

DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

news release

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

For Release August 15, 1979

Inez Connor 202/343-5634

NEW RULES PROPOSED FOR LISTING, DELISTING ENDANGERED SPECIES

New, comprehensive regulations for amending the U.S. List of Endangered and Threatened Wildlife and Plants have been proposed by the Departments of the Interior and Commerce.

"These proposed rules are virtually a 'how-to' manual that the public and other agencies can follow in either petitioning the Departments to list a species or in participating in our decisionmaking process," Lynn A. Greenwalt, Director of Interior's U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, said.

"When adopted, the rules will give everyone a much clearer understanding of how species get on or off the endangered list, what 'critical habitat' means, how it is designated, and how such designations may affect a given locality," Greenwalt said of the proposed rulemaking.

The proposal, published in the August 15, 1979, Federal Register, spells out the criteria for deciding whether a species qualifies for listing or reclassification, the procedures for submitting and acting on petitions, emergency listings, and the content of proposed and final regulations. Periodic review of the list and the procedures the Service will follow in considering economic and other impacts associated with critical habitat designations are also outlined.

Greenwalt said the proposed rules "take into account the competing interests -- social, economic, and recreational -- that come into play when Federal actions to conserve endangered species are needed. On the one hand," he said, "species threatened with extinction must be given prompt protection to increase their chance of survival. But at the same time, interested and knowledgeable parties must be consulted before Federal actions of potentially broad impact are taken."

The proposed regulations formalize the process the Interior agency has followed in the past in listing species and their critical habitats and also increase opportunities for public participation. These provisions include publishing notices of proposed actions in local newspapers and scientific

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journals; notifying local officials, interested parties, and other government agencies; and holding public meetings in or near the affected area. State Governors and foreign governments are also consulted on species that occur under their respective jurisdictions.

"Endangered" means that a species is threatened with extinction throughout all or a significant portion of its range. "Threatened" means that the species is likely to become endangered in the foreseeable future.

In order to qualify for listing under the proposed rules, a species must be threatened by one or a combination of the following factors: loss or destruction of suitable habitat; disease or predation; commercial, sporting, scientific, or educational activities; inadequate protective laws; or other natural or man-made factors.

Critical habitat designations would be based on the biology and conservation needs of the species, such as space for individual and population growth, cover, shelter, food, water, air, light and other nutritional needs, and sites for breeding, reproduction, and rearing of offspring. In the case of plants, this also would include the necessary sites for germination and seed dispersal. Critical habitat proposals would include an economic analysis, indicate activities that might have an adverse effect on the species, and would consider the impact that such designations might have on the local area involved.

After a species is listed, it is illegal for anyone under the jurisdiction of the United States to take wildlife (but not plants) and to import, export, ship, sell, or offer wildlife or plants for sale in interstate or foreign commerce. In addition, Federal agencies are required to consult with the Service to ensure that actions they authorize, fund, or carry out do not jeopardize the species' continued existence or destroy or adversely modify its critical habitat. The consultation requirement applies whether or not critical habitat has been designated.

Interested parties are invited to comment on these proposed rules through November 15, 1979. Comments and requests for additional information should be submitted to the Director (OES), U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Washington, D.C. 20240.

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OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

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For Release August 16, 1979

Secretary of the Interior Cecil D. Andrus released the attached statement and fact sheet today concerning the Pacific Northwest salmon fisheries, at a joint news conference held in Seattle with Senator Warren G. Magnuson of Washington.

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