

# NATIONAL PUBLIC LANDS GRAZING CAMPAIGN

## Grazing Impacts on Threatened and Endangered Species

Threatened and endangered plant and animal species inhabiting federal rangelands and imperiled by livestock grazing: **more than 175.**<sup>1</sup>

Rank of livestock grazing as a cause of species endangerment in

...southern Arizona and western New Mexico	<b>No. 1</b>
...southern Nevada and central Arizona	<b>No. 3</b>
...California	<b>No. 4</b>
...northern Arizona, southern Utah and southern Colorado	<b>No. 5</b> <sup>2</sup>

In the United States, **grazing has contributed to the demise of 22 percent of federal threatened and endangered species**—nearly equal to logging (12 percent) and mining (11 percent) *combined*.<sup>3</sup>

Livestock grazing is especially harmful to plant species, affecting **33 percent of endangered plants.**<sup>4</sup>

### Sensitive Focal Species Adversely Affected by Livestock Grazing

- Sage grouse
- Pronghorn (especially Sonoran subspecies)
- Bighorn sheep (California subspecies and Rocky Mountain subspecies)
- Black-footed ferret
- Wolf
- Grizzly bear
- Yellow-billed cuckoo
- Prairie dog (black-tailed, Gunnison's, Utah, white-tailed)

<sup>1</sup> USDI-BLM, USDA-Forest Service. 1995. Rangeland Reform '94 Final Environmental Impact Statement. USDI-BLM. Washington, DC: 26. See also B. Czech, P. R. Krausman, P.K. Devers. 2000. Economic associations among causes of species endangerment in the United States. *BioSci.* 50(7): 594 (table 1) (reporting that authors' analysis of several studies suggests that 182 species are endangered by livestock grazing) and USDA-NRCS. 1997. America's private land: a geography of hope. Program Aid 1548. USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service: 154 (stating that grazing is a contributing factor in the decline of 26 percent or 161 species on the federal threatened and endangered list). While these statistics are remarkable by themselves, the reported number of threatened and endangered species affected by grazing would be much higher if *livestock production* was considered on the whole as opposed to mere grazing. American livestock production is a pervasive industry that requires millions of acres of open range (public lands) and/or private pastures, feedlots, and related infrastructure and support facilities to feed, water, graze, transport, shelter, butcher, and market livestock. The ecological footprint of this industry is huge. Entire ecosystems and uncountable species are threatened because millions of acres of habitat are converted to mono-cultural crops of corn, barley, and other livestock food; large-scale agriculture and feedlots deplete aquifers and spoil water quality; rivers are dammed and diverted (at public expense) to irrigate forage crops and support ranches in desert environments.

<sup>2</sup> Flather, C. H. and L. A. Joyce. 1994. Species endangerment patterns in the United States. Gen. Tech. Rep. RM-241. USDA-Forest Service. Fort Collins, CO: 24 (table 9).

<sup>3</sup> Wilcove, D. S., D. Rothstein, J Dubow, A Phillips, E. Losos. 1998. Quantifying threats to imperiled species in the United States: assessing the relative importance of habitat destruction, alien species, pollution, overexploitation and disease. *BioScience* 48(8): 610.

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