



# News Release

Public Affairs Office  
PO Box 1306  
Albuquerque, NM 87103  
505/248-6911  
505/248-6915 (Fax)

Southwest Region (Arizona • New Mexico • Oklahoma • Texas) <http://www.fws.gov/southwest/>

**For Release:** May 2, 2007

**Contacts:** Elizabeth Slown 505-248-6433, Jeff Humphrey 602-242-0210 ext 222, Wendy Brown 505-248-6664

## Service Seeks Latest Scientific Information on Health, Population Trends for 24 Species

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service today opened a public comment period to update information on the status of 24 species protected under the Endangered Species Act in Arizona, New Mexico, Oklahoma and Texas. The reviews ensure the species are accurately classified as threatened or endangered.

Each review will result in a recommendation to maintain or change species classification, as well as in identification of information needs for subsequent reviews. Any change in Federal classification requires a separate rule-making process distinct from the status review with an opportunity for further public input.

The Service is asking the public to provide any new information concerning the status of these species including biology, habitat, conservation measures, threats, and any other new data or information. The comment period closes July 23. More information can be found on the internet at <http://www.fws.gov/policy/library/E7-7636.pdf>.

The species under review include ten plants: Arizona cliffrose, Knowlton's cactus, Large-fruited sand verbena, Mancos milkvetch, Nichol Turk's head cactus, Pecos sunflower, San Francisco Peaks groundsel, Sentry milk-vetch, Texas snowbells, and Walker's manioc, seven invertebrates: Bee Creek Cave harvestman, Bone Cave harvestman, Coffin Cave mold beetle, Kretschmarr Cave mold beetle, Ouachita rock-pocketbook clam, Tooth Cave pseudoscorpion and Tooth Cave spider, four fish: Devils River minnow, Gila topminnow, Loach minnow and Spikedace, one amphibian: Chiricahua leopard frog, one reptile: New Mexico ridge-nosed rattlesnake, and one bird: Attwater's prairie chicken.

"This is an opportunity for the scientific community and the public to actively engage in the evaluation of the status of our nation's threatened and endangered species," said Benjamin N. Tuggle, Ph.D., the Service's Southwest Regional Director.

In order for new information to be considered, it should be supported by documentation such as maps, bibliographic references, methods used to gather and analyze data, and copies of pertinent publications, reports, or letters by knowledgeable sources. However, the Service welcomes new information regarding any endangered species at any time. The addresses for

sending in new information can be found in the Federal Register notice at <http://www.fws.gov/policy/library/E7-7636.pdf>.

Categories of requested information include:

- Species biology, including population trends, distribution, abundance, demographics, and genetics.
- Habitat conditions, including amount, distribution, and suitability.
- Conservation measures that have been implemented that benefit the species.
- Threat status and trends.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is the principal Federal agency responsible for conserving, protecting and enhancing fish, wildlife and plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. The Service manages the 95-million-acre National Wildlife Refuge System, which encompasses 547 national wildlife refuges, thousands of small wetlands and other special management areas. It also operates 69 national fish hatcheries, 64 fishery resources offices and 81 ecological services field stations. The agency enforces federal wildlife laws, administers the Endangered Species Act, manages migratory bird populations, restores nationally significant fisheries, conserves and restores wildlife habitat such as wetlands, and helps foreign and Native American tribal governments with their conservation efforts. It also oversees the Federal Assistance program, which distributes hundreds of millions of dollars in excise taxes on fishing and hunting equipment to state fish and wildlife agencies. Visit the Service's website at <http://www.fws.gov>.

- <http://www.fws.gov/southwest>-