

available for public review during a 60-day comment period.

The Warner sucker inhabits the lakes and low gradient stream reaches of the Warner Valley in southeastern Oregon. The Foscett speckled dace inhabits two springs in the Coleman subbasin of the Warner Valley. The Hutton tui chub inhabits one spring, and may inhabit a second spring, in the Alkali subbasin of the Chewaucan Basin, in southeastern Oregon. The Warner sucker was listed in September of 1985 (50 FR 39117), and critical habitat was designated at that time. The Foscett speckled dace and Hutton tui chub were listed in March of 1985 (50 FR 12305) and at that time the designation of critical habitat was determined to be imprudent.

In addition to these listed species, this plan also addresses the conservation needs of the candidate Cowhead Lake tui chub and the Warner Valley redband trout which is considered to be of special concern. The Cowhead Lake tui chub is native to Cowhead Lake, Modoc County, California, where it inhabits the seasonal waters of the lake and a nearby slough that drains the lake. The Warner Valley redband trout is native to the Warner Valley and is found in the same habitats as the Warner sucker, but also in higher gradient stream reaches upstream of the Warner sucker's habitat.

Most of these species are impacted by a variety of human induced disturbances to their habitats. Activities such as grazing of livestock, timber harvest, road construction, irrigation practices, and the stocking of non-native fish species have all contributed to the declines of, or otherwise increased the risk of extinction of, these species. Recovery and long term conservation of these species will require establishment of self-sustaining populations with adequate distribution in current habitats and, in some cases, the reestablishment of migration corridors among habitats. For spring dwelling species, conservation will additionally require securing spring water sources, research into long-term habitat management needs, and assessment of genetic threats to small populations.

#### Public Comments Solicited

The Service solicits written comments on the recovery plan. All comments received by the date specified above will be considered prior to the approval of the plan.

**Author:** The author of this notice is Antonio Bentivoglio (see Oregon State Office address above).

#### Authority

The authority for this action is section 4(f) of the Endangered Species Act, 16 U.S.C. 1533(f).

Dated: August 30, 1997.

#### Mike Spear,

*Regional Director, Region 1, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.*

[FR Doc. 97-25419 Filed 9-24-97; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4310-55-U

## DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

### Fish and Wildlife Service

#### Availability of Draft Recovery Plan for Applegate's Milk-vetch (*Astragalus applegatei*) for Review and Comment

**AGENCY:** Fish and Wildlife Service, Interior.

**ACTION:** Notice of document availability.

**SUMMARY:** The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service announces the availability for public review of the Technical/Agency Draft Recovery Plan for Applegate's Milk-vetch (*Astragalus applegatei* Peck). This endangered plant is from the Lower Klamath Basin near the city of Klamath Falls, Klamath County, in southern Oregon.

**DATE:** Comments on the draft recovery plan received by November 24, 1997 will be considered by the Service.

**ADDRESSES:** Copies of the draft recovery plan are available for inspection, by appointment, during normal business hours at the following locations: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Klamath Falls Fish and Wildlife Office, 6610 Washburn Way, Klamath Falls, Oregon 97603. Requests for copies of the draft recovery plan and written comments and materials regarding this plan should be addressed to Steven Alan Lewis, Project Leader, at the above Klamath Falls office.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Barb Masinton at the Klamath Falls address above (541/885-8481).

#### SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

#### Background

Restoring endangered or threatened animals and plants to the point where they are again secure, self-sustaining members of their ecosystems is a primary goal of the Service's endangered species program. To help guide the recovery effort, the Service is working to prepare recovery plans for most of the listed species native to the United States. Recovery plans describe actions considered necessary for the conservation of the species, establish criteria for the recovery levels for

downlisting or delisting them, and estimate time and cost for implementing the recovery measures needed.

The Endangered Species Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.*) (Act), requires the development of recovery plans for listed species unless such a plan would not promote the conservation of a particular species. Section 4(f) of the Act as amended in 1988 requires that public notice and an opportunity for public review and comment be provided during recovery plan development. The Service will consider all information presented during the public comment period prior to approval of each new or revised Recovery Plan. Substantive technical comments will result in changes to the plans. Substantive comments regarding recovery plan implementation may not necessarily result in changes to the recovery plans, but will be forwarded to appropriate Federal or other entities so that they can take these comments into account during the course of implementing recovery actions. Individualized responses to comments will not be provided.

*Astragalus applegatei* (Applegate's milk-vetch) is endangered and is currently known from only three populations occurring in the Lower Klamath Basin near the city of Klamath Falls, Klamath County, in southern Oregon. It is restricted to flat-lying, seasonally moist, strongly alkaline soils. Although it is currently replete with introduced grasses and other weeds, the species' habitat was historically characterized by sparse, native bunch grasses and patches of bare soil. Intensive agricultural and urban development of the Klamath River floodplain has resulted in severe depletion and fragmentation of Applegate's milk-vetch habitat. The largest of the three populations continues to face attrition through industrial development on private lands. Virtually all remaining potential (undeveloped) habitat for the species has been seriously modified by a proliferation of weeds, fire suppression, flood control, and land reclamation projects involving extensive construction of drainage ditches and water retention dikes. Threats to the species are exacerbated by the small number of populations in a limited area, which increases the vulnerability of Applegate's milk-vetch to extirpation due to random mortality events. Furthermore, the smaller populations may not have enough individuals to maintain the genetic variability necessary for long-term population viability.

