If you are Pro-Wall, you are Anti-Wildlife

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There are many arguments to be made against erecting a wall along our border with Mexico: It's inefficient, it's symbolically divisive, it's very expensive, it's basically unnecessary. Despite the mudslide of lies emanating from the President's mouth and from the corresponding orifices of his obsequious staff members, there is no crisis at the southern border. The facts bear this out. I realize that facts no longer carry the cachet they once used to, but to those to whom reality still matters, that is the case. Just like the "caravan" that was threatening us right before the midterms, and then suddenly, mystically, dissipated on November 7, the "emergency" at the border is just a convenient political tool manufactured by the White House.



If the wall does happen to go up, happens to get built and plastered every quarter-mile with a big golden "T", there will be an emergency, and it's one that gets scant attention from either politicians or the media. Wildlife. The wall would be devastating for plant and animal habitats all along the United States-Mexico border.

Most people think of the borderlands as nothing more than a vast, uninhabited desert. Nothing could be farther from the truth. The region is one of the most biologically diverse areas in the world, and includes forests, grasslands, and salt marshes in addition to the desert areas (which are host to an extraordinary amount of wildlife). Along the area in which the wall is proposed, over 1,500 different species make their homes, and 62 of those are already either vulnerable or endangered.



The building of a wall will increase the numbers of those species who are forced to fight for their very survival. It will effectively slice their natural habitats in two, reducing both the available gene pool and disrupting annual and seasonal migration and dispersal routes.

The black bears of southern Arizona have more in common with their Mexican relatives than with their northern neighbors, and a wall will effectively lead to inbreeding of the U.S. population of these bears. This is what is happening with the cheetah populations in Africa; being separated from a wide enough gene pool is leading to inbreeding. We shouldn't let that happen to our own wildlife.

Peninsular Bighorn Sheep, that now enjoy free range of land on both sides of the border, will be decimated if the wall goes up. During drought seasons they travel back and forth looking for water supplies. This could prevent that migration. Also, it could prevent access to their mating and birthing grounds.

The Mexican Grey Wolf, the most endangered wolf in the world, if cut off from its wider population, would essentially become what's known as a "zombie species", meaning that its small mating pool would genetically doom the wolf to extinction. The situation is similar for the Sonoran Pronghom.

According to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the wall will doom the jaguar population in the US. It will doom the ocelot population. These two big cats are just now starting to make a comeback in our southwestern states, migrating from over the border, but for how long? The wall would be impossible for them to surmount.

Even flying creatures will be hindered. The Ferruginous Pygmy Owl cannot fly as high as the proposed height of the wall. The Quino Checkerspot Butterfly can't fly that high either. Their already tenuous existences will be threatened even more. The wall claims more victims

The Sky Islands of New Mexico and Mexico are home to an amazing array of species. Not actually plots of land surrounded by water, the Sky Islands are mountaintop oases of biodiverse ecosystems. Over half of all bird species in North America are represented in the Sky Islands, some of them vulnerable such as the Spotted Owl and the Thick-Billed Parrot. Other endangered species of the Sky Islands include the Barred Tiger Salamander and the Mount Graham Red Squirrel. The wall, creating a fault line through the region, will further harm these communities.

The Texas Tortoise, the Texas Horned Lizard, and the Texas Indigo Snake are all facing a day of reckoning in Texas, of course, if the wall becomes a reality.

Seasonal flooding in the border region will become a disastrous event. Whereas flood waters in open land can disperse and animals can escape, the wall will act as a dam, drowning and killing many species.



Ferruginous Pygmy Owl

Construction vehicles needed to build the giant slabs of the wall, will drag through and destroy many delicate habitats.

Noise and light pollution from the wall's construction and maintenance will displace and disturb many diurnal and nocturnal species, putting further strain on their survival chances.

More than 2,500 scientists warn that the wall will be devastating for the area's indigenous animal populations. Scientists from Stanford University concur that some of these species will face extinction as a result. There are already about 650 miles of wall or fencing already completed and many of the species at these points have suffered what scientists have theorized. It's not conjecture. Two-thirds of the border remains unhindered, and our wildlife continues to thrive in these areas.



Quino Checkerspot Butterfly

The Trump Administration, with the blessing of a short-sighted Supreme Court, has disregarded and overridden every law put in place to protect these environments, but we as a people should not allow this to happen on our watch. It's part of our national treasure. We have been blessed with a beautiful and diverse natural menagerie. We should protect it like we protect our homes. We should honor it like we honor our ancestors. We should not destroy in a few short months what has taken millions of years to create and perfect. Who do we think we are? Who does Trump think we are? Lemmings?