System Improvement Act of 1997, Public Law 105–57.

Dated: June 5, 2006.

Sam D. Hamilton,

Regional Director.

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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Fish and Wildlife Service

Endangered and Threatened Wildlife and Plants; Initiation of a 5-Year Review of Ten Listed Northeastern Species

AGENCY: Fish and Wildlife Service, Interior.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: Pursuant to section 4(c)(2)(A) of the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (ESA), we, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service), announce a 5-year review of 10 northeastern species. A 5-year review is a periodic process conducted to ensure that the listing classification of a species is accurate. A 5-year review is based on the best scientific and commercial data available at the time of the review; therefore, we are requesting submission of any such information that has become available since the original listing of the species as endangered or threatened. Based on the results of these 5-year reviews, we will make the requisite findings under section 4(c)(2)(B) of the ESA.

DATES: To allow us adequate time to conduct this review, we must receive your information no later than March 30, 2007. However, we will continue to accept new information about any listed species at any time.

ADDRESSES: Submit information to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Northeast Regional Office, 300 Westgate Center Drive, Hadley, MA 01035, to the attention of Ms. Mary Parkin. Information received in response to this notice and review will be available for public inspection, by appointment, during normal business hours, at the above address. Information may also be sent to *Mary_Parkin@fws.gov*.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Ms. Mary Parkin at the above address or at 617–876–6173.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Under the ESA 16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.*), the Service maintains a list of endangered and threatened wildlife and plant species at 50 CFR 17.11 (for animals) and 17.12 (for plants). Section 4(c)(2)(A) of the ESA requires that we conduct a review of listed species at least once every 5 years. Then, on the basis of such reviews under section 4(c)(2)(B), we determine whether or not any species should be removed from the list (delisted), or reclassified from endangered to threatened or from threatened to endangered. Delisting a species must be supported by the best scientific and commercial data available and only considered if such data substantiates that the species is neither endangered nor threatened for one or more of the following reasons: (1) The species is considered extinct; (2) the species is considered to be recovered; and/or (3) the original data available when the species was listed, or the interpretation of such data, were in error. Any change in Federal classification would require a separate rulemaking process. The regulations in 50 CFR 424.21 require that we publish a notice in the **Federal Register** announcing those species currently under active review. This notice announces our active review of the endangered Maryland darter (Etheostoma sellare), eastern cougar (Puma (=Felis) concolor couguar), Virginia fringed mountain snail (Polygyriscus virginianus), Virginia big-eared bat (Corynorhinus (=Plecotus) townsendii virginianus), Hay's Spring amphipod (Stygobromus hayi), American burying beetle (Nicrophorus americanus), and Lee County Cave isopod (Lirceus usdagalun), as well as the threatened Knieskern's beaked-rush (Rhyncospora knieskernii), bog turtle (Clemmys muhlenbergii), and small whorled pogonia (Isotria medeoloides).

Public Solicitation of New Information

To ensure that the 5-year review is complete and based on the best available scientific and commercial information, we are soliciting new information from the public, concerned governmental agencies, Tribes, the scientific community, industry, environmental entities, and any other interested parties concerning the status of the following endangered species since their original listings: The Maryland darter in 1967 (32 FR 4001) with Critical Habitat in 1984 (49 FR 34228–34232); eastern cougar in 1973 (38 FR 14678); Virginia fringed mountain snail in 1978 (43 FR 28932–28935); Virginia big-eared bat in 1979 with Critical Habitat (44 FR 69206–69208); Hay's Spring amphipod in 1982 (47 FR 5425–5427); American burying beetle in 1989 (54 FR 29652–29655); and the Lee County Cave isopod in 1992 (57 FR 54722–54726). In addition, we are requesting submission of any such information that has become available since the original listing of the following species as threatened: The Knieskern's beaked-rush in 1991 (56 FR 32978 32983); and bog turtle in 1997 (62 FR 59605–59623); as well as the revised listing of the small whorled pogonia as threatened in 1994 (59 FR 50852–50857).

The 5-year review considers the best scientific and commercial data and all new information that has become available since the listing determination or most recent status review. Categories of requested information include: (A) Species biology, including but not limited to, population trends, distribution, abundance, demographics, and genetics; (B) habitat conditions, including but not limited to, amount, distribution, and suitability; (C) conservation measures that have been implemented that benefit the species; (D) threat status and trends; and (E) other new information, data, or corrections—including but not limited to, taxonomic or nomenclatural changes, identification of erroneous information contained in the list, and improved analytical methods.

If you wish to provide information for this 5-year review, you may submit your comments and materials to Ms. Mary Parkin (see **ADDRESSES** section).

Our practice is to make comments, including names and home addresses of respondents, available for public review, by appointment, during regular business hours (see **ADDRESSES** section). Individual respondents may request that we withhold their name and/or home address, etc., but if you wish us to consider withholding this information, you must state this prominently at the beginning of your comments. In addition, you must present rationale for withholding this information. This rationale must demonstrate that disclosure would constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of privacy. Unsupported assertions will not meet this burden. In the absence of exceptional, documentable circumstances, this information will be released. We will always make submissions from organizations or businesses, and from individuals identifying themselves as representatives or officials of organizations or businesses, available for public inspection in their entirety.

Authority: This document is published under the authority of the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended (16 U.S.C. 1531).

Dated: December 4, 2006.

Richard O. Bennett,

Regional Director, Northeast Region, Fish and Wildlife Service.

