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THIRD READING

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Bill No: AB 1319  
Author: Schultz (D), et al.  
Amended: 9/2/25 in Senate  
Vote: 21

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SENATE NATURAL RES. & WATER COMMITTEE: 4-3, 7/8/25  
AYES: Limón, Allen, Laird, Stern  
NOES: Seyarto, Grove, Hurtado

ASSEMBLY FLOOR: 54-18, 6/2/25 - See last page for vote

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**SUBJECT:** Protected species: California Endangered Species Act

**SOURCE:** Defenders of Wildlife

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**DIGEST:** This bill authorizes the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) to determine whether a federally listed species under the Endangered Species Act (ESA) native to the state would be impacted by a decrease in federal protections that could be substantially reduced by protection under the California Endangered Species Act (CESA), authorizes CDFW to deem that species a provisional candidate species under CESA, authorizes the California Fish and Game Commission (commission) to proceed with the process to list the species under CESA, and makes it unlawful for a person to import, cause to be imported, export, cause to be exported, transport, sell, offer for sale, possess, receive, acquire, or purchase any fish, wildlife, or plant that was taken, possessed, transported or sold in violation of any law, regulation or order, as provided, among other provisions.

**ANALYSIS:** Existing law:

- 1) Provides that fish and wildlife resources are held in trust for the people of California by and through California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) (Fish and Game Code (FGC) §711.7).

- 2) Provides, under CESA and the federal ESA, for the listing and protection of species determined through biological scientific analysis to be endangered or threatened with extinction (FGC §§2070–2079.1; United States Code (U.S.C.) Title 16 §§1531 *et seq.*).
- 3) Makes it unlawful for any person to import, export, transport, sell, receive, acquire, or purchase any fish or wildlife or plant taken, possessed, transported, or sold in violation of any law, treaty, or regulation of the U.S. or in violation of any Indian tribal law, or to import, export, transport, sell, receive, acquire, or purchase in interstate or foreign commerce (18 U.S.C. §§3371–3378). Provides, with specified exception, that violations of the FGC are a misdemeanor (FGC 12000).
- 4) Defines endangered, threatened, and candidate species, all of which refer to native species or subspecies (FGC §§2062, 2067, 2068).
- 5) Prohibits a person or public agency from importing into this state, exporting out of this state, or taking, possessing, purchasing, or selling within the state, any listed species or any part or product of the listed species (FGC §2080).
  - a) Species that have been advanced to candidacy by the commission have the same protections as listed species until resolution of their candidacy.
- 6) Prohibits the take of an endangered species, threatened species, or candidate species listed pursuant to CESA unless CDFW authorizes the take of the listed species under an incidental take permit and if the take is incidental to an otherwise lawful activity, the impacts are minimized and fully mitigated, and the issuance of the permit would not jeopardize the continued existence of the species (FGC §§2081, 2084).
- 7) Allows the commission to adopt, amend, or repeal a regulation after at least one hearing (i.e., an emergency regulation) if the commission finds that the adoption, amendment, or repeal is necessary for (1) the immediate conservation, preservation, or protection of animal species or (2) the immediate preservation of the public peace, health and safety, or general welfare (FGC §399).

This bill:

- 1) Makes it unlawful for a person in this state to import, cause to be imported, export, cause to be exported, transport, sell, offer for sale, possess with the intent to sell, receive, acquire, or purchase any fish, wildlife, or plant that was taken, possessed, transported, or sold in violation of any law, regulation or

statute of any state or of any law, regulation, treaty or statute of the United States with regard to fish, wildlife, or plants in effect on January 19, 2025.

