

# **Over 1,600 scientists call for conservation funding to solve the biodiversity crisis**

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The journal *Science* has published a letter titled "Solve the biodiversity crisis with funding," coauthored by scientists at Defenders of Wildlife

and universities across the country. More than 1,600 scientists have so far endorsed the letter, calling on Congress to fully fund conservation programs that protect biodiversity from severe and growing threats.

The [letter](#) highlights the scale of the threats to [biodiversity](#) left unaddressed by decades of severe underfunding of successful conservation laws like the Endangered Species Act (ESA). The recent Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services Global Assessment (IPBES) is the most comprehensive report of the status and trends of biodiversity to date and offers a bleak assessment, with around 1 million species threatened with extinction.

The ESA is widely considered the strongest law in the world for conserving imperiled wildlife, pulling iconic species like the black-footed ferret and California condor back from the brink of extinction and setting hundreds on the path to recovery. Yet less than 25 percent of funding needed to recover listed species has been provided in the past several decades. Full funding for the ESA and other [conservation programs](#) would accelerate the successes of protecting biodiversity and ensuring a stable, resilient Earth.

The letter remains open for scientists to endorse at <https://defenders-cci.org/sign-on/conservation-funding>.

Dr. Jacob Malcom, lead author on the scientist letter and Director of the Center for Conservation Innovation, Defenders of Wildlife, said, "The science is clear: biodiversity faces unprecedented threats and decline, with about 1 million species at risk of extinction. Scientists stand united in the need for Congress to fully fund proven conservation programs to stem the tide of extinction. We must act now before it's too late."

Dr. Leah Gerber, coauthor on the scientist letter, a lead author on the

IPBES Global Assessment, and Professor and Director of the Center for Biodiversity Outcomes at Arizona State University, said, "Funding the ESA has been proven to recover endangered species—recovery costs for all listed species is 1/100 of the cost of food waste to Americans annually. So, for a mere fraction of what Americans spend on uneaten food, we can prevent further extinctions and help preserve our full natural heritage."

**More information:** J. Malcolm et al., "Solving the biodiversity crisis starts with fully funding conservation efforts," *Science* (2019).  
[science.sciencemag.org/lookup/.../1126/science.aay9839](https://science.sciencemag.org/lookup/.../1126/science.aay9839)

Provided by Defenders of Wildlife

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