U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

# News Release

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**Southwest Region (Arizona ● New Mexico ● Oklahoma ●Texas) www.fws.gov/southwest/**

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**Service Announces the Availability of the Thick-billed Parrot Final Recovery Plan Addendum**

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) is announcing the availability to the public of a final plan for the recovery of the thick-billed parrot. The thick-billed parrot is an endangered species that currently occurs only in the Sierra Madre Occidental of Mexico. There are historical observations from the mountains of southern Arizona and possibly southwestern New Mexico, however, no breeding populations were documented.

The final recovery plan addendum was collaboratively written by the Arizona Game and Fish Department and the Service's Tucson Ecological Services Sub-Office for the Southwest Region, with participation by experts in Mexico. In addition to providing a review of the biology, historical occurrence in the United States, current status in Mexico, recovery criteria, threats analysis, and recommended management actions, the Thick-billed Parrot Final Recovery Plan Addendum represents the first use of an existing Mexican recovery plan, the "Programa de Acción para la Conservación de las Especies: Cotorras Serranas (PACE)", as the best science and recovery strategy for the development of the addendum.

The final plan is an addendum to Mexico's National Commission of Protected Areas' 2009 recovery plan for the thick-billed parrot which guides recovery of the parrot throughout its current Mexican range. The Service is adopting the PACE for the parrot and adding an addendum to meet the requirements of the U.S. Endangered Species Act. The recovery plan addendum focuses on restoring populations and habitat in the parrot's current range in Mexico and establishing criteria for measuring recovery progress. The potential for the parrot's expansion into remaining suitable habitat within the U.S. is discussed, but the emphasis at this time is on recovering the thick-billed parrot where it lives in Mexico.

"The strategy for recovering the thick-billed parrot set forth in Mexico's plan is solid and we fully support it," said the Service's Southwest Regional Director Benjamin Tuggle. "We have used Mexico's plan to inform our recovery plan addendum because it represents the best available

science. We're pleased to adopt a Mexican recovery plan for a species in the U.S. for the first time, and we look forward to working with the Mexican government on the recovery of this parrot."

Thick-billed parrots are long-lived, gregarious, and form social groups in old growth pine forests, now found mainly in Mexico. The thick-billed parrot's current range is limited to high elevations of the Sierra Madre Occidental of Mexico extending to within 50 miles of the U.S. border. There are no formal historical nesting records for the United States; however, thick-billed parrots visited southeastern Arizona, and in some years large flocks were observed. Currently, threats to the thick-billed parrot in Mexico include loss of habitat, primarily driven by extensive logging of large mature pines which provide nesting cavities and the seeds that are the primary food source needed to sustain the flocks, and removal of birds from the wild for the illegal pet trade. In the United States the last documented sighting of thick-billed parrots was in Arizona's Chiricahua Mountains in 1938. Extirpation of the U.S. population was likely caused by excessive, unregulated shooting.

In Mexico, the parrot's current range is limited to high elevations of the Sierra Madre Occidental of Mexico, extending from northwestern Chihuahua and northeastern Sonora into Durango and continuing in a southeasterly direction to Jalisco, Colima, and Michoacán, spanning the Sierra Madre Occidental. The northernmost breeding area is Mesa de Guacamayas, located within 50 miles of the U.S.–Mexico border.

If you wish to review the recovery plan addendum, you may obtain a copy by any one of the following methods:
*Internet: http://www.fws.gov/southwest/es/arizona/T-B_Parrot.htm, http://www.fws.gov/southwest/, http://www.fws.gov/southwest/es/ElectronicLibrary_ListDocs.cfm*
Find Thick-billed_Parrot_Final_Recovery_Plan_Addendum_June_2013.pdf;
or *U.S. mail:* Arizona Ecological Services Office, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 2321 West Royal Palm Road, Phoenix, AZ 85021-4951; or *Telephone:* 602-242-0210.

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