- a) Excludes any cannabis or hemp as allowed under state law from this prohibition, as provided.
  - b) Requires prosecution of an offense to commence within 3 years.
  - c) Provides for a first conviction for a violation to be a misdemeanor punishable by a fine between \$5,000 to \$40,000, or imprisonment of up to one year, or both, as specified. Provides for a second or subsequent conviction to be punishable with a fine between \$10,000 to \$50,000, or imprisonment of up to one year, or both, as specified.
  - d) Requires upon conviction or other entry of judgment for a violation that any seized evidence be forfeited, and maintained, donated, or destroyed, as specified.
- 2) Requires CDFW to take the following actions to ensure no backsliding as a result of a decrease in endangered or threatened species protections by the federal government:
- a) Requires CDFW to monitor certain federal actions that could result in a decreased in endangered or threatened species protections by the federal government. Requires CDFW, if it determines these actions will result in a decrease in protection, to determine whether the decrease in federal protections will have a substantial impact on one or more listed species within California and provisional listing as a candidate species under CESA could significantly reduce any substantial impact.
  - b) Requires CDFW to publish written findings in the California Regulatory Notice Register if it determines that a decrease in federal protection for a listed species could substantially impact the species and that listing as a provisional candidate species under CESA could significantly reduce these impacts. Requires CDFW to include a statement that the affected species is deemed a provisional candidate species under CESA, and to add the species to the commission's list as a provisional candidate species.
  - c) Requires any species added to the list of provisional candidate species to remain on the list until January 31, 2031, as provided.
  - d) Requires CDFW to report any federally listed species that are listed as provisional candidate species at the next public meeting of commission following the provisional candidacy determination. Requires the commission, as warranted, to direct CDFW to prepared a status review and proceed with the process for listing the species under CESA.

- e) Requires provisional candidate species to have the same protections as candidate species under CESA.
- 3) Provides that any actions by CDFW or the commission in undertaking 2) are not subject to CEQA.
- 4) States legislative intent that CDFW and the commission are provided sustainable funding to fully implement 2).
- 5) Requires CDFW to notify affected or interested persons of any determination to make a federally listed species a provisional candidate species under CESA, as provided.
- 6) Provides that an entity operating under a federal authorization for take in effect on or before January 19, 2025, for species listed pursuant to an emergency regulation, during the pendency of the emergency regulation, not be liable for criminal or civil penalties so long as the entities are in full compliance with their federal biological opinion, incidental take permit, incidental take statement, conservation benefit agreement, or rules promulgated pursuant to ESA, as provided.
- 7) Sunsets the above provisions on December 31, 2031, as provided. Authorizes any enforcement action brought on or before December 31, 2031, to proceed to final judgment.
- 8) Provides legislative findings demonstrating the need to restrict public access to the meetings of public bodies or the writings of public officials, and states that no reimbursement is required for state-mandated costs, as provided.

[NOTE: See the Senate Natural Resources and Water Committee analysis for additional information regarding this bill.]

**FISCAL EFFECT:** Appropriation: No Fiscal Com.: Yes Local: Yes

According to the Senate Appropriations Committee:

- Unknown but likely significant ongoing costs, potentially as much as \$7-9 million annually (General Fund, Fish and Game Preservation Fund, or other fund) for CDFW to implement the provisions of this bill, depending on the number of species that become eligible for listing under the California Endangered Species Act pursuant to AB 1319. Costs of around \$7 million is based on assuming a scenario where only about 10% of federally listed species

are listed by the Commission under the emergency regulations under this bill in any one year.

**SUPPORT:** (Verified 8/29/25)

Defenders of Wildlife (sponsor)  
 Applegate Siskiyou Alliance  
 Audubon California  
 Bear Yuba Land Trust  
 Cabrillo Marine Aquarium  
 CactusToCloud Institute  
 California Association of Professional Scientists, UAW Local 1115  
 California Association of Zoos and Aquariums  
 California Coastal Protection Network  
 California Environmental Voters  
 California Institute for Biodiversity  
 California Native Plant Society  
 California Native Plant Society, Alta Peak Chapter  
 California Trout  
 CalWild  
 Center for Biological Diversity  
 Central Valley Partnership  
 Clean Water Action  
 CleanEarth4Kids.org  
 Climate Action California  
 Coastal Corridor Alliance  
 Endangered Habitats League  
 Environmental Defense Fund  
 Environmental Protection Information Center  
 Fresno Chaffee Zoo  
 Friends of Rose Creek  
 Friends of the Dunes  
 Friends of the Inyo

Friends of the River  
 Hills For Everyone  
 Los Angeles Waterkeeper  
 Los Cerritos Wetlands Land Trust  
 Los Angeles Neighborhood Land Trust  
 Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District  
 Mono Lake Committee  
 Monterey Bay Aquarium  
 Mount Shasta Bioregional Ecology Center  
 Planning and Conservation League  
 San Diego Bird Alliance  
 San Francisco Baykeeper  
 San Joaquin River Parkway & Conservation Trust, Inc.  
 Santa Clara Valley Bird Alliance  
 Save Mount Diablo  
 Sea and Sage Audubon Society  
 Sequoia Riverlands Trust  
 Sierra Club California  
 Sierra County Land Trust  
 Sierra Nevada Alliance  
 SoCal 350 Climate Action  
 Sonoma Land Trust  
 South Yuba River Citizens League  
 The River Project  
 The Trust for Public Land  
 The Wildlands Conservancy  
 UAW Region 6  
 Wildlands Network

