



Opposition to 2025 Proposed Amendments to the Endangered Species Act

Sharon S. Tisher, University of Maine

These proposed regulations under the Endangered Species Act do not “clarify” the ESA. Instead, they would essentially disable the statute from fulfilling the intentions of Congress, intentions that have been well served by the agencies’ lawful enforcement of this act for over 50 years. They enhance the likelihood that threatened species will become extinct before they even attained “endangered” status under the act; fail to protect endangered species from the fatal consequences of past habitat destruction; permit fast-track approvals of destructive projects without adequate consideration of their consequences for endangered and threatened species; and erode the scientific foundations of this law, by prioritizing corporate finances over science in decisions about species’ survival.

Case in point from my home state of Maine: As the agencies are aware, the Gulf of Maine population of Atlantic Salmon has been listed as endangered for over 25 years. In 2000, the fish were listed for certain rivers in Maine. In 2009, the list was expanded to include upper reaches of the Penobscot River. This listing was highly controversial, widely opposed by Maine politicians as a threat to industry and agriculture, a fact that probably led to limiting the geographic scope of the listing in 2000.