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Cute Animal in Danger: Jaguarundi

— By [Jen Phillips](#) | Tue August 4, 2009 4:40 AM PST



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The jaguarundi live mostly in the thorny brush of Texas's Rio Grande Valley, as well as in Mexico. Although the jaguarundi has been on the endangered species list since 1976, there has never been a conservation plan for them. The lack of any conservation plan, in addition to habitat destruction by human development, is likely why seeing a jaguarundi is now a rare and exciting event, even in Texas.

However, there is some good news: in February of this year, the Department of Fish and Wildlife announced that the jaguarundi would be one of 23 endangered species from the Southwest to receive a five-year review. The conservation group WildEarth also recently filed a suit against Interior secretary Ken Salazar to develop a recovery plan for the animal. In addition, the jaguarundi continues to survive in Mexico, and populations have been spotted as far south as South America.

Conservation Group Goes to Bat for Imperiled Border Cats Long Neglected by Government

News Release by WildEarth Guardians, June 17, 2009

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DENVER – Late Wednesday, WildEarth Guardians filed a lawsuit in Federal District Court against Interior Secretary Ken Salazar for failing to develop a recovery plan for two types of jaguarundi, a small, slender-bodied, long-tailed cat—slightly larger than a domestic cat—that lives along the border between Mexico and Texas. Specifically, the suit charges that the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service and the Interior Department have unreasonably delayed the development of a recovery plan for the species, originally listed as endangered in 1976.

“It is time for the government to defend these little border cats,” said Rob Edward of WildEarth Guardians. “The U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service is over a quarter century late in delivering a recovery plan for the jaguarundi. Meanwhile, the species is being pushed toward extinction by development, agriculture and construction of a damaging wall between America and Mexico,” said Edward.

WildEarth Guardians is going to court in order to jumpstart work on a recovery plan for the diminutive wild cats. Although a 1990 recovery plan for the ocelot (another small cat) also examines the plight of the jaguarundi, it explicitly rules out recovery actions for the jaguarundi due to lack of data on the species' occurrence in Texas and Arizona. Edward argues that is the last hope to force federal action on behalf the jaguarundi.

"These small cats should be roaming far and wide, deep in the heart of Texas," said Edward. "They would be, if the government put even a fraction as much effort into protecting jaguarundi habitat as they are putting into building a wall through it." The lawsuit asks the court to order Secretary Salazar to promptly develop a recovery plan for the species. The U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service's own policies require the agency to do so within two and a half years after a species is listed as threatened or endangered.

For a copy of the complaint (PDF), click

here: http://www.wildearthguardians.org/Portals/0/support_docs/complaint-jaguarundi-06-18-09.pdf

For informational images and video of jaguarundi, visit: <http://www.arkive.org/jaguarundi/puma-yagouarundi/>