

enhance the quality, utility, and clarity of the information to be collected; and (4) Ways to minimize the burden of the collection of information on respondents. The information collections in this program are part of a system of record covered by the Privacy Act (5 U.S.C. 552 (a))

Dated: October 3, 2001.

Rebecca A. Mullin,

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Information Collection Officer.

[FR Doc. 01-25234 Filed 10-5-01; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4310-55-P

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Fish and Wildlife Service

Notice of Intent to Prepare Comprehensive Conservation Plans and Associated Environmental Documents for the Great Dismal Swamp National Wildlife Refuge

AGENCY: Fish and Wildlife Service, Department of Interior.

SUMMARY: This notice advises the public that the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) intends to gather information necessary to prepare a Comprehensive Conservation Plan (CCP) and environmental documents pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act and its implementing regulations. CCPs will be prepared for the Great Dismal Swamp National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) located in Suffolk and Chesapeake, Virginia and Gates and Camden Counties, North Carolina and the Nanesmond Refuge Unit located within the City of Suffolk, Virginia. A Wilderness Review of Great Dismal Swamp NWR will also be completed concurrently in accordance with the Wilderness Act of 1964, as amended and Refuge Planning policy 602 FW Chapters 1, 2, and 3. The Service is furnishing this notice in compliance with the National Wildlife Refuge System Administration Act of 1966, as amended (16 U.S.C. 668dd *et seq.*): (1) To advise other agencies and the public of our intentions, and (2) to obtain suggestions and information on the scope of issues to include in the environmental documents.

DATES: Inquire at the address below for dates of planning activity and due dates for comments. The public scoping meetings will be held in January 2002 in the cities of Suffolk and Chesapeake, Virginia and also in Elizabeth City and Gatesville, North Carolina in the following locations:

January 8, 2002

Hampton Inn, 402 Halstead Boulevard, Elizabeth City, North Carolina

January 10, 2002

Performing Arts Building, Gates County High School, 088 Highway 158 West, Gatesville, North Carolina

January 22, 2002

City Council Chambers, 441 Market Street, Suffolk, Virginia

January 24, 2002

Major Hillard Public Library, Deep Creek, 824 Old George Washington Highway, Chesapeake, Virginia

ADDRESSES: Address comments, questions, and request for more information to the following: Refuge Manager, Great Dismal Swamp National Wildlife Refuge, P.O. Box 349, Suffolk, VA 23439-0349, 757-986-3706.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: By Federal law, all lands within the National Wildlife Refuge System are to be managed in accordance with an approved CCP. The CCP guides management decisions and identifies refuge goals, long-range objectives, and strategies for achieving refuges purposes. The planning process will consider many elements including habitat and wildlife management, habitat protection and acquisition, public uses, and cultural resources. Public input into this planning process is essential. The CCP will provide other agencies and the public with a clear understanding of the desired conditions for the Refuges and how the Service will impact management strategies.

The Service will solicit public input via, open houses, public meetings, workshops, and written comments. Special mailings, newspaper articles, and announcements will inform people of the time and place of such opportunities for public input to the CCP. The Great Dismal Swamp National Wildlife Refuge encompasses some 109,000 acres of marshes, wooded wetlands/swamps, and open water. Comments on the protection of threatened and endangered species and migratory birds and the protection and management of their habitat will be solicited as part of the planning process. A Draft CCP and Environmental Assessment are planned for public review by December of 2002.

Review of the project will be conducted in accordance with the requirements of the national Environmental Policy Act of 1969, as amended (42 U.S.C. 4321 *et seq.*), NEPA Regulations (40 CFR parts 1500-1508), other appropriate Federal laws and regulations, and Service policies and

procedures for compliance with those regulations.

Mamie A. Parker,

Acting Regional Director U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Hadley, Massachusetts.

[FR Doc. 01-25191 Filed 10-5-01; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Fish and Wildlife Service

Availability of Draft Implementation Plan for Falconry Take of Nestling American Peregrine Falcons in the Contiguous United States and Alaska

AGENCY: Fish and Wildlife Service, Interior.

ACTION: Notice of availability.

SUMMARY: This notice is to announce the availability of the Draft Implementation Plan for take for falconry of nestling American peregrine falcons in the contiguous United States and Alaska. The Implementation Plan is intended to assist the States in implementing the selected alternative from our May 2001 Environmental Assessment on take of nestlings. We seek public comment on the Draft Plan.

DATES: Comments on the Draft Implementation Plan are due by November 8, 2001.

ADDRESSES: The Plan is available from, and written comments about it should be submitted to, Chief, Division of Migratory Bird Management, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 4401 North Fairfax Drive, Room 634, Arlington, Virginia 22203-1610. You can request a copy of the Plan by calling 703/358-1714. The fax number for a request or for comments is 703/358-2272. The Plan also is available on the Division of Migratory Bird Management web pages at <http://migratorybirds.fws.gov>.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Jon Andrew, Chief, Division of Migratory Bird Management, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, at 703/358-1714 or the address above.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The Implementation Plan provides additional details to be used by the States for implementing the alternative selected. The Plan outlines the procedures we will follow in reviewing and adjusting the allowed take of nestling American peregrine falcons in accordance with the best available information about the population.

Dated: October 1, 2001.

Kevin Adams,

Director.

[FR Doc. 01-25161 Filed 10-5-01; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Fish and Wildlife Service

RIN 1018-AH32

Endangered and Threatened Wildlife and Plants; Determination That Designation of Critical Habitat Is Not Prudent for the Rock Gnome Lichen

AGENCY: Fish and Wildlife Service, Interior.

