

SCOTUS faces religious disputes

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Trump administration weakens wildlife protections



The Florida panther was close to extinction when the Endangered Species Preservation Act of 1966, the predecessor of the Endangered Species Act, was passed and led to changes that began to help stabilize the population.

JOE RAEDLE/GETTY IMAGES FILE

Three iconic animals show value of Endangered Species Act

Timothy Randhir UMass Amherst | THE CONVERSATION

It used to be considered against the law in America to starve a member of an endangered species to death or harm it by destroying its home. • That's changing as the federal government chips away at the Endangered Species Act. Under the Trump administration's new interpretations of the law, as long as the animal isn't directly targeted, there is no violation. • The new interpretations, if they hold up to court challenges, could leave a vast number of endangered species at higher risk. Many of the country's shipping, logging, mining and development practices are influenced by the Endangered Species Act's protections. In some cases, entire species could face extinction if their habitats are no longer protected.

As an environmental conservation scientist, I have been following these and other changes affecting endangered species. To understand what they mean, let's take a look at the potential impact on three very different species that are at risk: the Florida panther, the North Atlantic right whale and the monarch butterfly.

What's changing in how the law is carried out

First, here's what's changing.

On Sept. 14, a Trump administration rule change went into

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The Monarch butterfly's population has fallen by about 80% over the past decade, largely due to habitat loss.

BRUCE BENNETT/GETTY IMAGES FILE

Strikes cut power to thousands in Ukraine

Max Hunder and Alessandra Prentice
REUTERS

Russian strikes left hundreds of thousands of Ukrainians without power on Nov. 1, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said, while Russian authorities reported major damage to an industrial site after Ukrainian drones hit the Nizhny Novgorod region.

Even as a six-day local ceasefire held on its final day around the Russian-controlled Ukrainian town of Oleshky, there was no letup in fighting elsewhere along the front line and both sides kept up long-range air attacks.

Zelenskyy said Russia had hit power infrastructure in four Ukrainian regions overnight, cutting electricity to hundreds of thousands of households.

He said Ukraine, meanwhile, had hit the Kamensky plant in Russia's Rostov region, which he said was involved in the manufacture of Russian missiles.

Moscow did not comment on the reported attack in Rostov. In Nizhny Novgorod region, however, Gov. Gleb Nikitin said a large-scale overnight Ukrainian drone attack caused "significant damage" to an industrial facility.

The region is home to the NORSI oil refinery, one of Russia's largest.

Overall, Russia's Defense Ministry said its forces had downed 235 Ukrainian drones over Russian regions overnight. Ukraine's air force said it had shot down 371 of 433 long-range drones launched by Russia since Oct. 31.

Nizhny Novgorod's regional government said it was taking steps to ensure gas stations were supplied with fuel, urging motorists to "buy fuel only as

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White House crafts plan if Dems win

Nandita Bose and Tim Reid
REUTERS

WASHINGTON – President Donald Trump's White House has spent months preparing for a possible Democratic takeover of Congress, developing plans to keep advancing major parts of his agenda through executive power while bracing for investigations of his administration, according to a White House official and two people familiar with the plans.

Senior officials, including deputy chief of staff Stephen Miller and budget director Russell Vought, have been working with the White House Counsel's Office since April to identify executive actions on immigration, tariffs, housing costs and federal spending that Trump could pursue without congressional approval, said the three people, who spoke on the condition of anonymity.

White House counsel Will Scharf and his team also are looking at "what Trump can legally do on his own, where he could push the limits of his authority and how to defend those decisions in court," the White House official said.

The planning underscores a paradox of the midterm elections on Nov. 3: Capturing control of Congress would give Democrats the power to investigate Trump, block legislation and constrain his spending priorities. But Trump would retain broad executive authority over trade, foreign policy and the federal bureaucracy that he has already used aggressively during his second term.

Democrats need a net gain of four seats in the House of Representatives as well as the Senate to overturn Republicans' narrow 218-214 and 53-47 majorities. Opinion polls favor Democrats to win the House, while the Senate remains too close to call.

For the past month, Trump has held rallies across the country trying to preserve Republican control of Congress, even as his aides privately prepare for a very different political landscape in 2027.

The White House pushed back on the prospect of Republican losses and accused the media of promoting a false narrative.

"This administration and commonsense Republicans will continue to secure our borders, restore law and order, putting more money back into the pockets of hard-working Americans, and deliver wins for the American people," White House spokeswoman Lauren Bis said.

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