

Endangered species recovery: A resource allocation problem

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Many nations have laws to identify and protect imperiled species and their ecosystems. In the United States, actions taken under the Endangered Species Act (ESA) have prevented many extinctions, but few listed species have recovered to the point where they can have the ESA protections removed. One reason for this is a shortfall in funding, raising a conundrum for agencies responsible for species recovery: Should resources be allocated toward species facing imminent extinction or species whose long-term survival can most benefit from investment? Some argue that the latter strategy is ethically unsound because it may abandon species with little hope of long-term recovery, even when science suggests that the former strategy may miss opportunities to prevent species from ever experiencing the risk of imminent extinction. We suggest that framing recovery prioritization as a resource allocation problem provides a structure to facilitate constructive debate about such important questions. We discuss here the merits of an explicit resource allocation framework and introduce a prototype decision tool that we developed with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) to facilitate transparent and efficient recovery allocation decisions.

Read the full article in [Science Policy Forum](#) [1].

Associated Project:

[ESA Decision Making](#) [2]

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