



In the Arkansas, Thirty Years of Success

For more than 30 years, the Endangered Species Act has helped prevent the extinction of our national treasures. Because of the act, beloved symbols of America such as the bald eagle are thriving, and new species such as the ivory-billed woodpecker, once thought extinct, are appearing again in our forests due to habitat conservation efforts.

Only nine of the 1,800 species protected by the act have been declared extinct since its passage in 1973. Such an astonishing success rate makes the act a true symbol of our nation's commitment to protecting our natural heritage for future generations. It is also an example of the progress that can be made when communities work together to conserve their local wildlife and habitat. With the participation of communities, business and government, less than one percent of development has been halted by the act, proving that we can conserve wildlife without sacrificing progress. With the creation of jobs from tourism and outdoor recreation related to endangered species, it can truly be said that people all over Arkansas benefit from the act.

Arkansas currently has 30 endangered and threatened species (24 animals and 6 plants).

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Ivory-Billed Woodpecker

The dramatic “rediscovery” of the ivory-billed woodpecker, the third largest woodpecker in the world, has focused all conservation eyes on Arkansas. Never formally declared extinct, the ivory-billed woodpecker had not been seen for some 60 years before resurfacing in an Arkansas wildlife refuge in 2005. Conservationists and government agencies credit this miracle to aggressive land conservation efforts in the state, including a land exchange in 1992 that brought 41,000 acres into conservation ownership and connected the Cache River and White River national wildlife refuges, where the bird was found. Since the rediscovery, more than 20,000 additional acres have been brought into conservation management, and The Nature Conservancy in Arkansas hopes to conserve 200,000 more acres. In addition, Interior Secretary Gale Norton and Agriculture Secretary Mike Johanns have announced a multi-year, multi-million-dollar

partnership effort to aid the rare bird's survival, making Arkansas a true living laboratory for the conservation of one of our nation's rarest species. The state also stands to benefit economically once initial conservation efforts are underway, and the birding world descends on Arkansas to catch a glimpse of an ivory-billed woodpecker.

Fat Pocketbook Mussels

When most people think of endangered species, mussels probably do not spring to mind. However, not only are freshwater mussels among the most endangered group of species in the country, they are also critical to maintaining healthy aquatic ecosystems. The Arkansas State Highway and Transportation Department and Arkansas State University are working with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Arkansas Ecological Services Field Office, Arkansas Game and Fish Commission, and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in an unprecedented effort to monitor fat pocketbook mussels relocated way from areas slated for channel dredging and other disturbances. Using a sophisticated system, individual mussels are "tagged" and periodically located for minimally invasive tissue sampling to monitor their health. The techniques learned from this relocation work will be used to develop a Habitat Restoration Plan for the Tyronza River. The plan will be submitted to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for formal consultation, which will lay the groundwork for a protocol for future highway projects in Arkansas and elsewhere.

Bald Eagle

When Europeans first arrived in North America in the 1600's, an estimated 100,000 bald eagles called the continent home, but populations have since dropped for many reasons. The bald eagle declined throughout the United States due to habitat destruction, illegal shooting, and the deadly effects of pesticides such as DDT. By 1963, only 417 nesting pairs were found in the

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Bald eagle

lower 48 states. In 1973, the bald eagle was listed as endangered under the Endangered Species Act. However, due to the banning of DDT, success of reintroduction programs, habitat and nest protection measures and other efforts to restore bald eagle populations, the Fish and Wildlife Service reclassified the bald eagle from endangered to threatened in the lower 48 states. In 1999, the agency proposed removing it from the threatened list.

Arkansas ranks in the top 10 states for winter bald eagle sightings. Over 1,000 bald eagles are counted each winter—nearly triple the 368 recorded in 1979, and eagle watching in Arkansas is increasing in popularity. Every January, during the state's Eagle Awareness Month, volunteers throughout the state help count bald and golden eagles. Many state parks also have special programs for people interested in eagles.

Economic Benefits of Protecting Wildlife and Habitat

Ecotourism represents a huge economic force in the country. Each year, millions of Americans travel and pay to view wildlife and take in all that nature has to offer. Much of this activity takes place on the hundreds of national wildlife refuges spread across the country. Nationwide, visits to wildlife refuges generated more than \$1.3 billion in income for local and state coffers and an addition \$150 million in tax revenues. Indeed, national wildlife refuges received nearly twice as many visitors in

2004 than Grand Canyon, Yosemite, Yellowstone, Acadia, Grand Teton, and Statue of Liberty national parks combined. And the vast majority of refuge visitors came from outside the area, further testament to the ability of these special places to draw people and dollars to a region.

In Arkansas alone, White River National Wildlife Refuge in the southeastern part of the state generated \$23 million in economic activity for the local area. Felsenthal National Wildlife Refuge in the south part of the state generated \$13 million, and Cache National Wildlife Refuge to the east generated an additional \$4.5 million.

For more information on the success of the Endangered Species Act, please visit www.saveesa.org.



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