

Proposed Downlisting of Arroyo Toad (*Anaxyrus californicus*)

About the Document

Title: Endangered and Threatened Wildlife and Plants; 12-month Finding on a Petition to Downlist the Arroyo Toad, and a Proposed Rule to Reclassify the Arroyo Toad as Threatened

Subject and Purpose: This document announces the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) 12-month finding and proposed rule to downlist the arroyo toad (*Anaxyrus californicus*) to threatened under the Endangered Species Act (Act).

About the Peer Review Process

Type of review: Letter.

Number of reviewers: The peer review process included written requests to six species and/or habitat experts to conduct peer review of the proposed rule to downlist arroyo toad upon publication of the proposed rule on March 27, 2014. We received peer review from two experts during the March-May, 2014, comment period, and we will be contacting the remaining four experts to request peer review of the proposed rule during the reopening of the comment period in October-November, 2014.

Reviewer Expertise: Primary expertise for the review is familiarity with the life history, threats, and habitat requirements of arroyo toad.

Selection of Peer Reviewer: The Service selected peer reviewers based on their expertise with the subject matter and lack of any conflicts of interest as described in the Office of Management Peer Review Guidelines.

Management of Peer Review: The peer review is being managed by the Service.

Estimated Start Date of Peer Review: March 27, 2014 and October 17, 2014.

About Public Participation

Opportunities for the Public: The proposed rule to downlist the arroyo toad to threatened provided a public comment period of 60 days in March-May, 2014. The reopening of the proposed rule to downlist arroyo toad to threatened provides a second public comment period of 30 days in October-November, 2014. The rule identifies specific information requested from the public. Public comments are to

be submitted either electronically through *www.regulations.gov* or by hard copy to the Service (Division of Policy and Directives Management).

Public nominations of peer reviewers: No other individuals or groups were asked to nominate peer reviewers.

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