



**UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
ENDANGERED SPECIES PROGRAM**

ACHIEVING RECOVERY; PREVENTING EXTINCTION (Time 5:29)

NARRATED BY MARJORIE NELSON

This transcript was produced from audio provided by FWS Endangered Species Program

P R O C E E D I N G S

(Music plays.)

The Endangered Species Act (ESA) is a landmark environmental law that was enacted in 1973 to prevent the loss or harm of endangered and threatened species, and to preserve the ecosystems upon which these species depend. These goals of the ESA are achieved through the minimization or abatement of threats that are the basis for listing a species

Factors resulting in listing can range from threats due to hunting or collection, to spread of a new disease, or to habitat alteration. The key factor identified for many species is related to habitat alteration. The scope and severity of threats can increase substantially as a result of a synergy between individual threats. By minimizing or removing threats, a species can be ultimately, recovered and thus would not need the protection of the ESA.

Recovering listed species is a complex task. We are attempting to halt or reverse declines that in some instances have been more than 200 years in the making. Halting the decline, then removing or reducing the threats to the species is a challenge that takes time. For many species, more than one kind of threat is involved, such as habitat degradation through land, water, and other resource development and extraction; and invasive species proliferation.

Recovering endangered and threatened species is a shared responsibility. The ESA itself recognizes that the task cannot be accomplished by anyone acting alone. Recovery relies on the involvement of a diverse group of partners and stakeholders to develop innovative approaches to address threats, make use of existing flexible

conservation tools, broaden support for current and future on-the-ground actions and monitoring, and implement necessary recovery actions. Without the Service's partners and stakeholders, the recovery of our Nation's nearly 1,400 listed species would not be possible.

A species is recovered when it no longer needs the protection of the ESA. In other words, they are no longer facing threats such that their long-term viability is ensured. To delist a species, we follow the same process used to consider whether to list a species. We assess populations and recovery achievements with respect to minimization or abatement of threats to determine whether the species is still threatened or endangered.

Along the road to recovery, we may determine that a species status has improved such that it is no longer endangered and can be reclassified as threatened. Also known as "downlisting," such a reclassification is a celebration of recovery gains and an identification of further conservation needs in order to fully recover the species. Downlisting also affords the Service the ability to apply more flexible management such that our focus is put into the specific needs.

Thanks to the hard work and dedication of our federal, state, private, nongovernmental, and tribal partners, we are able to push species closer towards recovery.

For example, the Oregon chub, a small minnow found only in the Willamette River Basin in western Oregon, has rebounded from the brink of extinction. Last spring, the Service recognized this fish's improved condition by reclassifying the species from endangered to the less critical threatened status.

The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife and private landowners played important roles in restoring the species' habitat. And through the Oregon Chub Recovery Plan, a team of state and federal agencies funded extensive surveys that led to the discovery of new populations. In addition, successful reintroductions established 13 new populations within its historical range. These actions dramatically improved the known status of the Oregon chub. Currently, 49 known populations are distributed throughout the Willamette Valley.

Earlier this year, conservationists involved in the 25-year long Maguire daisy recovery effort had reason to celebrate. The Service announced in January the Maguire daisy would be removed from the list of threatened and endangered species, making it the 21st species to be delisted due to successful recovery.

Numbering at just seven plants when it was listed as endangered in 1985, the daisy has blossomed into a healthy population of 163 thousand plants. Since the time of listing, Federal land management agencies including the Forest Service, the Bureau of Land Management, the National Park Service, and the Fish and Wildlife Service worked collaboratively to stabilize populations, address threats, and provide adequate protection and management to ensure the plant's long-term persistence.

Not everyone may agree with our decisions, and in fact, a few decisions to delist species have been overturned in court. However, this is a rare occurrence, as the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service uses the best scientific and commercial information available to determine the status of a species. Additionally, conservation of a species does not end once a species is removed from the endangered species list. The ESA provides for the monitoring of delisted species for a minimum of five years in order to ensure the species remains secure from risk of extinction after the protections of the ESA are removed. A primary goal of this post-delisting monitoring is to be able to detect a substantial decline such that we can take corrective measures and therefore, re-proposing it as a threatened or endangered species would not be needed.

We have shown a great deal of success through the work of the Endangered Species Act. With the help of our partners, we have saved species from the brink of extinction; since 1968, 99 percent of all listed species have been prevented from going extinct. We have reversed the downward trend for many species, including our Nation's symbol, the Bald Eagle, and restored it to a self-sustaining member of ecosystems throughout the country.

For the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, this is Marjorie Nelson.