



# 2015

**ANNUAL REPORT**

# 2015 HIG

Starting with some numbers that make us proud, here's a summary of what Defenders accomplished with your help.

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# 10

With a push from Defenders' members, Texas became the 10th state to ban the sale or possession of shark fins (joining CA, DE, HI, IL, MD, MA, NY, OR and WA).



CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE

For the first time in almost 100 years, a wolf pack (2 adults, 5 pups) roam in California, thanks to our advocacy work.

© STEVE WINTER/NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC CREATIVE



# 18

To protect wolves, jaguars, sea otters and more, Defenders filed 18 lawsuits.



© BRIAN J. SKERRY/NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC CREATIVE

# 76,757

We gathered nearly 77,000 signatures in a petition that led to more protected habitat for manatees.

# 1

Defenders opened a new office in Asheville, North Carolina, a biodiversity hotspot, to protect red-cockaded woodpeckers, red wolves, mussels, salamanders, freshwater fish and more against mining, climate change and unsustainable forestry and farming practices.

# HIGHLIGHTS

## 611,318

Defenders' Facebook supporters exceeded 600,000.

## 29

Defenders led the reintroduction of 29 endangered scarlet macaws into the wild in Mexico.



© DANIEL DORANTES

## 330,000

President Obama created Berryessa Snow Mountain National Monument—protecting 330,000 acres of California's inner coast—after a campaign by Defenders.

## 4,577

The press mentioned Defenders' projects or quoted staff nearly 5,000 times in 2015.

## 62

To reduce conflicts with grizzlies and people—and keep bears alive—Defenders helped landowners complete 62 bear fencing projects.



© TIM GRAMS

## 138

We played a key role in restoring 138 Yellowstone bison to ancestral land on the Fort Peck Indian Reservation in Montana, bringing the population to 186.



© JANE TIMMERMAN

## 90%

A Defenders poll found 90% of registered voters support upholding the Endangered Species Act.

Defenders of Wildlife is a driving force in the protection of imperiled native wildlife throughout North America. We tackle the challenge of wildlife and habitat losses with a three-pronged approach to conservation: **PREVENT** species and their habitat from becoming imperiled, **PROTECT** endangered and threatened species and their habitats so they can recover, and **RESTORE** the health of species so they are no longer vulnerable to extinction and can once again thrive. Our approach produced some outstanding results in 2015.



# DEFENDING THE ESA

The Endangered Species Act (ESA)—one of the country's most effective and essential tools to protect imperiled wildlife—was under unprecedented legislative attack in Congress in 2015. More than 90 proposed bills, amendments and riders sought to undermine the law's ability to protect endangered species. Defenders testified before Congress in opposition to several bills that would have significantly weakened the ESA. Other measures would have prematurely delisted several species—including the gray wolf, the Mexican gray wolf and the Preble's meadow jumping mouse. We also helped lead the conservation community's collective response to an unusually high number of anti-ESA amendments proposed in the annual funding bill with a "Veto Extinction" campaign—which included online ads targeted at members of Congress and direct lobbying. Ultimately, Congress rejected every attempt to weaken the ESA, resulting in a major victory for endangered wildlife.



KATHAI NATIONAL PARK, ALASKA © CHRISTIE HAINES

BLACK-FOOTED FERRET © JOEL SARTORE/WWW.JOELSARTORE.COM



DESERT TORTOISE © JOEL SARTORE/NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC PHOTO ARK

After analyzing seven years of U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) assessments of 88,000 projects that could impact species listed under the ESA, Defenders found that not one project was stopped because FWS said it would threaten a species' survival. Published in the "Proceeding of the National Academy of Sciences,"—one of the world's top scientific journals—our findings counter arguments from ESA opponents who claim that complying with the law is always onerous. Our findings also raise serious questions about whether FWS is adequately protecting species—a concern we are looking into in 2016.

