

Endangered Species Act Summary

Methodology

This study was commissioned by the Endangered Species Coalition and conducted by Harris Interactive, using the Harris Poll National Quorum®. A total of 1,009 telephone surveys were conducted among adults aged 18 and over within the United States between February 16th to 20th, 2011. Figures for age, sex, race/ethnicity, education, region, number of adults in the household, and number of phone lines in the household were weighted where necessary to bring them into line with their actual proportions in the population.

In this summary, statistical testing was conducted between regions and between party ID. Uppercase letters indicate significant differences between the subgroups at the 95% confidence level.

Summary of Findings

- Overall, there is strong support for the Endangered Species Act (84%), with Democrats having the strongest support (93%).
- Most Americans believe the ESA is a safety net providing balanced solutions to save wildlife, plants and fish that are at risk of extinction (64%), with Democrats the most likely to believe this (76%).
 - While the majority of Republicans also believe the ESA is a safety net (49%), they are more likely than those who support other parts to believe the ESA is used by environmentalists and their lawyers to hinder growth and progress (43%).
- The majority of Americans believe decisions about whether to remove the Endangered Species Act's protections should be based on science, not politics (63%).
- The majority of Americans agree that:
 - Decisions about wildlife management and which animals needs protection should be made by scientists, not politicians (92%);
 - The ESA has helped hundreds of species recover from the brink of extinction (90%);
 - The gray wolf is a vital part of America's wilderness and natural heritage (87%);
 - The ESA is a successful safety net for protecting wildlife, plants, and fish from extinction (87%); and,
 - The ongoing recovery of gray wolves in the Northern Rockies could be one of America's greatest wildlife success stories if the Endangered Species Act is kept in place until the states have science-based management plans approved (78%).

Detailed Findings

1. As you may know, the Endangered Species Act is an environmental law established to protect all wildlife, plants and fish that are in danger of extinction. Based on what you know, would you say that you strongly support, somewhat support, somewhat oppose, or strongly oppose the Endangered Species Act?

		Region				Party ID		
	Total	North-East (A)	Midwest (B)	South (C)	West (D)	Total GOP (E)	Total DEM (F)	Total IND (G)
Strongly support	44%	44%	46%	45%	42%	31%	58% ^{EG}	41%
Somewhat support	40%	41%	39%	40%	39%	42%	35%	44%
Somewhat oppose	7%	7%	7%	8%	7%	14% ^F	1%	7% ^F
Strongly oppose	6%	6%	4%	6%	7%	9%	4%	4%
Don't know/ refused	3%	2%	3%	1%	6% ^C	3%	2%	4%
Support (T2B)	84%	85%	85%	85%	80%	74%	93% ^{EG}	85% ^E
Oppose (B2B)	13%	12%	11%	14%	14%	23% ^{FG}	6%	11%

2. Some people say the Endangered Species Act has been used by environmentalists and their lawyers to hinder economic development, while others say it is a safety net providing balanced solutions to save wildlife, plants and fish that are at risk of extinction. Which is closer to your point of view?

	Total	Region				Party ID		
		North-East (A)	Midwest (B)	South (C)	West (D)	Total GOP (E)	Total DEM (F)	Total IND (G)
The ESA is a safety net providing balanced solutions to save wildlife, plants and fish that are at risk of extinction	64%	57%	70% ^A	68%	60%	49%	76% ^{EG}	63% ^E
The ESA is used by environmentalists and their lawyers in the western United States to hinder growth and progress	26%	33% ^B	20%	24%	29%	43% ^{FG}	17%	27% ^F
Don't know/Refused	10%	11%	10%	7%	11%	9%	7%	10%

3. Some members of Congress are proposing legislation to remove the gray wolf from the Endangered Species Act's protections. Which of the following points of view is closest to your own?

Some/others say the gray wolf isn't endangered anymore and protection under the endangered species act is no longer needed. They say that since environmentalists' lawsuits and the federal courts are interfering with sound wolf management, the Congress has no choice but to turn wolf management decisions over to the states. In this view it is believed states are better equipped than the federal government to manage their own wildlife, and wolf numbers are now high enough to sustain a hunt.

Some/others say that decisions about whether to remove the Endangered Species Act's protections should be based on science, not politics. Gray wolves should continue to receive federal protection until they are fully recovered and the states have implemented effective, science-based management plans that will protect gray wolves at sustainable levels for generations to come.

