



Story Telling Through Photographic Profiles of Species at Risk on Department of Defense Lands

Project # 23-004

Background:

Department of Defense (DoD) lands contain some of the most pristine examples of rare wildlife habitats remaining in the U.S., unchanged and untouched by the encroachment of urban sprawl. DoD has made great strides in protecting species at risk (SAR) and ensuring environmental stewardship is a priority that is balanced with the military mission.

DoD manages nearly 27 million acres of land that have been sheltered from development pressures and large-scale habitat loss. These same acres provide habitat for over 500 federally-listed plant and animal species (55 of which exist *only* on DoD lands), and more than 500 other species at risk. These installations have proven vital to the conservation and preservation of many rare plant and animal species by providing crucial habitat that may be their last refuges in rapidly urbanizing landscapes. DoD lands support more federally listed species than any other major federal agency, and harbor more imperiled species than lands managed by either the National Park Service or the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Objective:

- Identify species at risk on DoD lands and group species by geographic location, seasonal occurrence, and photographer availability.
- Conduct photoshoot of each of the identified species with world renown National Geographic Photographer, Joel Sartore.
- Work with local DoD leadership, biologists, natural resource managers and partners to develop the conservation story surrounding each of the photographed species.



San Clemente Loggerhead Shrike



Stephen's Kangaroo Rat

Summary of Approach:

To document unique and rare species on DoD lands, Joel Sartore, the National Geographic Photographer and founder of the Photo Ark, was engaged to photograph DoD SARs on military installations. Sartore's portrait style photography allows the viewer to connect with the species which is presented in the same size/perspective whether large or small.



Island Night Lizard

Benefit:

This project documents DoD stewardship through the creation of world class photographs which highlight the conservation status and the critical role DoD continues to provide. This project promotes coordination with multiple DoD partners and integrates relevant efforts at a cross-boundary, landscape, regional, and national scale. It highlights compatible land uses, including sustainment of military ranges and operating areas for future use, while simultaneously publicizing long-term stewardship of natural resources and the benefits there-of.



San Clemente Island Fox



Southwestern Pond Turtle

Accomplishments and Outcomes:

Conducted photoshoots at three locations:

- **San Clemente Island-** the San Clemente Loggerhead Shrike (*Ludovicianus mearnsi*), Island Night Lizard (*Xantusia riversiana*) and Island Fox (*Urocyon littoralis clementae*). The San Clemente Bell's Sparrow (*Artimisiospiza belli clementae*) was not photographed because it was in the process of being delisted.
- **Naval Weapons Station Seal Beach Detachment Fallbrook** - Stephen's Kangaroo Rat (*Dipodomys stephensi*).
- **Vandenberg Space Force Base-** Tidewater Goby (*Eucyclogobius newberryi*), Lompoc Grasshopper (*Trimerotropis occulens*), Southwestern Pond Turtle (*Actinemys pallida*), Western Spadefoot Toad (*Spea hammondi*), Arguello Slender Salamander (*Batrachoseps wakei*), Buckwheat Blue Butterfly (*Euphilotes* spp.) (undescribed)

Personnel from each of the installations were interviewed and a story of their conservation efforts was written to accompany the photos.

Story Maps can be found at:

- U.S. Navy Making Endangered Species History <https://arcg.is/1DSzCu0>
- The Stephens' Kangaroo Rat Recovery <https://arcg.is/0qn5v1>
- Saving Species, Supporting the Mission <https://arcg.is/1jfXn>



Western Spadefoot Toad

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