 2020 presidential primary elections and ensuring that candidates fully

appreciate the scope of the climate crisis, make climate change a top priority, and commit to an ambitious plan to address the crisis on day one as president.

This website aims to track and publicize what the candidates are saying and doing about climate change while campaigning for president. The candidates included on the website have formally declared their candidacies and have received at least one percent in at least one major national poll. Note that the “results” counts that appear on each candidate’s page are based on the candidates’ media coverage and social media posts and are not inclusive of every statement or action in support of addressing climate change.

#### Combating Climate Change and Promoting Clean Energy

Addressing climate change at the scale necessary requires transforming our energy, infrastructure (including transportation and buildings), agricultural and industrial systems while advancing a suite of policies and massive investments that create good, family-sustaining jobs and build a more sustainable, just, and equitable society.

The scale of the climate crisis requires both legislative and executive branch action. The next president’s climate action plan must include the following:

- Address the climate crisis as a very top priority starting on day one, using all the powers of the presidency and existing law and working with Congress to enact major legislation.
- Achieve 100 percent clean energy and net-zero climate pollution economy-wide no later than 2050. Transitioning to a 100 percent clean energy economy is necessary to avert the worst impacts of climate change and also a huge opportunity to create good, family-sustaining jobs, make our economy work for all people, save consumers money, and protect our health.
- Pursue the most just, equitable economic transition that supports good-paying, family-sustaining new jobs in clean energy and prioritizes investments in communities that are historically overburdened by pollution and most vulnerable to climate impacts.
- Exceed our current commitments under the Paris Climate Agreement, a landmark agreement where 197 countries, including developing countries and major emitters, committed to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions, and exercise strong leadership at home and abroad to encourage other countries to increase the ambition of their domestic climate targets as quickly as possible.
- Advance strong environmental rules, including restoring and strengthening rules rolled back by the current administration, which has launched unprecedented attacks on public health and clean air and water protections.
- Champion a fair and equitable infrastructure agenda that includes a 100 percent clean energy economy, green, nature-based solutions, respects environmental laws and works to mitigate contributions to and build community resilience to a changing climate while also providing good, safe, family-sustaining jobs.
- Reject all PAC contributions from the oil, gas and coal industries which promote policies with candidates and lawmakers that harm the health of our families and worsen the climate crisis.

<https://www.changetheclimate2020.com/>

## Wildfires Force 10,000 to Flee as Alberta Repeals Carbon Tax

More than 10,000 people have been forced to evacuate as [wildfires](#) spread in northern Alberta, Canada's [CBC News reported Thursday](#). Smoke from the fires has choked skies across the province, raising the Air Quality Health Index in its capital city of Edmonton to a 10+ Thursday, [the Edmonton Journal reported](#).

In an ironic turn, the fires prompted Alberta Premier Jason Kenney to cancel a celebration of the repeal of the province's carbon tax, [Canada's National Observer reported.](#)

\*This event has been cancelled so the premier can receive an internal, real-time briefing on the status of Alberta's wildfires," the government said in a statement reported by Canada's National Observer.

[https://www.ecowatch.com/alberta-wildfires-carbon-tax-2638572137.html?utm\\_source=EcoWatch+List&utm\\_campaign=6a92e247f9-](https://www.ecowatch.com/alberta-wildfires-carbon-tax-2638572137.html?utm_source=EcoWatch+List&utm_campaign=6a92e247f9-)

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