

# Tiny bird may no longer be federally protected

By Michael Doyle, McClatchy

WASHINGTON – An unassuming bird that's rebounded in California's remote Inyo County is giving conservatives and environmentalists alike something to crow about.

The Sacramento-based Pacific Legal Foundation gets to claim victory, with the Fish and Wildlife Service's new proposal to remove the Inyo California towhee from federal protection. The conservative advocacy group sued to force action.

But in a rare win-win for the perennially embattled Endangered Species Act, environmentalists are likewise pleased with the Fish and Wildlife Service's proposal. The towhee's revival, they say, shows the 1973 law can still work.

"The recovery of the towhee and its spring habitats is cause for celebration and provides yet another example of the success of our most important law for saving wildlife," declared Tierra Curry, a biologist at the Center for Biological Diversity.

Only 30 other species, including the bald eagle, have been delisted from the Endangered Species Act because their populations have recovered. More than 1,500 U.S. species remain listed, including more than 300 currently found in California.

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