



DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

news release

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

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FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE REQUESTS 4-YEAR REAUTHORIZATION FOR ENDANGERED SPECIES ACT; CITES ACCOMPLISHMENTS UNDER ACT'S FIRST DECADE

The Interior Department's U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service requested a 4-year renewal of the U.S. Endangered Species Act during reauthorization hearings held today by the House Committee on Merchant Marine and Fisheries.

In testimony before the Committee, Fish and Wildlife Service Director Robert Jantzen requested no major legislative changes in the act, which governs national endangered species protection and recovery programs. Federal responsibility for these programs is shared by the Fish and Wildlife Service and the Commerce Department's National Marine Fisheries Service.

Jantzen testified before the Fish and Wildlife Conservation and the Environment subcommittee, which is holding hearings on H.R. 1027, a bill sponsored by Representatives John Breau and Don Young to reauthorize appropriations for the Endangered Species Act.

"The Department of the Interior is requesting a 4-year reauthorization of the Endangered Species Act, without substantive amendments," Jantzen said. He added that Congressional amendments during earlier reauthorizations had made the Endangered Species Act more effective and more flexible in responding to potential conflicts with development projects. "These changes, along with administrative improvements by the Federal departments responsible for implementing the act, have resulted in a program that is running efficiently and effectively."

The Endangered Species Act, which has been reauthorized four times since it was enacted in 1973, established a comprehensive program for the conservation of endangered and threatened species. Currently, 831 animals and plants are listed as endangered or threatened, 333 of which are found in the United States. A total of 169 recovery plans have been approved, setting goals and procedures for bringing listed species back from the verge of extinction.

The Fish and Wildlife Service has requested a FY 1986 budget of \$27 million for administration of the endangered species program, approximately the same level of appropriations approved by Congress for FY 1985. About \$23 million would support listing, recovery, consultation, research, and law enforcement programs; \$4 million is requested for endangered species conservation and restoration grants for the States. In 1985, 146 such cooperative projects were conducted in 37 States with the same level of support.