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**Lawsuit Seeks Endangered Species Act Protections for Humboldt Marten**

***Rare Forest Carnivore Threatened by Logging, Historic Fires***

ARCATA, Calif.— Two conservation groups today sued the Trump administration for its failure to finalize Endangered Species Act protection for the Humboldt marten.

Fewer than 400 of these secretive forest dwellers remain in four isolated populations along a narrow strip of coastal habitat in northern California and southern Oregon.

In October 2018, eight years after the Center for Biological Diversity and Environmental Protection Information Center (EPIC) first petitioned to protect this rare carnivore, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service proposed listing the Humboldt marten as a threatened species under the ESA. But the wildlife agency has yet to finalize the rule, denying the marten the protections it needs to survive.

“It wasn’t long ago that we thought Humboldt martens were extinct, and the Trump Administration’s inexcusable delays mean we could lose them for good this time,” said Quinn Read, Oregon policy director of the Center for Biological Diversity. “The administration must act now to provide the protections necessary for martens to once again thrive in our ancient forests.”

Humboldt martens were once common in the coastal mountains from California’s Sonoma County north to the Columbia River in Oregon. But the population was decimated by unchecked trapping and logging of its forest habitat. The Humboldt marten is so rare that it was thought extinct until trail cameras provided evidence of their survival in the redwoods in 1996.

“The Fish and Wildlife Service is failing at its charge: to protect America’s native wildlife. Delay after delay, the Humboldt marten has been put at peril to placate the timber industry,” said Tom Wheeler, executive director at EPIC.

The Center and the EPIC petitioned to list the Humboldt marten as a protected species under the ESA in 2010, but the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service caved to timber-industry pressure and issued a negative decision in 2015. The groups successfully challenged that decision, and a federal judge ordered the agency to reevaluate the marten’s status.

The Service subsequently announced its proposal to list the marten as a threatened species in October 2018. That decision triggered a deadline for a final listing by October 2019, but the agency has since failed to act, leading the Center and EPIC to file suit today.

Martens are threatened by the ongoing logging of mature forests, loss of closed-canopy habitat to wildfires, rodent poison used in marijuana cultivation, and vehicle strikes. California banned trapping of Humboldt martens in the 1940s, but Oregon did not follow suit until 2019 after a petition and lawsuit from conservation groups. The animals have been wiped out from 93% of their historic range.

Martens have triangular ears and a bushy tail, and are related to minks and otters. They grow up to 2 feet long but weigh less than 3 pounds and must eat a quarter of their body weight daily to keep up with their high metabolism. Martens eat small mammals, birds, berries, reptiles and insects, and are eaten by larger mammals and raptors.

*The Center for Biological Diversity is a national, nonprofit conservation organization with more than 1.7 million members and online activists dedicated to the protection of endangered species and wild places.*

*The Environmental Protection Information Center (EPIC) advocates for the protection and restoration of Northwest California's forests, using an integrated, science-based approach, combining public education, citizen advocacy, and strategic litigation.*