# GATHERING FACTS TO COUNTER ATTACKS

# KEEPING GRAY WOLF RECOVERY ON TRACK



The good news in 2015 for gray wolves: In Wyoming, wolves regained much-needed ESA protection—after we took FWS to court to challenge its delisting decision. In Idaho, after a court settlement with Defenders, the Department of Fish and Game decided not to trap and kill wolves in the Frank Church River of No Return Wilderness for another year. In California, the Department of Fish and Wildlife confirmed the first wolf pack after nearly a century of absence. Defenders played a major role in making it happen by advocating for the protection of wolves under the ESA in Oregon and for the development of a protective wolf-management plan in California that includes provisions to reduce wolf and livestock conflicts. Defenders also met with managers of the Mexican gray wolf reintroduction project in Mexico to discuss wolf-livestock conflicts and assemble temporary barrier fences—known as turbo fladry—reinforced with known predator deterrents—called Foxlights—in a corridor frequently used by wolves. As a result of these measures, project managers report that wolves no longer harassed cattle.

© LARRY TRAVIS



© FRITZ POLKING/FLPA/MINDEN PICTURES

# STEPPING UP FOR PANTHERS

Large-scale habitat conservation is one of the best ways to ensure Florida panthers return to the Southeast. Our Florida team mapped out a wildlife habitat network plan that prioritizes the land and water necessary to conserve wildlife corridors across the panhandle. The goal is to protect imperiled species from development and roads and to identify the best remaining unprotected habitats. Defenders also played a significant role in the passage of the Florida Water and Land Conservation State Constitutional Amendment. This landmark ballot amendment is expected to set aside nearly \$18 billion over the next 20 years to fund projects that include protecting habitat for panthers, manatees, shorebirds, sea turtles and gopher tortoises.

# ADVOCATING FOR MANATEES

Defenders' hard work to improve protections for Florida manatees resulted in a winter sanctuary at Three Sisters Springs in Crystal River National Wildlife Refuge in Florida and a tourist no-touch policy.



© PAUL NICKLEV/NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC CREATIVE



© DEBBIE TUBRIDY

# PEOPLE AND POLAR BEARS

To bring vital Alaska Native knowledge to our work, we hired an Arctic community liaison from the Bering Strait region. This new Defender is leading our marine mammal oil preparedness response program, which includes ensuring that community wildlife experts are essential participants in state and federal spill response and preparedness.

# LOBBYING ON BEHALF OF BISON

Damaging anti-bison bills before the state legislature would have blocked bison restoration efforts in Montana. Through our lobbying efforts and an aggressive statewide media campaign, we were able to dramatically limit the number of introduced anti-bison bills to one. When that bill passed the legislature, Defenders and our allies persuaded the governor to veto it.



© GRAHAM MCCORMACK



EMILY SALAMANDER © TIFFANY YAP

# AVERTING AMPHIBIAN CRISIS

With scientists warning that the international pet trade might introduce a deadly fungus to our shores that could wipe out our native salamander species, Defenders lobbied hard to ensure that FWS declare an emergency moratorium on the importation of salamanders—and we succeeded.





© ROBI NLAJASKE/ODDIBOY OF KANSAS

# FAMILY & FERRETS

Defenders helped broker an agreement between FWS and a Kansas ranching family that prevented government-sponsored poisoning of prairie dogs—the primary prey of Kansas’s only population of endangered black-footed ferrets—on about 2,000 acres of the family’s land. It also resulted in the release of 16 more ferrets and a 40-year ESA safe harbor agreement that will ensure the ferret population on the ranch is not harmed.

# PROTECTING A PORPOISE

With fewer than 100 vaquitas left on Earth, Defenders played a key role in protecting this rare porpoise by securing a total fishing ban in its habitat in the Upper Gulf of California, Mexico. A victim of bycatch in both legal and illegal fisheries, the vaquita would have become extinct in just four years without the ban.



