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(Martin 2001) and its potential reauthorization (Thomas 1999; Young 2000), it is clearly important that both scientists and policymakers understand how the public and the government have actually used the ESA to list species. Past reviews of the ESA have sought to evaluate its effectiveness solely by examining the implementation of the act's provisions by the U.S. FWS and NMFS once a species has been listed (Bean et al. 1991; U.S. GAO 1992; Schemske et al. 1994; Carroll et al. 1996). However, all of the actions of these agencies are in fact regulated responses that can only be set in motion by a petitioner's request to list a species.

Due to specific provisions of the act, the ESA can be used as a tool for land preservation by seeking to protect species and subsequently the habitat in which they



(i.e., what the petitioners are willing to reveal to the surveyors during the interview period) (Huang et al. 1997).

Each document we examined contains information on the individuals or organizations that proposed an ESA listing, what species were proposed, the date proposed, and what federal action has been taken on the proposal to date. In addition, each document gives a variable amount of information on the species itself, usually including the species habitat requirements, species range, and areas where the species is proposed for listing. In order to evaluate our questions, we recorded the species being proposed, its taxon, number of species coproposed, the area of concern of each organization proposing a listing and the size of the area in which the listing was proposed. Additionally, to determine which species eventually become listed, we examined whether a species had been listed as endangered or threatened, was still under consideration for listing, or was denied listing by the



that successfully listed 20% and 6% of the 54 and 52 species for which they, respectively, petitioned. This may be due to taxa bias since local and regional groups attempted to list more invertebrate species or “noncharismatic microfauna” than national groups (Table 2) (

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appears to be an incongruity between the effectiveness of different political organizations in eventually seeing the species through to actual listing. Why this occurs and if it occurs due to differences in political willpower and knowledge may actually represent a failing due to improper implementation of the current statute.

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