



In Support of the Endangered Species Act

Approved March 2017

The Association of Reptilian and Amphibian Veterinarians is a U.S. based international organization of veterinarians dedicated to scientifically based reptile and amphibian medicine and surgery, research, conservation, and responsible pet ownership. If you would like more information on our organization please visit our website at www.arav.org.

We are writing this letter to you to express our support of the Endangered Species Act of 1973. It has come to our attention that there is discussion in Congress regarding amending this act to limit some of the protections offered in favor of land use for various purposes, including mining and drilling. We are strongly opposed to any such weakening of protections for endangered species.

Since its inception, the Endangered Species act has helped prevent the extinction of several reptile and amphibian species unique to the United States. There are currently 38 species of reptiles and 32 species of amphibians protected by the Act. Many of these animals are found uniquely in the United States, making this protection of greater importance. Those species face numerous threats, from habitat loss to the spread of newly discovered diseases. Fungal disease is threatening wild snake populations in the Midwest and Northeastern United States. Another fungal disease is threatening amphibian species worldwide and US populations need to be closely monitored. Further habitat loss, in the acquisition of fossil fuels for short-term gains, places unnecessary pressures on these species' delicate populations.

The good news, is that the Endangered Species Act has been proven to be effective. The American alligator (*Alligator mississippiensis*) was on the brink of extinction, but habitat protection afforded by the Endangered Species Act and captive breeding have restored the wild population to greater than 5 million animals. The green sea turtle (*Chelonia mydas*) has rebounded from 50 nesting animals in Florida in 1990 to 10,000 in 2013. Because of the ongoing protection provided from this very important piece of legislation, these turtles are now fairing far better and have hopefully avoided extinction from human interference.

If the Endangered Species Act is weakened, many of the animals currently offered protection could be lost forever. We would like to see the important protection provided many critical animal species continues to ensure that no further unnecessary extinctions take place in this great nation.

Sincerely,

ARAV Board of Directors on behalf of the membership of The Association of Reptilian and Amphibian Veterinarians.

For more information visit ARAV.org or contact us at info@arav.org



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