



Keeping Northwest California wild since 1977

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### **Coastal Marten Takes Important First Step Toward California Endangered Species Act Protection**

ARCATA, *Calif.*— In response to a petition from two conservation groups, the California Department of Fish and Wildlife has recommended protection for the coastal marten under the California Endangered Species Act. Formerly known as the Humboldt marten, the coastal marten is a cat-sized carnivore found in the old-growth forests of Northern California and southern Oregon. The California Fish and Game Commission will vote in February on whether to accept Thursday's recommendation by the department to make the marten a "candidate" for state protection. More than 90 percent of the marten's forest habitat has been decimated by logging; there are probably fewer than 100 martens left in California.

"We are encouraged that the department has recommended candidacy for the marten," said Rob DiPerna, a wildlife advocate with the Environmental Protection Information Center. "Both the perilously small population size and the magnitude of threats to the marten clearly point to the conclusion that candidacy is warranted."

"This is great news for coastal martens," said Justin Augustine, an attorney with the Center for Biological Diversity. "Once the commission accepts the petition early next year, these amazing animals will finally start to get protections that are decades overdue."

The Environmental Protection Information Center and the Center for Biological Diversity petitioned the state to protect the marten in June. Under the California Endangered Species Act, it is the Department of Fish and Wildlife's role to make recommendations on any petition, but ultimately, it is up to the five-member Fish and Game Commission to act on the recommendation and formally accept a petition. Once the petition is accepted by the commission, coastal martens will begin to receive important protections

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the California Endangered Species Act affords, such as a prohibition on the killing or harming of these beautiful creatures.

The historic range of the marten extends from Sonoma County in coastal California north through the coastal mountains of Oregon. Once thought extinct, the marten was rediscovered on the Six Rivers National Forest in 1996. Since that time researchers have continued to detect martens in California, but also determined that coastal martens declined substantially between 2001 and 2008 and have not rebounded.

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

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