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(S.D.&Wyo.)-Protection Considered For Bird That Needs Wildfire



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By JEFF BARNARD
AP Environmental Writer

GRANTS PASS, Ore. (AP) - A woodpecker that depends on intense wildfires for the dead trees where it feeds on insects is being considered for protection under the Endangered Species Act.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service said Monday it will take a closer look at the black-backed woodpecker.

That is giving conservation groups hope the bird can force changes in national wildfire policy the same way the northern spotted owl overhauled the idea of logging old growth forests.

Chad Hanson, staff ecologist of the John Muir Project of the Earth Island Institute, says thinning and post-fire salvage logging on national forests pose a threat to the habitat needs of the bird.

Fish and Wildlife is considering two populations of the woodpecker - one in California and Oregon, and another in South Dakota and Wyoming.