

# News Release

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## **Service Determines Three Idaho Species Do Not Warrant Listing Under Endangered Species Act**

*ESA-driven collaboration among states, landowners and federal agencies is helping to protect once imperiled species*

BOISE, Idaho – Three species found in Idaho don’t warrant listing under the Endangered Species Act (ESA) following completion of status reviews by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service). The Southern Idaho ground squirrel, Goose Creek milkvetch, and the Great Basin population of the Columbia spotted frog are among 17 species across the country that have been determined to no longer merit candidate status for listing under the ESA.

These species will be removed from the ESA Candidate List. These findings represent years of collaborative efforts within Idaho and across the United States to conserve and restore once-imperiled species and their habitats and eliminate the need for ESA protection.

“Working with our conservation partners has helped us to avoid listing these three species native to Idaho. Strong partnerships with the state of Idaho, tribes, private landowners and other federal agencies are essential ingredients to proactive conservation,” said Mike Carrier, state supervisor for the Service’s Idaho Fish and Wildlife Office. The Idaho field office led the Service’s conservation of Southern Idaho ground squirrel.

The Service reached a not warranted finding for the southern Idaho ground squirrel because squirrels have been at a peak in their population cycle for the past several years and are well distributed throughout most of their historical range, which has led to an increase in gene flow among populations. Squirrels continue to persist throughout the majority of their historical range and populations appear stable.

The Service was petitioned to list the ground squirrels in 2001. In 2001 the Service found the species warranted for listing, but its listing was precluded due to higher listing priorities, which resulted in it

receiving candidate status. The species is native to four counties in southwest Idaho: Adams, Gem, Payette and Washington counties, with a known range of about 718,318 acres.

A programmatic Candidate Conservation Agreement with Assurances (CCAA) was completed for this species between the State of Idaho, private landowners and the Service. The CCAA covered approximately 9 percent of the known range of the species.

States and landowners addressed threats to the Great Basin population of Columbia spotted frog. Found in Nevada, southwestern Idaho and southeastern Oregon, the Columbia spotted frog lives its entire life in water and faced the threat of declining water quantity and quality. Following the designation of the frog as an ESA candidate species, states, federal agencies and private landowners went to work clarifying solutions, employing sustainable grazing practices, and creating ponds where the frog has taken up residence and is successfully breeding. As a result of these collaborative conservation efforts, population numbers of the Great Basin Columbia spotted frog have rebounded.

The BLM and Service reached agreements to protect and restore imperiled Goose Creek milkvetch. The milkvetch is located primarily on federal lands in Idaho, Nevada and Utah, and following its listing as an ESA candidate species the Service partnered with BLM and state natural heritage programs to restore and protect its habitat from the invasive plant, leafy spurge. Through a voluntary arrangement called a Candidate Conservation Agreement, federal agencies have protected 86 percent of the current milkvetch population and 93 percent of its known habitat.

The other 14 species that will be removed from the Candidate List are the Cumberland arrow darter, Nevares spring bug, Page springsnail, Ramshaw meadows sand verbena, Sequatchie caddisfly, Siskiyou mariposa lily, Sleeping ute milkvetch, Tahoe yellow cress and six Tennessee cave beetles (Baker Station, Coleman, Fowler's, Indian Grave Point, Inquirer, and Noblett's beetles).

Additionally, the Service has determined that petitions to list the American eel and Shawnee darter are not warranted under the ESA. Neither are on the ESA candidate species list.

The not warranted determinations (known as 12-month findings) represent compelling examples of American conservation and demonstrate that how the ESA inspires collaboration between federal and state agencies, private companies, conservation organizations and individual landowners.

“We are proud of our close work with so many diverse stakeholders, and of the role of the Endangered Species Act in supporting these collaborations,” said Service Director Dan Ashe. “This model of proactive conservation and partnership should give critics of the Act pause and make us all consider what would be lost to future generations of Americans by weakening the nation’s foremost wildlife conservation law.”

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