

118TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. RES. 516

Commemorating the 50th anniversary of the passage of the Endangered Species Act of 1973.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

DECEMBER 19, 2023

Mr. BOOKER submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Environment and Public Works

RESOLUTION

Commemorating the 50th anniversary of the passage of the Endangered Species Act of 1973.

Whereas Congress passed the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (16 U.S.C. 1531 et seq.) (referred to in this preamble as the “Endangered Species Act”) in December of 1973 by a vote of 92–0 in the Senate and 355–4 in the House of Representatives;

Whereas President Richard Nixon, upon signing the Endangered Species Act into law, stated, “Nothing is more priceless and more worthy of preservation than the rich array of animal life with which our country has been blessed. It is a many-faceted treasure, of value to scholars, scientists, and nature lovers alike, and it forms a vital part of the heritage we all share as Americans [and]

which we hold in trust to countless future generations of our fellow citizens.”;

Whereas decades of polling have shown strong bipartisan support for the Endangered Species Act, with more than 4 out of 5 citizens of the United States in favor of it;

Whereas the Endangered Species Act is one of the most successful conservation laws ever enacted by any country, and 99 percent of species protected under the Act have been saved from extinction, including the humpback whale, grizzly bear, and bald eagle;

Whereas thanks to the Endangered Species Act, gray whales still swim our coasts, peregrine falcons still soar our skies, and polar bears still roam the Arctic tundra;

Whereas the Endangered Species Act is currently helping protect and recover more than 2,000 species of plants and animals that are threatened or endangered;

Whereas the Endangered Species Act provides added benefits to people by maintaining healthy natural systems that provide us with clean air and water, food, medicines, and other benefits that we all need to live healthy lives;

Whereas the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services published a study in 2019 that estimated that 25 percent of assessed taxa of plants and animals and 10 percent of insects, which account for 75 percent of all species, could be threatened with extinction;

Whereas, globally, 1,000,000 animal and plant species face extinction within the coming decades, and millions more are declining as habitat loss, climate change, wildlife exploitation, pollution, and other human activities continue to threaten their survival;

Whereas North America alone has lost nearly 3,000,000,000 birds since 1970, which means more than 1 in 4 birds that have disappeared from the landscape in a mere half a century, and in that same time frame, global wildlife populations have declined by an average of 69 percent;

Whereas, in the United States, nearly half of all ecosystems are at risk of range-wide collapse;

Whereas, as of October 2023, a total of 2,363 species of animals and plants were listed as either endangered or threatened, and 1,668 of all listed species occur in the United States and its territories, and the remainder (695 species) occur solely in other countries;

Whereas the unraveling of the natural world remains a fundamental threat to the well-being of all humanity, which depends on millions of species and the countless services that the web of life provides, and each extinction brings closer the collapse of these planetary life-support systems, including carbon sequestration, pollination, water purification, oxygen production, and disease regulation;

Whereas the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change found that climate change has caused local species losses, increases in disease, and mass mortality events of plants and animals, resulting in the first climate-driven extinctions, ecosystem restructuring, increases in areas burned by wildfire, and declines in key ecosystem services;

Whereas the planet is experiencing a biodiversity crisis, which many scientists conclude is the sixth mass extinction event, with plant and wildlife species across the globe facing heightened risk of extinction that is largely driven by human activity;

Whereas the United States has prioritized the conservation of imperiled species by enacting the Endangered Species Act and other landmark conservation statutes; and

Whereas the recovery of species under the Endangered Species Act is a remarkable success that should be celebrated: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That the Senate commemorates the 50th
2 anniversary of the passage of the Endangered Species Act
3 of 1973 (16 U.S.C. 1531 et seq.).

○