



# The Environment & CAPITALISM:

## The Spotted Owl Case

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### LOSS OF "OLD-GROWTH" FORESTS

Over the last 150 years, much of the old-growth forest in the Pacific Northwest has been lost to logging. It is estimated that only 10% of these forests remain. These forests served as the habitat for the Spotted Owl. Due to the reduction of the old-growth forest, it is estimated that the current population was as low as 2,000 pairs.

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### CLASSIFIED AS A THREATENED SPECIES IN 1990

In 1986, the US Fish & Wildlife Service was petitioned to list the owl as endangered. After heated negotiations (based on the economic losses that were projected if the owl was granted endangered status), the owl was classified as threatened.

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### RESULTS

Timber companies must leave at least 40% of the old-growth forests intact within a 1.3 mile radius of any spotted owl nest or activity site

### THE TIMBER INDUSTRY PERSPECTIVE



### THE ENVIRONMENTALIST PERSPECTIVE

The protective policies ignored the dire economic consequences for the people involved.

Society has a fundamental moral obligation to preserve the rare species and related ecosystems.

These forests accounted for 65% of western wood; reducing logging could cause the loss of 28,000 jobs and increase lumber costs!

The spotted owl is an indicator species; how well an indicator fares suggests how other species will fare...

Cutting old-growth is essential in maintaining growth (it fosters growth among younger tree populations...

Society ought to preserve the Spotted Owl and its habitat due to the aesthetic value it represents!

The setting aside of hundreds of thousands of acres as national parks ensures that the aesthetic loss will not occur!

The Owl and habitat are of high scientific value - who knows what secrets these forests may hold?

Claire Andre & Manuel Velasquez. (November 13, 2015). The Spotted Owl Controversy from "Ethics and the Environment." Retrieved from <https://www.scu.edu/environmental-ethics/resources/ethics-and-the-environment-the-spotted-owl/>



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