



Candidate Species Overview
WildEarth Guardians

Synopsis of 2010 Candidate Notice of Review (N=251 candidate species)

Over half of the species on the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service’s (FWS) most recent Candidate Notice of Review (CNOR) (published in November 2010) are, according to FWS, facing “high-magnitude, imminent” risks to their survival. There are 141 species, or 56% of the 251 CNOR candidates, in this highest risk category (Table 1).

Table 1. Candidates by Imperilment

Listing Priority Number	No. of Species	Extinction Risk
1	0	Highest Risk (N= 141)
2	90	
3	51	
4	2	Second Highest Risk (N=46)
5	40	
6	4	
7	1	Third Highest Risk (N=48)
8	35	
9	12	
10	0	Fourth Highest Risk (N=16)
11	14	
12	2	
Total	251	

Candidate species occur throughout the United States. FWS regions with the highest number of candidates are Region 1 (HI, Pacific Remote Islands, ID, OR, WA), Region 2 (the southwestern U.S.), and Region 4 (the southeastern U.S.). Altogether, these have jurisdiction over 205 (82%) of the 251 CNOR candidates (Table 2). When FWS regions are grouped differently, the western continental U.S. stands out as having jurisdiction over the most candidate species: 101 (40%) of the 251 CNOR candidates (Table 3).

Table 2. Candidates by FWS Region

FWS Region	No. of Species
Region 1	104
Region 2	41
Region 3	5
Region 4	60
Region 5	6
Region 6	10
Region 7	2
Region 8	23
Total	251

Table 3. Candidates by Geographic Area

Area	No. of Species
Western US	101
Hawaii & Pacific Remote Islands	79
Eastern US	71
Total	251

Candidates in the 2010 CNOR include a diverse array of species (Table 4). Slightly over half are animals (141 species or 56%); the remainder are plants (110 species or 44%).

Table 4. Candidates by Taxonomy

Taxonomy	No. of Species
Vertebrates	67
Invertebrates	74
Plants	110
Total	251
Vertebrates	
Birds	16
Herptiles	19
Fishes	14
Mammals	18
Total Vertebrates	67
Invertebrates	
Butterflies	8
Damselflies	4
Beetles	13
Other insects	4
Crustaceans	6
Mollusks	38
Spiders	1
Total Invertebrates	74
Plants	
Hawaiian	55
Western U.S.	28
Florida	14
Other	13
Total Plants	110

More than half have waited for more than 20 years. Nine out of ten candidates have been waiting for more than five years (Table 5).

Table 5. Candidate Waiting Times*

Waiting for more than...	No. of Species	Proportion of candidate list
30 years	53	21%
20 years	146	58%
10 years	210	84%
5 years	232	92%
1 year	245	98%

*last updated May 10, 2011

All 53 species that have waited over 30 years to be listed are plants that were originally petitioned for listing by the Smithsonian Institution in 1975 and first placed on the candidate list on December 15, 1980. These plants comprise almost half of all plants currently awaiting ESA listing as candidates. Put differently, 1 of every 2 plants on the ESA candidate list have waited for over 30 years for protection.

Candidate species do not have the luxury of time. According to FWS data, almost all of them (98%) are imperiled by habitat loss. Lack of legal protection is also a leading threat (98%). More than one-half are threatened by disease or predation (55%), and one-third are impacted or potentially impacted by the climate crisis (35%) (Table 6). Nearly every species faces multiple threats.

Table 6. Threats to the Candidates

Threat Category	Number of Candidates	Proportion of Candidates
Habitat Loss	245	98%
Overutilization	48	19%
Disease or Predation	138	55%
Lack of Legal Protection	245	98%
Other Causes	231	92%
Climate Change	31	12%
Impacted or Potentially Impacted by Climate Change	88	35%