

[From Fall 1995]

The Endangered Species Act

The Endangered Species Act of 1973 instructs federal agencies to carry out programs to conserve endangered and threatened species and to conserve the ecosystems on which these species depend.

Interior Secretary Babbitt issued the following statement in response to the publication of a National Academy of Sciences' Report, "Science and the Endangered Species Act":

The Academy's independent report comes at an important moment in the national debate about reauthorization of the Endangered species Act.

The Endangered Species Act is not perfect, but this report tells us that the current law is built on the foundation of sound biological science. Over the last two years we have made substantial progress in utilizing the flexibility of the law. The Academy's report clearly tells us that the only way to prevent extinctions is to protect the natural habitat of threatened and endangered plants and animals.

America without an Endangered Species Act is a nation without an environmental safety net and a nation less beautiful than the one we know today.

This act has relevance for Chincoteague NWR:

- Endangered peregrine falcons nest on the refuge, and hundreds of falcons stop to feed and rest during migration.
- The recovery plan for the endangered Delmarva Peninsula fox squirrel assigns many of the recovery actions to the Refuge.
- The Atlantic population of piping plovers is a federally designated threatened species. Chincoteague NWR supports many of the nesting pairs of these birds.
- Since 1994 Bald Eagles have been nesting on refuge lands.