

VICTORY REPORT MID-YEAR 2016



CELEBRATING BIG WINS FOR THE ENVIRONMENT



FLICKR/JULIEN B.

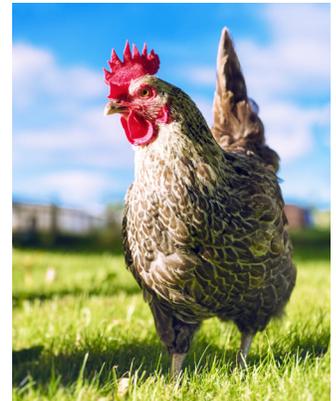
CLIMATE & ENERGY

Demanding Strong Climate Action

The December COP21 conference in Paris culminated with a momentous breakthrough: an ambitious global agreement to tackle climate change and accelerate the shift to clean energy. Perhaps the most significant pledge in the agreement, which nearly 180 countries signed on Earth Day 2016, was for countries to pursue efforts to hold the global temperature rise to 1.5 degrees Celsius—a goal pushed for by NRDC. On the ground in Paris, NRDC helped broker and secure strong climate commitments from key countries like China and India. Meanwhile, implementing the Clean Power Plan at home will limit carbon pollution from power plants for the first time ever—a crucial step toward achieving the United States' own climate goal. Although the Supreme Court has issued a temporary stay on the plan's execution, NRDC is already working with states that want to meet the requirements and helping others prepare to comply when the court upholds the legislation (as we expect it will). This historic action moves us closer to cutting carbon pollution by 80 percent by 2050—an essential milestone for tackling climate change.

Pushing Back Against Dirty Fuels

In March 2016—after hundreds of thousands of NRDC activists demanded that he keep our coasts safe from Big Oil—President Obama released his proposed five-year offshore drilling plan, putting our Atlantic waters off-limits to the fossil-fuel industry until 2022. This decision builds on the momentum created by the president's rejection of the Keystone XL tar sands pipeline and his moratorium for new coal leasing on federal lands, groundbreaking victories made possible by the unrelenting pressure from our members and the dedication of a grassroots coalition. These wins help steer us away from dirty fossil fuels and toward a clean energy future. Now we're keeping the pressure on the administration to finish the job by permanently withdrawing both the Arctic and Atlantic from oil and gas drilling forever—not just for the next five years.



HEALTH

Winning the Food Fight

A staggering 70 percent of the antibiotics sold in the United States are used on livestock, not people. In fact, industrial livestock operations routinely give antibiotics to animals that aren't even sick. Exposed to too many of these drugs, bacteria can mutate into "superbugs" that have become immune to these antibiotics, which then threaten human health. NRDC scored a big win in April 2016, when the restaurant chain Taco Bell responded to our pressure by making a commitment to eliminate antibiotics from its meat supply. This announcement followed similar pledges from fast-food giants Subway and McDonald's in 2015.



THE WILD

Stopping the Illegal Wildlife Trade

Over the past three years, rhino killings have risen 7,000 percent—a rate that, if sustained, would push the animals to extinction within a decade. That’s why NRDC sprang into action when South Africa’s president introduced a plan to legalize the international rhino horn trade, a scheme that almost certainly would have increased demand. As a result of our careful analysis and tireless advocacy, South Africa announced in April 2016 that it would shelve the disastrous proposal. Right on the heels of that victory, NRDC and our partners successfully pressed Hawaii, the third-largest U.S. ivory market, into banning the majority of commercial trade in ivory and rhino horn. And most recently, after intense pressure from NRDC and others, the Obama administration put in place a near-total ban on ivory imports, exports, and interstate trade, which could help save tens of thousands of African elephants each year. We’ll continue to fight for animals whose survival is threatened by the illegal wildlife trade.



FLICKR/ALAN KRAKUAER

Saving the Sage Grouse

The greater sage grouse is an icon of the American West—and a bellwether of the health of its vast sagebrush-sea ecosystem.

As that grassland habitat has shrunk, so has the bird’s population. Over the past decades, NRDC has gone to court for the sage grouse, and local conservation groups have joined forces to protect its habitat. In September 2015, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service announced that it would protect 35 million acres of western sagebrush habitat, the single-largest conservation effort of the Obama administration.

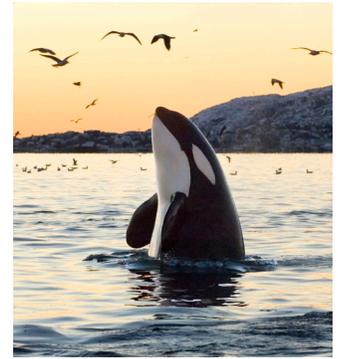
WATER

Justice for the Penobscot River

Over the course of nearly four decades, the chemical company HoltraChem (now known as Mallinckrodt) dumped tons of toxic mercury into Maine’s Penobscot River. NRDC and the Maine People’s Alliance sued the company in 2000, and in September 2015—after years of tenacious litigation and citizen action—a judge ordered Mallinckrodt to clean up the river. A shining example of community justice, the victory holds the promise of protecting the health of countless people, preserving the state’s longstanding tradition of lobster and crab fishing, and restoring an ecosystem that spans more than 20 miles along this great waterway.



FLICKR/MARK PLUMMER



OCEANS

Court Protects Marine Mammals

NRDC took the U.S. Navy to court over its high-intensity sonar and explosives training off the coasts of Southern California and Hawaii, which threatened the well-being of more than 60 whale, dolphin, seal, and sea lion populations. In September 2015, following a major legal victory and extensive negotiations, the U.S. Navy agreed to designate significant habitat in the Pacific as off-limits to such military exercises. The settlement was a hard-fought win, but there’s more to do, and we’ll continue our efforts to protect whales and other marine mammals.



Founded in 1970, NRDC is the nation’s most effective environmental action group, combining the grassroots power of 2.4 million members and online activists with the courtroom clout and expertise of some 500 lawyers, scientists, and other professionals.

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