# US agency plans to cull 500,000 barred owls to save endangered spotted owl populations



The US Fish and Wildlife Service plans to deploy trained shooters to kill nearly 500,000 barred owls over three decades in an effort to save the endangered spotted owl populations in Oregon, Washington state, and California. Released on Wednesday, this initiative aims to address the decline in spotted owl numbers due to competition from the encroaching barred owls. The proposal includes shooting barred owls, which have larger broods and need less space, thus outcompeting the smaller spotted owls.

The plan has sparked debate among wildlife advocates and conservationists, with some supporting the measure and others criticizing it as a diversion from forest preservation efforts. Barred owls, which have migrated west via Great Plains and Canada's boreal forests, are already being killed for research purposes, with about 4,500 removed since 2009. The method includes luring barred owls with recorded calls and shooting them, a strategy aimed at reducing their population significantly.

This initiative follows decades of conflicts regarding forest management and conservation, highlighting ongoing challenges in balancing human activity with wildlife protection.