



Natural Areas Conservancy  
1234 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10029

December 18, 2025

Brian Nesvik, Director  
United States Fish and Wildlife Service  
1849 C Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20240

Emily Menashes, Deputy Assistant Administrator for Operations  
NOAA Fisheries  
1315 East-West Highway 14th Floor  
Silver Spring, MD 20910

Dear Director Nesvik and Deputy Assistant Administrator Menashes,

On behalf of the Natural Areas Conservancy (NAC), we are writing in opposition to the four proposed rules regarding the Endangered Species Act found in the following dockets:

- FWS–HQ–ES–2025–0048: Economic influences must be considered during listing decisions
- FWS–HQ–ES–2025–0029: Threatened species listed under the ESA would no longer receive the broad protections that endangered species get
- FWS–HQ–ES–2025–0044: Key species protection actions, known as “offsets,” would be removed from the list of reasonable and prudent measures available to conservationists; the criteria for delisting a species would be lowered, possibly removing protections before it would be warranted.
- FWS–HQ–ES–2025–0039: Unoccupied habitats, which are crucial for birds that may need to relocate due to environmental pressures or have an expanding range, would be much harder to protect.

As the champion for urban natural areas in New York City, the NAC works to increase the health and resilience of our urban forests and wetlands, which provide critical habitat to over 200 species of mammals, birds, reptiles, amphibians, fish, and insects that have state legal protection status (e.g., threatened, endangered, or special concern). We view these habitats as a crucial benefit of the natural areas with our parks, especially as research has shown that nearly 50% of NYC residents only experience nature in their local parks. We also believe that protecting habitat for endangered species to meet the requirements of the ESA as it stands now has the added benefit of supporting better public health outcomes for city residents. NOAA even highlights this important function of the ESA on its [own website](#): “Each plant, animal, and their physical environment is part of a complex web of life. The extinction of a single species can affect many other species, especially humans, who depend on marine, estuarine, and riverine environments for food, commerce, medicine, and recreation.”



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Locally, we have seen the return of previously endangered species such as the bald eagle to our local parks and green spaces, with multiple nesting pairs now calling NYC home. This remarkable recovery has only been possible thanks to the protection conferred by the ESA.

We strongly urge the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to reconsider this proposed rule change, and believe that we must keep all four components of the ESA that give it authority as the strongest and oldest conservation law in the world. Rolling back these four aspects will hurt humans, animals, and the habitats we share for generations to come.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Andrew Wallach

Interim Executive Director  
Natural Areas Conservancy