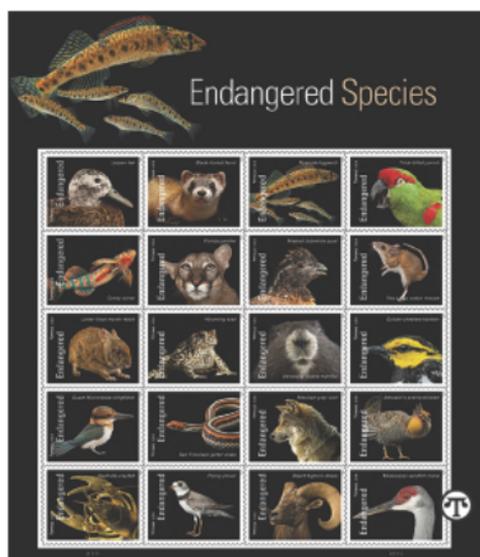


S T A M P news & notes

Postal Service Celebrates the 50th Anniversary of the Endangered Species Act

(NAPS)—The U.S. Postal Service will commemorate the 50th anniversary of the Endangered Species Act (ESA) with the release of a new set of stamps on May 19. The stamps showcase photographs of 20 endangered animals found within the United States and its territories, as well as two North American species living near U.S. borders. These threatened species include the piping plover, the black-footed ferret, the Roanoke logperch, the Florida panther, the Mississippi sandhill crane, the Nashville crayfish, the Wyoming toad, the Lower Keys marsh rabbit, the San Francisco garter snake, the Key Largo cotton mouse and 10 others.

The photographs are among the more than 13,000 images in National Geographic Explorer and photographer Joel Sartore's "National Geographic Photo Ark," a project to document every species living in the world's zoos, aquariums, and wildlife sanctuaries with the



Beautiful, but endangered, these threatened animals are featured on new stamps to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the Endangered Species Act (ESA).

and conserving the habitats upon which they depend. All Americans can take pride in the fact that, under the protection of the ESA, the California condor, grizzly bear, Okaloosa darter, whooping crane, and black-footed ferret have all been brought back from the brink of extinction. We can also celebrate that many other species no longer need ESA protection and have been removed from the list of endangered and threatened species, including the bald eagle — the very symbol of our nation's strength."

Habitat loss is the chief cause of species vulnerability. Other factors include pollution, climate change, the



aim of supporting on-the-ground conservation efforts and inspiring action through education.

The national effort to save threatened wildlife can be traced to Dec. 27, 1973, when President Richard Nixon signed the Endangered Species Act into law, following a unanimous Senate vote. In the 50 years since, other nations have emulated the pioneering U.S. initiative. The law, also known as the ESA, provides a framework to conserve and protect endangered and threatened species and their habitats both domestically and abroad.

Under the ESA, more than 1,670 U.S. species and 698 foreign species are safeguarded to increase their chances of survival. Scientists estimate that hundreds of species have been rescued from the brink of extinction in the United States since the ESA began. A species found to need protection is listed under the ESA as either threatened or endangered, the latter defined as "in danger of extinction throughout all or a significant portion of its range."

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service implements the ESA. Their website, fws.gov/program/endangered-species, describes the law's enduring legacy: "Throughout its history, ESA has proven to be incredibly effective in stabilizing populations of species at risk, preventing the extinction of many others,



introduction of invasive species and overhunting. Human activity accounts for about 99 percent of all modern-day extinctions, so humans' unique capability to alter the environment comes with immense responsibility.

There's a story behind every stamp. The story behind the Endangered Species stamps is one of hope, persistence and resilience. Let's celebrate and support the organizations, agencies and people that are working to protect and save these beautiful animals.

The Endangered Species stamps can be purchased at local post offices or online at the Postal Store.