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Settlement: EPA to Analyze Impacts of World's Two Most Widely Used Pesticides on 1,500 Endangered Species

Historic Settlement Means Harms of Atrazine, Roundup Will Be Assessed

WASHINGTON— The Environmental Protection Agency will analyze the impacts of atrazine and glyphosate — the two most commonly used pesticides in the United States — on 1,500 endangered plants and animals in the United States under the terms of a settlement reached today with the Center for Biological Diversity. The EPA will also analyze the impacts of propazine and simazine, two pesticides that are chemically similar to atrazine. It has committed to completing the assessments by June 2020.

“This settlement is the first step to reining in the widespread use of dangerous pesticides that are harming both wildlife and people,” said Brett Hartl, endangered species policy director at the Center for Biological Diversity. “Atrazine, for instance, chemically castrates frogs even in tiny doses, is an endocrine disruptor, and likely causes birth defects in people. The EPA should have banned this years ago.”

Up to 80 million pounds of atrazine are used in the United States each year. In addition to causing severe harm to endangered species, atrazine exposure may be linked to increased risks of thyroid cancer, reproductive harm and birth defects in people. A recent [study](#) showed that children whose mothers were exposed to atrazine had an increased risk of birth defects. Atrazine is the second most commonly used pesticide after glyphosate, more commonly known as Monsanto’s Roundup.

“This settlement will finally force the EPA to consider the impacts of glyphosate — widely known as Roundup — which is the most commonly used pesticide in the United States, on endangered species nationwide,” said Hartl. “With more than 300 million pounds of this stuff being dumped on our landscape each year, it’s hard to even fathom the damage it’s doing.”

Glyphosate has also been linked to the decline of many wildlife species, including the [monarch butterfly](#). The EPA has never completed any endangered species assessments of glyphosate at any point over the lifetime of this chemical on the market. The agency last evaluated the general ecological impacts of glyphosate in 1993, when approximately 10 million pounds were applied annually. The increase in use within the United States has come with the widespread adoption of herbicide-tolerant, genetically engineered crops such as corn and soy. The World Health Organization recently declared glyphosate a probable human carcinogen.

The EPA has, for decades, continued to register and allow the use of pesticides without considering their impacts to endangered species, despite the legal requirement for them to do so and the well-documented risks of pesticides to thousands of imperiled species. A series of lawsuits by the Center has forced the agency to consult on the impacts of scores of pesticides on some endangered species, primarily in California, and resulted in temporary restrictions on pesticide use in sensitive habitats.

Last year the Center entered a nationwide settlement with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service requiring the agency to analyze impacts on endangered species across the country from five dangerous pesticides — carbaryl, chlorpyrifos, diazinon, malathion and methomyl — that have been found to be toxic to wildlife and may pose a health risk to humans. Today’s settlement follows a similar framework and will require the EPA to begin the consultation process on these chemicals.

The Center for Biological Diversity is a national, nonprofit conservation organization with more than 900,000 members and online activists dedicated to the protection of endangered species and wild places.

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