

Security plan imperils endangered species

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An area just north of Tijuana and south of San Diego -- the last refuge for many endangered species -- is being threatened by a fence.

The National Estuarine Research reserve -- all that remains of the wilderness that once was common in southern California -- is home to more than 350 species of birds, as well as 20 kinds of fish and a plethora of other endangered animals and plants.

Now, in the name of national security, the Department of Homeland Security wants to build 15-foot-high fencing just south of the federally protected land -- a border protection project environmentalists say could spell disaster for the sensitive ecology of the region, The San Francisco Chronicle reported Monday.

But the Department of Homeland Security can waive any federal, state or local laws or rules to build barriers and roads along the Mexican border.

In addition, 700 miles of double border security fencing are being considered in California, Arizona, New Mexico and Texas.

Such fencing, opponents told the Chronicle, could wreak havoc on the rich swath of parks, forests, wilderness areas and habitats for migratory wildlife, animals and plants in the areas.

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