

Trump Bulldozes New Wall Through Wildlife Refuge, Jaguar Country

By [Center For Biological Diversity](#)

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New border-wall construction in southeastern Arizona is imperiling the [San Bernardino National Wildlife Refuge](#), and encroaching into an active [jaguar](#) movement corridor where the [jaguar known as "Sombra"](#) most likely crossed the border into the United States.

The new 30-foot-high bollard wall will block the natural migration of wildlife, replacing existing waist-high vehicle barriers that allow most wildlife to move freely. Massive groundwater pumping for the project threatens to destroy rare desert springs that harbor several imperiled species that live nowhere else in the United States.

"Trump's wall is destroying some of the most beautiful, fragile landscapes in the borderlands," said Laiken Jordahl, borderlands campaigner with the Center for Biological Diversity. "Construction here could push the endangered species in this wildlife refuge to extinction and encroach on vital jaguar territory. The Border Patrol's reckless pumping of desert groundwater threatens to dry up the single most valuable resource for wildlife, ranchers and border communities. This lawlessness shows outrageous disrespect for our public lands and most vulnerable wildlife."

The 20-mile-long segment also cuts through the historic [Slaughter Ranch](#) and neighboring public and private lands. [Drone footage](#) of the construction site shows the damage already being done.

Crews have cleared land for a concrete batching plant and staging area just west of the wildlife refuge. They have also tapped a well to extract limited groundwater resources to mix concrete during construction. Water usage estimates for the project run from 70,000 to 700,000 gallons per day.

The San Bernardino National Wildlife Refuge is home to eight threatened and endangered species, including four species of [endemic fish](#), [Chiricahua leopard frogs](#), [Huachuca water umbel](#), [Mexican garter snakes](#) and Aplomado falcon. The only known population of San Bernardino springsnails in the world is limited to just a couple of fragile springs in the area.

Beyond jeopardizing wildlife, endangered species and public lands, the U.S.-Mexico border wall is part of a larger strategy of ongoing border militarization that damages human rights, civil liberties, native lands, local businesses and international relations. The border wall impedes the natural migrations of people and wildlife that are essential to healthy diversity.

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*Featured image: An excavator sits at the eastern edge of the San Bernardino National Wildlife Refuge.
Photo: Laiken Jordahl*

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