



Keeping Northwest California wild since 1977

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## **Groups Fight to Save Rare, Mink-like Carnivore in California and Oregon**

### ***Lawsuit Will Challenge Failure to Protect the Coastal Marten***

ARCATA, Calif.— Three conservation groups filed a formal notice of intent to sue the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service today for failing to protect the coastal marten, a secretive member of the weasel family, under the Endangered Species Act. The groups petitioned in 2010 for federal protection of the rare carnivore, then known as the Humboldt marten, but the Service issued a decision denying protection earlier this year. A small carnivore related to minks and otters, the coastal marten is found only in old-growth forest and dense coastal shrub in Northern California and southern and central coastal Oregon. Once extensively trapped for its fur, the marten was historically common, but now fewer than 100 of the cat-like animals are known to survive.

“The science clearly shows that the coastal marten is one of the most endangered animals in the country,” said Tierra Curry, senior scientist at the Center for Biological Diversity and lead author of the petition to protect the marten. “Denying protection for the coastal marten is a blatant example of the Fish and Wildlife Service caving to pressure from the timber industry at the expense of the irreplaceable marten.”

Due to the loss of 95 percent of its old-growth forest habitat and historic overtrapping, the coastal marten was thought to have been driven to extinction until it was rediscovered on the Six Rivers National Forest in 1996. In 2009 the first marten to be photographed in recent times was detected in Prairie Creek Redwoods State Park by remote-sensing camera.

“It’s unjustifiable that the Service denied protection for the coastal marten,” said Rob DiPerna, EPIC’s California Forest and Wildlife Advocate. “We already nearly lost the coastal marten to extinction, and so now we need to do everything we can to protect this special part of our natural heritage.”

The historic range of the marten extends from Sonoma County in coastal California north through the coastal mountains of Oregon. In Oregon, the marten lives in the Siskiyou and Siuslaw national forests.

“There’s no question that the coastal marten warrants Endangered Species Act protection, so we are taking action to make sure this fascinating carnivore survives for future generations,” said Greg Loarie, attorney at EarthJustice.

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The extremely secretive animals are known for their slinky walking motion and ferocious hunting skills. Typically about two feet long, with large, triangular ears and a long tail, they eat small mammals, berries and birds, and are preyed on by larger mammals and raptors.

*Since 1977, the Environmental Protection Information Center (EPIC) has defended Northwest California's forests and wildlife, including the rare and incredibly adorable coastal marten.*

*The Center for Biological Diversity is a national, nonprofit conservation organization with more than 900,000 members and online activists dedicated to the protection of endangered species and wild places.*

*Earthjustice, the nation's premier nonprofit environmental law organization, wields the power of law and the strength of partnership to protect people's health, to preserve magnificent places and wildlife, to advance clean energy, and to combat climate change. Because the earth needs a good lawyer.*