	Total	Region				Party ID		
		North-East (A)	Midwest (B)	South (C)	West (D)	Total GOP (E)	Total DEM (F)	Total IND (G)
Decisions about whether to remove the Endangered Species Act's protections should be based on science, not politics	63%	61%	65%	65%	62%	54%	70% ^E	64%
The gray wolf isn't endangered anymore and protection under the endangered species act is no longer needed	29%	33%	26%	29%	31%	39% ^F	24%	29%
Don't know/Refused	7%	6%	9%	7%	7%	7%	6%	7%

4. Please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree with each of the following statements.

a. The gray wolf is a vital part of America’s wilderness and natural heritage

	Total	Region				Party ID		
		North-East (A)	Midwest (B)	South (C)	West (D)	Total GOP (E)	Total DEM (F)	Total IND (G)
Strongly agree	50%	50%	40%	53% ^B	53%	36%	62% ^{EG}	45%
Somewhat agree	37%	40% ^D	50% ^{CD}	33%	26%	42% ^F	30%	42% ^F
Somewhat disagree	6%	3%	6%	7%	8%	10% ^F	2%	7% ^F
Strongly disagree	4%	4%	1%	2%	8% ^{BC}	8% ^{FG}	2%	3%
Don't know/refused	4%	3%	2%	5%	4%	4%	4%	3%
Agree (T2B)	87%	90% ^D	90% ^D	86%	80%	78%	92% ^E	87% ^E
Disagree (B2B)	10%	7%	8%	9%	16% ^A	18% ^{FG}	4%	10%

b. The Endangered Species Act is a successful safety net for protecting wildlife, plants and fish from extinction

	Total	Region				Party ID		
		North-East (A)	Midwest (B)	South (C)	West (D)	Total GOP (E)	Total DEM (F)	Total IND (G)
Strongly agree	48%	52%	46%	45%	50%	35%	62% ^{EG}	43%
Somewhat agree	39%	34%	42%	42%	37%	42% ^F	29%	47% ^F
Somewhat disagree	5%	6%	6%	4%	5%	11% ^{FG}	2%	4%
Strongly disagree	5%	4%	3%	6%	6%	9%	5%	4%
Don't know/refused	3%	3%	3%	3%	2%	3%	3%	2%
Agree (T2B)	87%	86%	88%	86%	87%	77%	90% ^E	90% ^E
Disagree (B2B)	10%	11%	9%	10%	11%	20% ^{FG}	7%	8%

- c. The Endangered Species Act has helped hundreds of species recover from the brink of extinction, such as the bald eagle, the gray whale, the Florida panther and gray wolves in the Northern Rockies

		Region				Party ID		
	Total	North-East (A)	Midwest (B)	South (C)	West (D)	Total GOP (E)	Total DEM (F)	Total IND (G)
Strongly agree	55%	48%	53%	57%	59%	47%	65% ^{EG}	53%
Somewhat agree	35%	39%	37%	33%	31%	40%	30%	37%
Somewhat disagree	4%	3%	5%	3%	4%	6% ^F	<1%	4% ^F
Strongly disagree	3%	3%	1%	2%	4%	4%	2%	2%
Don't know/refused	4%	6% ^D	3%	4%	1%	3%	3%	4%
Agree (T2B)	90%	88%	90%	90%	91%	87%	94% ^E	90%
Disagree (B2B)	6%	6%	6%	6%	8%	10% ^F	3%	6%

- d. Decisions about wildlife management and which animals need protection should be made by scientists, not politicians

		Region				Party ID		
	Total	North-East (A)	Midwest (B)	South (C)	West (D)	Total GOP (E)	Total DEM (F)	Total IND (G)
Strongly agree	71%	68%	72%	73%	72%	59%	82% ^{EG}	69%
Somewhat agree	21%	22%	20%	21%	19%	29% ^F	12%	24% ^F
Somewhat disagree	4%	5%	4%	4%	3%	5%	3%	4%
Strongly disagree	2%	2%	2%	1%	5%	5%	2%	1%
Don't know/refused	2%	3%	2%	1%	<1%	2%	1%	2%
Agree (T2B)	92%	90%	92%	94%	92%	88%	95%	93%
Disagree (B2B)	6%	7%	6%	5%	8%	10%	5%	5%

- e. The ongoing recovery of gray wolves in the Northern Rockies could be one of America’s greatest wildlife success stories if the Endangered Species Act is kept in place until the states have science-based management plans approved

		Region				Party ID		
	Total	North-East (A)	Midwest (B)	South (C)	West (D)	Total GOP (E)	Total DEM (F)	Total IND (G)
Strongly agree	37%	32%	30%	44% ^B	41%	24%	51% ^{EG}	35% ^E
Somewhat agree	40%	46% ^D	49% ^D	37%	33%	43%	36%	41%
Somewhat disagree	10%	9%	10%	8%	13%	16% ^F	4%	12% ^F
Strongly disagree	5%	5%	3%	4%	9%	9%	4%	4%
Don't know/refused	7%	8%	9%	8%	4%	8%	6%	7%
Agree (T2B)	78%	78%	78%	80%	73%	67%	86% ^{EG}	77%
Disagree (B2B)	15%	14%	13%	12%	23% ^C	25% ^F	8%	17% ^F