© THOMAS A. JEFFERSON/VIVA VAQUITA



© TRISHA FLAHERTY

# AIDING AQUATIC APPALACHIA

The valley streams of Appalachia boast the highest diversity of freshwater fish, mussels, reptiles and salamanders in the world—many of them protected under the ESA. But these waterways have long been the dumping ground for the coal-mining industry. To protect these biologically rich ecosystems, Defenders went to court to challenge the federal permits of three coal mines in Tennessee, resulting in a reassessment of the projects under the ESA.



© BRIAN J. SKERRY/NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC CREATIVE

## SCALING UP FOR SHARKS

Defenders played a key role in helping Colombia organize and host a shark conservation workshop under the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES). More than 60 participants from more than 20 countries attended the workshop that identified the actions needed to monitor and control the trade of shark products and develop sustainability strategies.

## BETTER FOR BIGHORN

After opposition from Defenders—because development would have compromised important habitat for endangered bighorn sheep and migratory birds—the Bureau of Land Management rejected a 200-megawatt solar project proposal in the Silurian Valley in California.



© JOAN TANNER



© JOEL SARTORE/WWW.JOELSARTORE.COM

## RESCUING THE RED WOLF

Despite a 50 percent decline in red wolves in the Southeast since 2012—only a single population of fewer than 50 remain in the wild today—FWS continues to allow liberal lethal “take” of red wolves from private property. Defenders is suing FWS for failure to protect the wolf under mandated ESA protocols. We have also mobilized tens of thousands of member and supporter comments in opposition to termination of recovery efforts and have filed extensive formal comments in support of the red wolf recovery program.



US FOREST SERVICE

# KEEPING TONGASS ROADLESS

In a major victory for the Tongass National Forest, America's last great rainforest, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit sided with Defenders and overturned a Bush administration exemption of the forest from the "Roadless Rule." This landmark 2001 regulation protects nearly 60 million acres of wild, national forests from new road building and logging—and again includes the Tongass.

# STURGEON STEWARDSHIP

In the murky waters of the Missouri, one of our largest freshwater fish in North America is making a last stand. After federal agencies failed to protect the endangered pallid sturgeon's habitat in the upper Missouri River Basin, Defenders sued and a federal judge ruled in our favor, temporarily blocking construction of a dam and prompting the agencies to reanalyze alternatives to provide this ancient fish passage to its spawning habitat.



© JOEL SARTORE/NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC PHOTO ARK



© KEITH CROWLEY/LODGETRAIL.COM

# SAVING A SAGE-GROUSE

Thanks to Defenders' expert input and years-long investment, the federal government adopted new protections on millions of acres of priority habitat for sage-grouse and over 350 other sagebrush-dependent species. While the final plans contain some deficiencies, the Obama administration's unprecedented effort will advance wildlife conservation on public lands across the West.



KRISTINE SOWIL/USFWS

# INTERVENING FOR IZEMBEK

Defenders won a key legal battle to protect the Izembek National Wildlife Refuge in Alaska after we intervened in a lawsuit that tried to force the construction of a road through the heart of the refuge. Besides devastating the wilderness, the road would have set a dangerous precedent that would have threatened all national wildlife refuges and designated wilderness across the country. Thankfully, a federal judge upheld the federal decision to reject the road.

# WORKING FOR WOLVERINES

After FWS rejected our petition to list the wolverine under the ESA, Defenders filed a lawsuit to challenge FWS's findings that the wolverine is not threatened by climate change, low population numbers and human impacts to its habitat.



© KEN CURTIS



USFWS/PACIFIC SOUTHWEST REGION

# DEFENDING THE DESERT

Conservation would have lost to military interests on the largest national wildlife refuge in the lower 48 states, if Defenders hadn't stepped up to help defeat an amendment adopted in the U.S. House of Representatives. Our efforts prevented the U.S. Air Force from gaining primary jurisdiction over 800,000 acres of the Desert National Wildlife Refuge in Nevada—habitat for 53 mammal species, 35 reptile species and 320 species of birds.