ACTION: Notice of finding.

SUMMARY: We, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service), have reconsidered whether designating critical habitat for the rock gnome lichen (*Gymnoderma lineare*) would be prudent. We have again determined that such a designation would not be prudent. The rock gnome lichen was listed as an endangered species under the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended (Act), on January 18, 1995. At the time the plant was listed, we determined that the designation of critical habitat was not prudent because designation would increase the degree of threat to the species and/or would not benefit the species.

We determine that the designation of critical habitat is not prudent for the rock gnome lichen because it would likely increase the threat from collection, vandalism, or habitat degradation and destruction, both direct and inadvertent.

We have revised the proposed finding to incorporate or address comments and new information received during the comment period.

DATES: The finding announced in this document was made on September 27, 2001.

ADDRESSES: The complete file for this finding is available for public inspection, by appointment, during normal business hours at the Asheville Field Office, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 160 Zillico Street, Asheville, North Carolina 28801.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Brian P. Cole, State Supervisor, (828) 258-3939, Ext. 223.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Background

Taxonomy and Description

Gymnoderma lineare, first described by Evans (1947) as *Cladonia linearis*

from material collected in Tennessee, is a squamulose (scale-like) lichen in the reindeer moss family. This species is the only member of its genus occurring in North America (Yoshimura and Sharp 1968). *Gymnoderma* was considered a monotypic genus for over a century, until its revision by Yoshimura and Sharp (1968). These authors reclassified Evans' (1947) *Cladonia linearis* as *Gymnoderma lineare* on the basis of its short and solid podetia (hollow upright structures) that lack symbiotic algae (algae that live cooperatively with a fungus). *Gymnoderma lineare* occurs in rather dense colonies of narrow straps (squamules). The only similar lichens are the squamulose species of the genus *Cladonia*. *Gymnoderma lineare* has terminal portions of the straplike individual lobes that are blue-grey on the upper surface and generally shiny-white on the lower surface; near the base they grade to black (unlike squamulose *Cladonia*, which are never blackened toward the base) (Weakley 1988, Hale 1979). Hale's (1979) description of the species reads as follows: "Squamules dark greenish mineral grey; lower surface white to brownish toward the tips, weakly corticated; podetia lacking but small clustered apothecia common on low tips." Weakley (1988) further describes the species as having squamules about 1 millimeter (mm) (0.04 inches [in]) across near the tip, tapering to the blackened base, sparingly branched, and generally about 1 to 2 centimeters (cm) (0.39 to 0.79 in) long (though they can be longer or shorter, depending on environmental factors). The squamules are nearly parallel to the rock surface, but the tips curl away from the rock, approaching or reaching a perpendicular orientation to the rock surface. The fruiting bodies (apothecia) are borne at the tips of the squamules and are black (contrasting to the brown or red apothecia of *Cladonia* spp.) (Weakley 1988). The apothecia are borne singly or in clusters, usually at the tips of the squamules but occasionally along the sides; these have been found from July through September (Evans 1947, North Carolina Natural Heritage Program records 1991). The apothecia are either sessile or borne on short podetia 1 to 2 mm (0.04 to 0.08 in) in height, and the largest of these have a diameter of about 1 mm (0.04 in), with most being much smaller. The apothecia are cylindrical in shape and radial in symmetry (Evans 1947). The primary means of propagation of this lichen appears to be asexual, with colonies spreading clonally.

Distribution, Habitat, and Life History

Gymnoderma lineare (Evans)

Yoshimura and Sharp is endemic (native to a particular region) to the southern Appalachian Mountains of North Carolina, Tennessee, South Carolina, and Georgia, where it occurs only in areas of high humidity, either on high-elevation cliffs that are frequently bathed in fog or in deep river gorges at lower elevations. It is primarily limited to vertical rock faces, where seepage water from forest soils above flows at (and only at) very wet times, and large stream-side boulders, where it receives a moderate amount of light but not high-intensity solar radiation. It is almost always found growing with the moss *Andreaea* in these vertical intermittent seeps. This association makes it rather easy to search for, due to the distinctive reddish-brown color of *Andreaea* that can be observed from a considerable distance (Weakley 1988). Most populations occur above 1,524 meters (5,000 feet) elevation. In Tennessee, it is apparently limited to the Great Smoky Mountains National Park (Park) and one other mountain on the North Carolina/Tennessee State line. Very little specific information is known about the life history and population biology of the rock gnome lichen. Other common species found growing with or near this species include *Huperzia selago*, *Stereocaulon* sp., *Scirpus cespitosus*, *Carex misera*, *Rhododendron* spp., *Saxifraga michauxii*, *Krigia montana*, *Heuchera villosa*, *Geum radiatum*, and sometimes *Juncus trifidus*. The high-elevation coniferous forests adjacent to the rock outcrops and cliffs most often occupied by the species are dominated by red spruce (*Picea rubens*) and Fraser fir (*Abies fraseri*).

Forty populations of *Gymnoderma lineare* have been reported historically; thirty-five remain in existence. The remaining populations are in Mitchell (two), Jackson (five), Yancey (four), Swain (one), Transylvania (four), Buncombe (four), Avery (two), Ashe (two), Haywood (one) and Rutherford (one) Counties, North Carolina; Greenville County (one), South Carolina; Rabun County (one), Georgia; and Sevier (seven) and Carter (part of this population is on the State line with Mitchell County, North Carolina) Counties, Tennessee.

Threats

Five populations of rock gnome lichen are known to have been completely extirpated. The reasons for the disappearance of the species at most of these sites are undocumented; however, one population is believed to