

Environmentalists sue for Everglades bird

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The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is being sued by environmental groups concerned with endangered snail kites, hawk-like birds in the Florida Everglades.

The suit was filed in Washington by the National Wildlife Federation and the Florida Wildlife Federation, who claim the Corps is destroying the snail kite's habitat by drastically reducing the bird's primary food source through "mismanagement of water levels in Lake Okeechobee."

The birds exist almost entirely on apple snails, whose numbers are in decline as the waters deepen, the Naples (Fla.) Daily News said Tuesday.

"This is a wildlife disaster on the fast track," said Randy Sargent, wildlife conservation counsel at the NWF.

Corps officials could not be reached for comment on the suit.

The lawsuit aims to have the Corps reinitiate formal consultation with the Fish and Wildlife Service when dealing with water levels at Lake Okeechobee. It also seeks to prevent the Corps from holding water in Lake Okeechobee at levels harmful to the snail kite and its habitat.

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