This plan provides a framework for the recovery of Applegate's milk-vetch so it can at least be reclassified from endangered to threatened status, and might eventually no longer need the protection by the Endangered Species Act. This plan summarizes available information about the species, reviews the threats to its continued existence, and lists management actions needed to remove these threats. Immediate actions needed to prevent extinction of Applegate's milk-vetch includes conservation of natural populations and establishment of new populations. Inventories will be conducted to attempt to find undiscovered populations and to find suitable sites to establish new populations. Habitat management will be instituted for populations of this plant, as will monitoring to determine whether populations are likely to persist. Long-term activities necessary to perpetuate this species in its natural habitats include long-term seed storage and propagation to mitigate future population losses and make it possible to maintain genetic variability in small populations that are vulnerable to inbreeding depression and/or allele fixation. Research to define population self-sustainability, improve population establishment and augmentation techniques, assess the efficacy of habitat management strategies, and evaluate the plant's soil and water requirements are all needed to help make appropriate management decisions.

#### Public Comments Solicited

The Service solicits written comments on the recovery plan. All comments received by the date specified above will be considered prior to approval of this plan.

#### Authority

The authority for this action is section 4(f) of the Endangered Species Act, 16 U.S.C. 1533(f).

Dated: September 18, 1997.

#### Don Weathers,

Acting Regional Director, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Pacific Region.

[FR Doc. 97-25420 Filed 9-24-97; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4310-55-P

## DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

### Fish and Wildlife Service

#### Notice of Availability of Draft Recovery Plan for Nelson's Checker-Mallow (Oregon and Washington) for Review and Comment

AGENCY: Fish and Wildlife Service, Interior.

**ACTION:** Notice of document availability and public comment period.

**SUMMARY:** The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) announces the availability for public review of a draft recovery plan for the Nelson's checker-mallow (*Sidalcea nelsoniana*), listed as a threatened species on February 12, 1993 (58 FR 8242). The species occurs primarily as scattered populations in two distinct ecological regions—the northern Coast Range and the Willamette Valley of Oregon. Two outlying populations are located in the Puget Trough of Washington.

**DATES:** Comments on the draft recovery plan received by November 24, 1997 will be considered by the Service.

**ADDRESSES:** Persons wishing to review the draft recovery plan may obtain a copy by contacting the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Oregon State Office, 2600 S.E. 98th Ave., Suite 100, Portland, Oregon 97266-1398. Written comments and material regarding the plan should be addressed to the Field Supervisor at the above address. Comments and materials received are available for public inspection, by appointment, during normal business hours at the above address.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Dr. Andrew F. Robinson Jr., Fish and Wildlife Biologist, at the above address or by phone at 503/231-6179.

#### SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

##### Background

Restoring endangered or threatened animals and plants to the point where they are again secure, self-sustaining members of their ecosystems is a primary goal of the Service's endangered species program. To help guide the recovery effort, the Service is working to prepare recovery plans for most of the listed species native to the United States. Recovery plans describe the site specific management actions considered necessary for conservation and survival of the species, establish objectives and measurable criteria for the recovery levels for downlisting or delisting them, and estimate time and cost for implementing the recovery measures needed.

The Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended (16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.*) (Act), requires the development of recovery plans for listed species unless such a plan would not promote the conservation of a particular species. Section 4(f) of the Act, as amended in 1988, requires that public notice and an opportunity for public review and comment be provided during recovery plan development. The Service, and

other affected Federal agencies, will take these comments into account in the course of implementing approved recovery plans.

Nelson's checker-mallow (*Sidalcea nelsoniana*) is a herbaceous perennial plant species in the mallow family (Malvaceae). Like many of the members of its genus, Nelson's checker-mallow produces mature plants that have either exclusively female flowers or perfect flowers. Nelson's checker-mallow is listed as threatened, with 59 known extant occurrences containing an estimated 27,000 individuals. The species typically occurs in or along the margins of seasonally moist, early successional valley bottom habitats of the Willamette Valley or in mountain meadows in the Oregon Coast Range.

Populations in the Willamette Valley are threatened by agriculture and urban development that has resulted in severe habitat depletion and modification, and the fragmentation of its populations into mostly small, widely-scattered patches. Successional species, primarily resulting from suppression or elimination of natural disturbances such as periodic flooding and fires, are eliminating Nelson's checker-mallow from much of its remaining habitat. In addition to land use threats, Willamette Valley populations are subject to competitive exclusion by exotic species, seed predation by weevils prior to seed dispersal, and increased vulnerability to extirpation due to small population size and genetic isolation, and lack of genetic variation within and among populations.

Land use threats are serious in the Oregon Coast Range, where the meadows occupied by Nelson's checker-mallow are isolated from agricultural and Urban development. The major land use threat in the Oregon Coast Range is inundation by a reservoir planned for Walker Creek, the site of the largest known population of the species. The habitat of several Oregon Coast Range populations is disturbed by recreational use of habitat by motorcyclists.

The objective of this plan is to provide a framework for the recovery of Nelson's checker-mallow so that its protection by the Act is no longer necessary. The plan will be made final and approved following incorporation of comments and material received during this comment period.

#### Public Comments Solicited

The Service solicits written comments on the recovery plan described above. All comments received by the date specified above will be considered prior to approval of this plan.