**OPPOSITION:** (Verified 8/29/25)

Agricultural Council of California

Association of California Water  
Agencies  
California Building Industry  
Association  
California Chamber of Commerce  
California Council for Environmental  
and Economic Balance  
California Farm Bureau  
Metropolitan Water District of  
Southern California

Milk Producers Council  
San Luis & Delta-Mendota Water  
Authority  
Santa Clara Valley Water District  
Southern California Water Coalition  
State Water Contractors  
United Water Conservation District  
Water Blueprint of San Joaquin  
Valley Advocacy Fund

**ARGUMENTS IN SUPPORT:** According to the author, “The California Endangered Species Act states that all native species and their habitats, threatened with extinction and those experiencing a significant decline, which, if not halted, would lead to a threatened or endangered designation, will be protected or preserved. Currently, there are 80 fish and wildlife species and 65 plant species in California considered endangered or threatened but are protected only by the federal Endangered Species Act. California law also includes protections for international species experiencing declines by prohibiting the trade in lion and elephant parts.”

“The current federal administration has made it clear that it intends to weaken protections for biodiversity, particularly endangered and threatened species. Since January, President Trump has issued multiple executive orders with directives to weaken protections for species protected under the federal ESA. Last month, the federal government issued a draft rule that would significantly reduce the scope of protections for imperiled species under the federal ESA.”

“AB 1319 creates a clear and orderly process by which the state would evaluate the changes in federal protection and decide if endangered and threatened California native species left unprotected by changes in federal law should be protected by the state Endangered Species Act. It also keeps in place existing protections for hunted international species protected by federal law.”

**ARGUMENTS IN OPPOSITION:** The Association of California Water Agencies, in a joint “oppose unless amended” letter, writes that the new emergency regulation process proposed by this bill “creates additional uncertainty for permittees with the potential to lead to extensive delays in the implementation of projects and maintenance activities and significantly increase costs to the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW).”

“The Commission and CDFW already have the appropriate and expeditious tools to address any concerns related to a species that is native to California. CDFW and the Commission can utilize the emergency regulation process consistent with Fish and Game Code section 399, and CDFW can submit a petition for listing in the absence of a petition from an interested party, which would expedite the traditional candidate status process. By using these existing tools, CDFW could best manage its resources and manage the fiscal impact of adding new species to the endangered and threatened species list.”

“The term “decrease in protection” is far too broad. [...] We request that the emergency process outlined in this bill be limited to the delisting of a species that is not based on the recovery of that species or its extinction in the wild.”

In addition, ACWA requests that a consistency determination be issued to strengthen the protection from criminal and civil penalties, and notes the potential fiscal impact to CDFW given the potential staff time needed to implement the bill.

ASSEMBLY FLOOR: 54-18, 6/2/25

AYES: Addis, Aguiar-Curry, Ahrens, Alvarez, Ávila Farías, Bauer-Kahan, Bennett, Berman, Boerner, Bonta, Bryan, Calderon, Caloza, Carrillo, Connolly, Elhawary, Fong, Gabriel, Garcia, Gipson, Mark González, Haney, Harabedian, Hart, Irwin, Jackson, Kalra, Krell, Lee, McKinnor, Muratsuchi, Nguyen, Ortega, Pacheco, Papan, Patel, Pellerin, Petrie-Norris, Quirk-Silva, Ramos, Ransom, Celeste Rodriguez, Michelle Rodriguez, Rogers, Schiavo, Schultz, Sharp-Collins, Solache, Stefani, Ward, Wicks, Wilson, Zbur, Rivas

NOES: Alanis, Castillo, Davies, DeMaio, Dixon, Ellis, Flora, Gallagher, Jeff Gonzalez, Hadwick, Hoover, Lackey, Macedo, Patterson, Sanchez, Ta, Tangipa, Wallis

NO VOTE RECORDED: Arambula, Bains, Chen, Lowenthal, Blanca Rubio, Soria, Valencia

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\*\*\*\* END \*\*\*\*