



Tom Gallagher/AP Photo

A northern spotted owl in California.

Judge throws out Trump-era rollbacks on protections for endangered species

Decision restores some protections

By **MATTHEW DALY**
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — A federal judge on Tuesday threw out a host of actions by the Trump administration to roll back protections for endangered or threatened species, a year after the Biden administration said it was moving to strengthen species protections weakened under former President Donald Trump.

U.S. District Judge Jon Tigar in Northern California eliminated the Trump-era rules even as two wildlife agencies under President Joe Biden are reviewing or rescinding the Trump-era regulations. The decision restores some protections under the Endangered Species Act while the reviews are completed.

Environmental groups hailed the decision, which they said speeded up needed protections and designation of critical habitat designations for threatened species, including salmon in the Pacific Northwest.

Tigar's ruling "spoke for species desperately in need of comprehensive federal protections without compromise," said Kristen Boyles, an attorney for the environmental group Earthjustice. "Threatened and endangered species do not have the luxury of waiting under rules that do not pro-

tect them."

The court ruling comes as two federal agencies — the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and National Marine Fisheries Service — review five Endangered Species Act regulations finalized by the Trump administration, including critical habitat designations and rules requiring federal agencies to consult with other agen-

energy development such as mining or oil drilling that could disturb a vulnerable species, while the consultation rule, and a separate rule on the scope of proposed federal actions, helps determine how far the government may go to protect imperiled species.

Under Trump, officials rolled back protections for the northern spotted owl,

wants to reconsider, revise or scrap.

A spokesman for the U.S. Department of the Interior, which oversees the Fish and Wildlife Service, said the agency is reviewing the decision.

Fish and Wildlife, along with the marine fisheries service, announced in June 2021 that they were reviewing the Trump-era actions. The reviews could take months or years to complete, officials said.

Industry groups and Republicans in Congress have long viewed the Endangered Species Act as an impediment to economic development, and under Trump they successfully lobbied to weaken the law's regulations. Environmental groups and Democratic-controlled states battled the moves in court, but many of those cases remained unresolved.

Ryan Shannon, a lawyer with the Center for Biological Diversity, another environmental group, said he was "incredibly relieved" that "terrible" Trump-era rules governing the Endangered Species Act were thrown out by the Oakland, California-based Tigar, who was appointed to the federal bench by former President Barack Obama.

"I hope the Biden administration takes this opportunity to strengthen this crucial law, rather than weaken it, in the face of the ongoing extinction crisis," Shannon said.

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— Ryan Shannon | lawyer with the Center for Biological Diversity

cies before taking action on threatened or endangered species.

Fish and Wildlife also said it will reinstate the so-called "blanket rule," which mandates additional protections for species that are newly classified as threatened. Those protections were removed under Trump.

Critical habitat designations for threatened or endangered species can result in limitations on

gray wolves and other species, actions that Biden has vowed to review. The Biden administration previously moved to reverse Trump's decision to weaken enforcement of the century-old Migratory Bird Treaty Act, which made it harder to prosecute bird deaths caused by the energy industry.

The decision on the bird law was among more than 100 business-friendly actions on the environment that Trump took and Biden

Study: The decrease in salmon threatens killer whale numbers

Associated Press

BELLINGHAM, Wash. — Southern resident killer whales have not had enough food for several years, which could affect their already small numbers, according to a study by the University of British Columbia.

Researchers looked at requirements and availability of prey for the killer whales. The study found a fluctuating level of salmon from spawning areas on rivers had a detrimental effect on killer whale health, threatening a small and fragile group of whales, the Bellingham Herald reported.

"It really appears like they cannot take (many) more rough years," said Fanny Couture, lead researcher for the study.

About 75 of the southern resident killer whales span from the California

coast to Haida Gwaii in British Columbia's Queen Charlotte Islands.

They feed on Chinook salmon, but number of Chinook has decreased even as fishing regulations attempted to bolster their numbers. That leaves animals high on the food chain, like killer whales, without adequate prey.

The study showed a significant decrease in salmon between 1979 and 2020.

Studies have shown that a lack of food intake for killer whales has led to lower birth rates and higher death rates. The current study agreed, showing a slightly higher birth rate in years where the killer whales met their dietary needs.



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Immigrant civil rights group Causa to dissolve

Associated Press

SALEM — After 27 years, the Salem-based immigrant civil rights group Causa will be dissolving.

Causa's board of directors made the decision to start dissolving the organization last week, according to an email from Causa's board.

"The decision to dissolve Causa was not an easy one, but we firmly believe it is the right one," the board said.

Causa recently co-lead the launch of the Oregon Worker Relief Fund to provide about \$60 million to immigrants in Oregon during the pandemic, the Statesman Journal reported. It also helped pass legislation that provided driver's licenses to undocumented immigrants.

The board cited two

culties, unprecedented turnover in staff and leadership, and the inability to finalize a contract with the employee union as reasons for the decision.

Causa was spending its financial reserves to cover expenses, and attempts to finalize a contract with union leadership failed, the email said.

The organization will dissolve by July 31. The board is working on a "generous severance" before reserves are gone and will re-grant remaining funds to partner organizations that will continue Causa's work.

"While Causa is closing its doors, we are confident our mission to give Latinx immigrants a powerful voice in Oregon will continue through the work of our incredible community partners," officials said.

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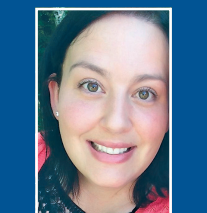
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