[FR Doc. E7–1315 Filed 1–26–07; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Fish and Wildlife Service

Notice of Availability for the McNary and Umatilla National Wildlife Refuges Draft Comprehensive Conservation Plan and Environmental Assessment and Notification of Public Open House Meetings

AGENCY: Fish and Wildlife Service, Interior.

ACTION: Notice of availability and notification of public open house meetings.

SUMMARY: The Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) has completed a Draft Comprehensive Conservation Plan and Environmental Assessment (Draft CCP/EA) for the McNary and Umatilla National Wildlife Refuges (Refuges). It is available for public review and comment. The Draft CCP/EA describes the Service's proposal for managing the Refuges for the next 15 years. Draft compatibility determinations for public uses are available for review with the Draft CCP/EA.

DATES: Public comments on the Draft CCP/EA are requested by February 23, 2007 (see **ADDRESSES** for delivery options). Three public open house meetings will be held see **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION** for details.

ADDRESSES: Address comments on the Draft CCP/EA to: Greg Hughes, Project Leader, Mid-Columbia River National Wildlife Refuge Complex, 3250 Port of Benton Blvd., Richland, WA 99352; fax (509) 375–0196; or e-mail *FW1PlanningComments@fws.gov.* Please use ''McNary/Umatilla CCP'' in the subject. Additional information concerning the Refuges can be found on the Internet at *http://www.fws.gov/midcolumbiariver/.* Comments may also be submitted at the public open house meetings see **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION** for details.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Greg Hughes, Project Leader, (509) 375–0196.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The Draft CCP/EA was prepared pursuant to the National Wildlife Refuge System Administration Act, as amended, and the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA). Copies of the Draft CCP/EA on compact diskette are available upon request from the Refuge Complex at phone number (509) 371–9212. Copies of the Draft CCP/EA may be reviewed at the Mid-Columbia River National Wildlife Refuge Complex, 3250 Port of Benton Blvd., Richland, WA. The Draft CCP/EA is also available for viewing and downloading on the Internet at *http://www.fws.gov/midcolumbiariver/.* Printed copies will be available for review at the following libraries.

1. Richland Public Library, 955 Northgate Drive, Richland, WA.
2. Hermiston Public Library, 235 E. Gladys Avenue, Hermiston, OR.
3. Walla Walla Public Library, 238 E. Alder St., Walla Walla, WA.
4. Umatilla Public Library, 911 7th St., Umatilla, OR.

Habitat management activities proposed in the Draft CCP/EA include improving the conditions of wetland, riparian, mudflat, and shrub-steppe habitats, with emphasis on reducing invasive species; increasing moist soil habitats beneficial for waterfowl, shorebirds, and other wetland associates; evaluating and, where feasible, enhancing backwater habitats for salmonids; and increasing the amount of grain available for ducks on the Refuges' agricultural lands.

Public use management actions proposed in the Draft CCP/EA include expanding and improving trails, signs, and access areas for wildlife observation; improving the quality of upland bird hunting; implementing some minor trades between sanctuary and hunt areas; continuing waterfowl hunting coordination with the States; improving information available to anglers and boaters; expanding the Umatilla Refuge's environmental education program; improving management of horseback riding; eliminating overnight camping at McNary Refuge; and reducing illegal uses.

Background

Umatilla Refuge encompasses 26,888 acres with units along the Columbia River in both Washington and Oregon. McNary Refuge encompasses approximately 15,894 acres located 30 miles upstream of Umatilla Refuge, near Kennewick, Washington. Habitat types found on both Refuges include shrub-steppe uplands, croplands, woody riparian areas, basalt cliffs, emergent marshes, large marshes, and open water areas of the Columbia River. Several islands are also part of each Refuge. Both Refuges provide important migratory and wintering habitat for numerous bird species especially waterfowl.

Purpose and Need for Action

The purpose of the CCP is to provide reasonable, scientifically-grounded guidance for improving the Refuges' shrub-steppe, riparian, wetland, and cliff-talus habitats for the long-term conservation of native plants and animals and migratory birds, while providing high quality public use programs for hunting, fishing, wildlife observation, photography, and environmental education and interpretation. The Draft CCP/EA identifies appropriate actions to protect and sustain the cultural and biological features of the river islands, the Refuges' wintering waterfowl populations and habitats, the migratory shorebird populations that use the Refuges, and threatened, endangered, or rare species.

Alternatives

The Service identified and evaluated four alternatives for managing the McNary and Umatilla Refuges for the next 15 years, including a No Action Alternative (Alternative 4). Brief descriptions of the alternatives follow.

Alternative 1: Emphasize Migratory Waterfowl Management and Consumptive Public Uses. Under Alternative 1, the Refuges' management focus would be on providing migratory waterfowl with high quality, easily accessible food during both normal and severe winters. This would be accomplished by increasing both crop production and waterfowl food plants. Secure, adequately-sized resting areas would be provided to ensure the health of overwintering and migrating waterfowl. Consumptive public uses such as hunting and fishing would be emphasized, with improvements to facilities and increased opportunities. A State pheasant augmentation/release program would be discontinued, and camping would be discontinued at Madame Dorion Park. Other public uses would continue at approximately their current levels of service.

Alternative 2: Emphasize Migratory Birds, Special Status Species and Wildlife-Dependent Public Uses. Under Alternative 2, the Service's preferred alternative, the Refuges would focus on managing habitat for all migratory birds, and enhancing populations of targeted special status species and their habitats. Habitats for migratory waterfowl, shorebirds, threatened and endangered species, and other native wildlife would be improved. Weed control and reduction, and improving riparian, shrub-steppe, island, and cliff habitats would be emphasized. Wildlife-dependent public uses would also be emphasized, with opportunities for