© SAM PARKS

## GOING ALL OUT FOR GRIZ

In Idaho and Montana, Defenders' grizzly coexistence program provided financial assistance to 62 landowners who put electric fences around attractants like chicken coops and beehives. Since it began, our program has helped 148 landowners reduce conflicts with grizzlies that could otherwise end in bear deaths. We are also pushing FWS and the National Park Service to reintroduce grizzlies in the North Cascades in Washington, where fewer than 20 grizzly bears exist.

## STOPPING PARROT POACHING

Supported by Defenders, a nest-monitoring project involving endangered military macaws in Mexico successfully stopped all poaching for a second year in a row. Elsewhere in Mexico, Defenders played a key role in the third release of endangered scarlet macaws inside the Biosphere Reserve of Los Tuxtlas. This once locally extinct wild population now numbers 72 and counting.



© ROBERTO A. SANCHEZ/ISTOCK



© DAVE ELLIOTT/CENTER FOR WHALE RESEARCH/NMFS PERMIT 15669/DFO SARA 272

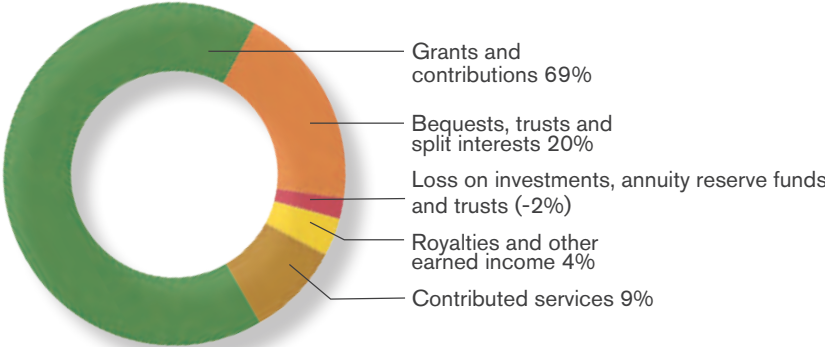
## CETACEAN CONSERVATION

With more than three-quarters of North Atlantic right whales carrying scars from fishing gear entanglement and fewer than 500 of the whales left on the planet, Defenders continues to advocate that New England fishermen be required to use fishing gear that does not harm—or kill—the whales. Meanwhile, southern resident orcas are in similar straits with only 84 left in the Puget Sound region. We are urging the National Marine Fisheries Service to expand their critical habitat before it's too late.

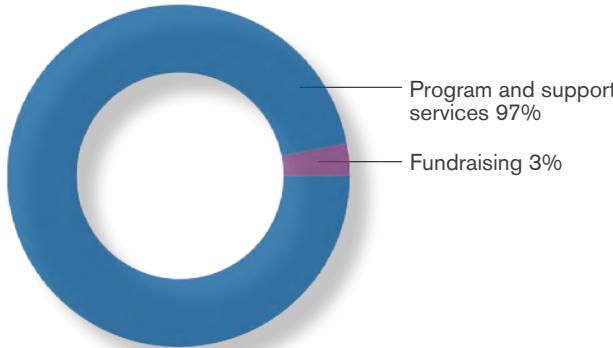
# FINANCIAL REPORT

**In 2015, Defenders of Wildlife’s more than 1.2 million members and supporters contributed more than \$32.5 million for wildlife and wildlife habitat.** This figure also includes all those who generously donated their time and expertise. The steadfast support of our donors allows Defenders to sustain our program and public education efforts in the field, the courts and on Capitol Hill.

## 2015 SOURCES OF FUNDS



## 2015 USES OF FUNDS



### SOURCES OF FUNDS

Grants and contributions	\$22,695
Bequests, trusts and split interests	\$6,474
Loss on investments, annuity reserve funds and trusts	(\$511)
Royalties and other earned income	\$1,149
Contributed services	\$2,857

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**Total Revenue** **\$32,664**

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### USES OF FUNDS

Endangered Species Act	\$8,843
Key species	\$11,966
Habitat	\$7,779
Fundraising	\$1,078
Management and general	\$3,666

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**Total Expenses** **\$33,332**

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Change in net assets	(\$668)
Net assets, start of year	\$26,321

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**Net assets, end of year** **\$25,653**

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Dollars are in thousands.

