

News Release



Idaho Fish and Wildlife Office
1387 S. Vinnell Way, Room 368
Boise, Idaho, 83709
<http://www.fws.gov/idaho>

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Greg Burak, 208-378-5654, greg_burak@fws.gov

Northern Idaho Ground Squirrel Review Completed

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) announced today that it has completed a five-year review of the northern Idaho ground squirrel (*Spermophilus brunneus brunneus*), a threatened mammal that has been protected under the Endangered Species Act (ESA) since 2000.

The ESA requires the Service to review the status of all species included on the federal list of threatened and endangered species at least once every five years. The Service reviews the best available scientific information to ensure that protection under ESA for the listed species is still warranted. Five-year reviews include an assessment of population status and threats based on new information since the original listing, including peer-reviewed published literature, agency reports, monitoring data, recovery team reports, public databases and university theses. At the conclusion of a five-year review, the Service may propose to change the species' listing classification or determine there will be no change in its listing status.

One of the rarest mammals in North America, the northern Idaho ground squirrel occurs only in Idaho's Adams and Valley counties. Approximately 1600 squirrels are known to occur on private and public lands, including U.S. Forest Service and Idaho State lands. The northern Idaho ground squirrel lives in dry meadows, surrounded by ponderosa pine and Douglas-fir forests. It is protected under ESA because of a loss of native meadow habitat from forest encroachment due to fire suppression and altered fire cycles; land use changes and development; recreational shooting; poisoning; predation and competition from other ground squirrels, such as the Columbian ground squirrel.

Brian Kelly, Idaho State Supervisor for the Service, said, "The Service's five-year review recommends that the northern Idaho ground squirrel remain protected as a threatened species. Although we are seeing a positive trend in population numbers, additional actions are needed to ensure recovery."

Kelly added, "Partnerships are key to recovery of species. I am optimistic about the northern Idaho ground squirrel's future due to the Service's ongoing recovery work with our valued partners in conservation. Private landowners and other northern Idaho ground squirrel recovery partners have worked hard for years, including of the Idaho Department of Fish and Game; the Payette and Boise National Forests; the College of Idaho and University of Idaho; the Idaho Fish and Wildlife Foundation and the Southwest Idaho Resource Advisory Council. We look forward to continued strong partnership efforts in the future."

The northern Idaho ground squirrel five-year review will be posted online at <http://ecos/fws.gov>, search for: northern Idaho ground squirrel. It will also be available at <http://www.fws.gov/idaho>, or by contacting the Idaho Fish and Wildlife Office, 1387 S. Vinnell Way, Room 368, Boise, Idaho 83709. For more information about the review or the species, please contact Greg Burak, greg_burak@fws.gov, 208-378-5654.

The ESA provides a critical safety net for America's native fish, wildlife and plants, and to date has prevented the extinction of hundreds of imperiled species across the nation, as well as promoting the recovery of many others. America's fish, wildlife and plant resources belong to all of us, and ensuring the health of imperiled species is a shared responsibility. We're working to actively engage conservation partners and the public in the search for improved and innovative ways to conserve and recover imperiled species. To learn more about the Endangered Species Program, go to <http://www.fws.gov/Endangered>.

The mission of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is working with others to conserve, protect and enhance fish, wildlife, plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. We are both a leader and trusted partner in fish and wildlife conservation, known for our scientific excellence, stewardship of lands and natural resources, dedicated professionals and commitment to public service. For more information on our work and the people who make it happen, visit www.fws.gov.

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