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News Release



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Draft Economic Analysis on Revised Critical Habitat Proposal for Tidewater Goby Released

Public comment period is reopened on critical habitat proposal

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) today announced the availability of a draft economic analysis on the 2011 revised proposal of critical habitat for the federally endangered tidewater goby. Release of the analysis opens a new 30-day comment period on the proposed rule and the draft economic analysis.

The economic analysis, prepared for the Service under contract by Industrial Economics, Inc. of Cambridge, Mass., estimates the costs of the 2011 proposed revised critical habitat for the tidewater goby to be \$558,000 over a 20-year period, assuming a 7 percent discount rate.

On October 19, 2011, the Service proposed to designate 12,157 acres of revised critical habitat for the goby. A 60-day public comment period closed on December 19, 2011.

Public comments on the proposed rule and draft economic analysis will be accepted until August 23, 2012. Today's notice is available for viewing at the Federal Register's [Public Inspection](#) desk. The notice will officially publish in the Federal Register on July 24, 2012.

Copies of the proposed rule, draft economic analysis and other supporting information are available at www.regulations.gov. Comments and information on the proposed rule and economic analysis can be submitted by e-mail at www.regulations.gov. In the search box enter: **FWS-R8-ES-2011-0085** and follow the instructions for submitting comments.

Written comments can also be submitted to:

Public Comments Processing, Attn: **FWS-R8-ES-2011-0085**
Division of Policy and Directives Management
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
4401 N. Fairfax Dr., Suite 222
Arlington, VA 22203

The proposed revised critical habitat for the fish includes land in portions of Del Norte, Humboldt, Mendocino, Sonoma, Marin, San Mateo, Santa Cruz, Monterey, San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara, Ventura, and Los Angeles, Orange, and San Diego counties.

In January 2008, the Service designated 10,003 acres of critical habitat for the tidewater goby, which inhabits brackish waters along the west coast of California. In settlement of a lawsuit by the Natural Resources Defense Council in 2009, the Service agreed to revise critical habitat. Enhanced mapping techniques account for a portion of the new proposed acreage. The Service has also proposed additional critical habitat areas across the range of the species, including areas that are currently unoccupied.

Approximately 53 percent of the proposed revised critical habitat is on state lands. Of the remaining lands proposed as critical habitat, 24 percent are privately held, 10 percent are federally managed, and 12 percent are administered by local agencies. Essential habitat on Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton in San Diego County and Vandenberg Air Force Base in Santa Barbara County is exempt from the proposed designation because these bases have completed Integrated Natural Resource Management Plans that provide conservation benefits to the tidewater goby.

Under the Endangered Species Act (ESA), critical habitat identifies geographic areas that contain features essential to the conservation of a threatened or endangered species and which may require special management considerations. Areas outside the geographic area occupied by the species at the time it was listed under the ESA may also be designated as critical habitat if the areas are essential for the conservation of the species.

The designation of critical habitat does not affect land ownership or establish a refuge or preserve. It does not allow government or the public access to private lands. A critical habitat designation has no impact on private landowners taking actions on their land that do not require federal funding or permits.

The tidewater goby is a small, grey-brown fish rarely exceeding two inches in length. Male tidewater gobies are nearly transparent with a mottled brownish upper surface. Female tidewater gobies develop darker colors—often black—on the body as well as on the dorsal and anal fins. The fish lives approximately one year and occurs in lagoons, estuaries, marshes, and coastal streams. They are occasionally found in freshwater streams that are up-gradient and tributary to brackish habitats.

For more information about the tidewater goby and the revised proposed critical habitat contact: Michael McCrary, Listing and Recovery Coordinator, Ventura Fish and Wildlife Office by mail at 2493 Portola Road, Suite B, Ventura, CA 93003 or by calling 805-644-1766.

The Service is 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, visit <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/cno. Connect with our Facebook page at <http://www.facebook.com/usfwspacificsouthwest>, follow our tweets at <http://twitter.com/USFWSPacSWest>, watch our YouTube Channel at <http://www.youtube.com/usfws> and

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