

# Federal plan to Shoot Half-Million Barred Owls Impractical and a Prescription for Incidental Kills of 15 Owl Species

*USFWS killing scheme is unworkable and will result in dangerous and far-reaching collateral effects*

WASHINGTON, D.C., UNITED STATES, March 25, 2024 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Today, 75 organizations led by Animal Wellness Action and the Center for a Humane Economy wrote to Interior Secretary Deborah Haaland and urged her to nix a reckless and wholly unworkable [proposed plan](#) to shoot more than 500,000 barred owls over the next 30 years across millions of public and private lands in California, Oregon, and Washington as a far-fetched strategy to reduce competition with beleaguered spotted owls.

You can read the letter by [clicking here](#).

“This plan will cause severe disruptions to wildlife from the forest floor to its canopies, producing an untold number of mistaken-identity kills of other native owl species (including spotted owls), disrupting nesting behavior for animals, poisoning wildlife from dispersed and fragmented lead, and causing rapid dispersal and social chaos among many other species inhabiting these forest ecosystems,” wrote the leaders of 75 organizations opposing the plan.

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*Scott Edwards, general counsel of the Center for a Humane Economy*

“The USFWS has had some limited success with wildlife-control or wildlife-eradication plans on islands or contained ecosystems, but the logistics of this situation bear no resemblance to that set-up,” noted Wayne Pacelle, president of Animal Wellness Action. “This control plan will have to be conducted over millions of acres of public and private lands, and it targets a low-density, nocturnal, migratory species living far off the forest floor. I am



Barred Owl photo by USFWS

astonished that no adult in the room at the Fish and Wildlife Service put the brakes on this plan solely on the impossibility of its success.”

Scott Edwards, general counsel of the Center for a Humane Economy, said there are a number of deficiencies in the agency’s presentation of the plan and that animal-welfare and conservation groups would sue to stop it. “Beyond the legal infirmities, let’s remember that barred owls are a native species to vast portions of North America,” Edwards added. “The agency is calling for mass slaughter of an owl species native to the United States that has exhibited adaptive behavior and expanded its range because of human perturbations of the environment. This is a dangerous road to travel for a federal wildlife protection agency.”

The agency issued a Draft Environmental Impact Statement on Nov. 17 and closed a comment period on Jan. 16. A USFWS decision is on an indefinite timetable.

“Barred owls are protected by the Migratory Bird Treaty Act,” added Pacelle. “We cannot start wiping out native species for range expansion that is likely a derivative of human actions. The whole plan is self-defeating given that it would inevitably produce incidental shootings of more than a dozen other owl species that inhabit the Pacific Northwest, including spotted owls. The Service should give us even one example in its decades of work where a plan of this type has succeeded.”

The organizations also point out that if lead ammunition is used, this will undeniably result in the killing of many other protected bird species. The Fish and Wildlife Service acknowledges that lead is deadly to wildlife but refuses to take action to limit its system-wide use on the national wildlife refuges it manages.

Organizational signers of the letter include Alaqua Animal Refuge & Wildlife Rehabilitation Center (Freeport, FL), Animal Behavior and Healing (Portland, ME), Animal Care Society (Mathews, VA), Animal Protection Affiliates (NV), Animal Protection League of New Jersey, Animal Rights Initiative, Animal Rights Maine, Animal Welfare Society (Kennebunk, ME), Animal Wellness Action, Animal Wellness Foundation, Animals’ Angels, Arkansas Valley Audubon Society (Pueblo, CO), Bleating Hearts Sanctuary (Golden, CO), Cedar Cove Conservation & Education Center (Louisburg, KS), Christian Animal Rights Association, Coalition to Protect America’s National Parks, Colorado Voters for Animals, Dania Beach Monkey Sanctuary (FL), Evergreen Audubon (CO), Federation of Humane Organizations of West Virginia, Forever Home Beagle Rescue (Pittsburgh, PA), Francisco J. Santiago-Ávila, PhD, MPP/MEM, Interdisciplinary scientist (Madison, WI), Georgia Animal Rights and Protection, Global Federation of Animal Sanctuaries, Good Karma Pet Rescue (Pompano Beach, FL), Greene County Humane Society (OH), Greg Costello, Conservation Policy Consultant (Seattle, WA), Heartwood Haven (Roy, WA), Hope Haven Farm Sanctuary (Sewickley, PA), Hotchkiss Humane Society (CT), Howling for Wolves (Hopkins, MN), Humane Action Pennsylvania, Humane Action Pittsburgh, Humane Society of Huron Valley (MI), Humane Voters of Washington, In Defense of Animals, Jefferson County Humane Society (OH), Lancaster Farm Sanctuary (PA), Last Chance Audubon Society (Helena, MT), League of Humane

Voters - Georgia, Maine Animal Coalition, Maine Friends of Animals, Marley's Mutts (Tehachapi, CA), Misfits Coven Animal Haven (Pittsburgh, PA), New Hampshire Animal Rights League, Northeast Equine Rescue (West Newbury, ME), NYCLASS, Ohio Bird Sanctuary, Palm Springs Animal Shelter (CA), Pawsitive Beginnings, Inc. (Key Largo, FL), Peace Ridge Sanctuary (Brooks, ME), Pittie Posse Rescue (ME), Pittsburgh Vegan Society, Pollination Project, Project Animal Freedom (Eureka, MO), Protect Our Wildlife Vermont, Resource Renewal Institute, Revolution Philadelphia, Sanctuary Education Advisory Specialists, Santa Paula Animal Rescue Center (CA), Social Compassion in Legislation (CA), SPCA International, SPCA of Hancock County (Trenton, ME), Stahl's No Harm Farm Animal Sanctuary (Uniontown, OH), Switch 4 Good, The Center for a Humane Economy, The Conservation Agency (Jamestown, RI), Their Turn, Vegan Pittsburgh, Voices of Wildlife in New Hampshire, Voters for Animal Rights (NY), West Virginia Voters for Animal Welfare, and WildAid.

## ABOUT

Animal Wellness Action is a Washington, D.C.-based 501(c)(4) whose mission is to help animals by promoting laws and regulations at federal, state and local levels that forbid cruelty to all animals. The group also works to enforce existing anti-cruelty and wildlife protection laws. Animal Wellness Action believes helping animals helps us all. X: @AWAction\_News

The Center for a Humane Economy is a Washington, D.C.-based 501(c)(3) whose mission is to help animals by helping forge a more humane economic order. The Center encourages businesses to honor their social responsibilities in a culture where consumers, investors, and other key stakeholders abhor cruelty and the degradation of the environment and embrace innovation as a means of eliminating both. The Center believes helping animals helps us all. X: @TheHumaneCenter

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