

Wild 'teddy bear' of Louisiana no longer endangered

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The Louisiana black bear, a subspecies of black bear like the one seen here, lives in certain areas of the American south

The Louisiana black bear, which inspired the popular stuffed animals known as teddy bears, is no longer an endangered species, US officials said Wednesday.

After more than two decades of [conservation efforts](#), the US Fish and Wildlife Service is proposing to remove the bears from the endangered list because their numbers have rebounded.

"Across Texas, Louisiana and Mississippi, we have worked together with our partners to protect and restore habitat, reintroduce populations and reduce the threats to the bear," said Interior Secretary Sally Jewell.

"Today's recovery of the bear is yet another success story of the Endangered Species Act."

The Louisiana [black bear](#), a subspecies of black bear that lives in certain areas of the American south, rose to fame in the early 20th century after one bear's encounter with the president.

In 1902, president Theodore "Teddy" Roosevelt was on a hunting trip in Mississippi. He was unable to find any bears to shoot until the third day, when aides found a black bear that had been chased and attacked by dogs and tied it to a tree for Roosevelt to shoot.

The US leader decided he could not shoot the bear, but ordered that it be put down to end its suffering.

The story spread in US newspapers and editorial cartoons, and inspired the creation of stuffed animals named "teddy bears" by a Brooklyn candy store owner.

The Fish and Wildlife Service said other animals saved from extinction due to the Endangered Species Act include the American alligator, Florida panther, bald eagle, brown pelican and gray whale.

"An America without the Louisiana black bear would be an America that has deprived its children of a key piece of their wildlife heritage," said

deputy director Steve Guertin.

The proposal to delist the Louisiana black bear is open for comment until July 20, and public hearings will be held to discuss the recommended changes.

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