

Department of the Interior
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
Bay-Delta Fish and Wildlife Office
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News Release



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U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Announces Opening of 30-day Ashy Storm Petrel Comment Period

SACRAMENTO –The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service today announced it will accept comments through Dec. 28, 2012 regarding a status review of the ashy storm-petrel throughout its range in the United States. To ensure that the status review is comprehensive, the Service is soliciting scientific and commercial data, as well as other information regarding this species. Based on the status review, the Service will issue a final 12-month finding by Sept. 30, 2013 that will address whether the listing may be warranted under the Endangered Species Act.

The complete *Federal Register* filing can be found today at <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2012-11-28/pdf/2012-28811.pdf>, and also in the hardcopy version of the *Federal Register*. After the date of publication, links to documents can be found at: <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/browse/collection.action?collectionCode=FR>

Interested parties may submit comments by one of the following methods:

- *Federal eRulemaking Portal*: <http://www.regulations.gov>. Search for Docket No. FWS-R8-ES-2012-0075 and then follow the instructions for submitting comments.
- *U.S. mail or hand-delivery*: Public Comments Processing, Attn: FWS–R8–ES–2012–0075; *Division of Policy and Directives Management*; U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service; 4401 N. Fairfax Drive, MS 2042-PDM; Arlington, VA 22203.
- All information received will be posted on <http://www.regulations.gov>.

The ashy storm-petrel is a dark smoke-gray, medium-sized bird with long slender wings, a long forked tail, and webbed feet. It has a relatively short neck, large puffy head and small bill. The bill, legs, and feet are black. It can be distinguished from its close relative Leach's storm-petrel by color: Ashy storm-petrel is almost entirely black while Leach's storm-petrel is dark with a white rump patch. Research indicates that there are no genetic differences between the ashy storm-petrel populations on the Farallon and Channel islands and there are no recognized subspecies.

Ashy storm-petrels have been confirmed to breed at 26 locations (on islands and offshore rocks) from Mendocino County in California, south to Todos Santos Islands, and west of Ensenada, Baja California, Mexico. More than 95 percent of the species breeds in two population centers at the Farallon Islands and in the California Channel Islands. Anacapa, San Miguel, Santa Cruz, Santa Rosa, San Clemente, San Nicholas, Santa Barbara, and Santa Catalina islands comprise the Channel Islands. Ashy storm-petrels occur at their breeding colonies nearly year-round and occur in greater numbers from February through October.

On Aug. 19, 2009, the Service announced its 12-month finding that found, after reviewing the best available scientific and commercial information, listing the ashy storm-petrel was not warranted. The Center for Biological Diversity challenged this decision in the District Court of the Northern District of California on Oct. 25, 2010. This challenge was resolved by a Sept. 16, 2011, Stipulation of Dismissal, based on the approval of two settlements in which the Service agreed to submit a proposed rule or a not-warranted finding regarding the ashy storm-petrel to the *Federal Register* by Sept. 30, 2013.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Field Supervisor, Bay-Delta Fish and Wildlife Office, 650 Capitol Mall, Eighth Floor, Sacramento, CA 95814; by telephone at 916-930-5603; or facsimile at 916-930-5654. Persons who use a telecommunications device for the deaf (TDD), call the Federal Information Relay Service (FIRS) at 800-877-8339. Photos of the ashy storm-petrel can be located and downloaded from the Bay-Delta FWO image library at http://www.flickr.com/photos/usfws_pacificsw/sets/72157625318619878/

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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