# WAYS TO GIVE

## PRESIDENT'S COUNCIL

Donors of \$1,000 or more are recognized as members of the President's Council. This special leadership group provides important support to Defenders' programs and offers opportunities for more personal involvement in the work of the organization. Visit the President's Council website at: [www.defenders.org/presidentscouncil](http://www.defenders.org/presidentscouncil).

## WILDLIFE CIRCLE

Members who support Defenders of Wildlife with a donation of \$100 to \$999 are included in our Wildlife Circle. These crucial donors are key partners in our work to protect wolves and other wildlife. In appreciation of their dedicated support, Wildlife Circle members are recognized as a part of our inner circle.

## WILDLIFE GUARDIANS

When you join Defenders' Wildlife Guardians, our monthly giving program, your donations can be made easily and automatically through a credit card or checking account. For more information, visit: [www.defenders.org/wildlifeguardians](http://www.defenders.org/wildlifeguardians).

## CORPORATE MATCHING GIFTS

Many employers match charitable contributions made by their employees. Companies may match donations made by current employees, employees' spouses and even retirees. Check with your personnel office about your company's program or visit us at: [www.defenders.org/matching](http://www.defenders.org/matching).

## WORKPLACE GIVING/EARTH SHARE

Earth Share is a nationwide network of America's leading nonprofit environmental and conservation organizations that raises funds through voluntary payroll deductions at federal, state, city, corporate and private workplaces across the country. Ask about Earth Share where you work and designate Defenders of Wildlife for all or part of your gift. (CFC #10624)



GRAYWOLF © JOHN RAMER

## BEQUESTS AND LIFE INCOME GIFTS

By including Defenders as a beneficiary in your will, living trust, retirement plan, life insurance policy or other estate plan today, you can provide a legacy gift to support our mission well into the future. You can specify that Defenders receives a certain percentage, dollar amount or asset in your estate. Or you can leave specific bequests to family members and friends, and specify that Defenders receives a percentage of the remaining estate value.

To include Defenders in your will or other estate plans, please provide the following language to your professional advisor: "I bequeath \_\_\_\_\_ (describe dollar amount, asset to be given or percentage of your residuary estate) to Defenders of Wildlife (Tax ID# 53-0183181), a nonprofit corporation organized under the laws of the District of Columbia with its principal office at 1130 17th St., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036."

We can also help you structure life-income gifts such as charitable gift annuities or charitable trusts that support wildlife while providing income and tax advantages for you and your loved ones. If you would like more information, please call us toll free at 1.800.915.6789, email [legacy@defenders.org](mailto:legacy@defenders.org), write to us at Office of Gift Planning, Defenders of Wildlife, 1130 17th St., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036, or visit: [www.defenders.org/legacy](http://www.defenders.org/legacy).



**DEFENDERS OF WILDLIFE**  
**IS A NATIONAL,**  
**NONPROFIT MEMBERSHIP**  
**ORGANIZATION**  
**DEDICATED TO THE**  
**PROTECTION OF ALL**  
**NATIVE WILD ANIMALS**  
**AND PLANTS IN THEIR**  
**NATURAL COMMUNITIES.**

Jamie Rappaport Clark, *President & CEO*

Editor  
 Heidi Ridgley

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# THANK YOU

Your passion and commitment to Defenders empowers us to fight for imperiled wildlife species that aren't able to defend themselves. We fight for them in the halls of Congress, in the courts and in the field. Thank you for all you do to ensure our wildlife has a voice. Your donations, letters and emails are behind every single success we had in 2015. We look forward to another great year of wildlife-protection accomplishments with you at our side.

**Winsome Dunn McIntosh**  
*Chair*

**Jamie Rappaport Clark**  
*President & CEO*