

2012- Sea Turtles and the US Endangered Species Act. Message by George Balazs to Cturtle.

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Sent: Thursday, August 30, 2012 11:02:14 PM

To: CTURTLE@LISTS.UFL.EDU <CTURTLE@LISTS.UFL.EDU>

Subject: [CTURTLE] Sea Turtles and the US Endangered Species Act

National legislations of various countries pertaining to threatened and endangered species can be complex and confusing. This seems especially so for marine turtles, the specialty of our conservation and research interests. Among the array of national legislations perhaps the US Endangered Species Act stands out as the most complicated and frequently misunderstood. Recently I came across the following text providing an easy-to-read summary about the US Endangered Species Act. I'm sharing it with you here on Cturtle to enhance understanding about this important piece of USA law. I am no authority on this topic, and I indeed I learned some useful things from this text, after decades of working with marine turtles under USA Federal and State of Hawaii laws and rules. Aloha, George Balazs

From:

http://www.wolf.org/wolves/learn/wow/regions/United_States_Subpages/ERecoveryandManagement2.asp

Purpose of the Endangered Species Act: The Endangered Species Act (ESA) is intended to conserve endangered and threatened species and their habitats and to improve the species' status so that they no longer need ESA protection. When their recovery has progressed to that point, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) takes steps to delist, or remove, the species from the federal list of Endangered and Threatened Wildlife and Plants. If the species had been listed as endangered, the USFWS sometimes reclassifies it to threatened status as an intermediate step toward removal of ESA protection. Once a species is removed from the federal list, management authority for the species generally returns to the states and tribes that have jurisdiction over the areas that the species inhabits.

The ESA should be thought of as an emergency room for species; it provides emergency temporary care to ensure the species' survival and to pull it back from the brink of extinction. Hopefully, once species are listed as threatened or endangered the resulting intensive care they receive under the ESA leads to a "recovery" to the extent that the species can be moved back to the more routine care and management of the states and tribes. The species can be delisted at that point. "Recovery" under the ESA doesn't mean that the species must be back to full health - restored to its past population level or throughout its historical range - before it can be delisted. Rather, "recovery" under the ESA means that the species no longer needs ESA's emergency care to keep it from becoming extinct in the foreseeable future.

