Impacts on Wildlife and Habitat
The short- and long-term effects of the border wall on wildlife and its habitat include:

• Mortality caused by construction activity, enforcement vehicles, stress and loss of habitat and access to resources

• Blockage of the corridors that accommodate migrations and other movement—including northward shifts in range as species adapt to climate change

• Obstruction of access to seasonally important resources

• Displacement of species and disruption of wildlife ranges

• Destruction, deterioration and fragmentation of habitat, including movement corridors and areas recently replanted or otherwise restored

A border wall will cut off populations of endangered Mexican wolves, eliminating much needed opportunities to interbreed and increase the genetic diversity of the species essential to its recovery.
Wildlife and Wild Lands at Risk
The U.S.-Mexico border intersects several major habitat types and is regularly crossed by wildlife migrating north and south. According to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, at least 89 endangered or threatened species and 108 species of migratory birds could be affected by activities in the border region. Four national wildlife refuge complexes could also be affected. These refuge lands each represent tens of millions of dollars of federal investments for acquisition, management and rehabilitation, as well as decades of binational collaboration to ensure wildlife habitat is connected and pristine.

The wall would seriously impede the recovery of two critically endangered species, jaguars and Mexican gray wolves. Any wall along the border of Mexico would have to pass through designated jaguar critical habitat, preventing the movement of jaguars between Mexico and the United States, which is vital to re-establishing a jaguar population in the United States. Populations of Mexican gray wolves would also be cut off. With just 113 of these wolves—the most endangered gray wolf species in the world—in U.S. borderlands and 35 in Mexico, the inbreeding that would result could jeopardize their continued recovery.

Other wildlife that could fare badly include ocelot, bighorn sheep, cactus ferruginous pygmy owl, desert tortoise, wild turkey, quail, Sonoran pronghorn, black bear, mountain lion and coati. New barriers along the border would increase the number of species at risk, especially in three biologically rich regions: coastal California, the Gulf Coast of Texas and the Madrean Archipelago or “Sky Islands” of southeast Arizona.

References


