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News Release

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ISLAND NIGHT LIZARD RECOVERY SUCCESS – SPECIES PROPOSED FOR REMOVAL FROM ENDANGERED SPECIES PROTECTION

Carlsbad, CA – The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service announced today a proposal to remove the island night lizard (*Xantusia riversiana*) from its current listing as threatened under the Endangered Species Act, based on successful recovery efforts by the U.S. Navy and National Park Service.

Island night lizards are known from three of the Channel Islands off the southern California coast - San Clemente Island, San Nicolas Island, and Santa Barbara Island.

These islands were severely impacted by historic land use practices that included ranching and grazing. In particular, the introduction of non-native herbivores, including goats and pigs on San Clemente and San Nicolas islands, and rabbits on Santa Barbara Island, stripped the lands of much of their vegetation and caused significant erosion. Cats introduced to San Clemente and San Nicolas islands also posed a predation threat to the lizard.

The island night lizard was listed under the ESA in 1977.

Efforts were undertaken by the U.S. Navy and National Park Service to remove these non-native species, and by the mid-1990s all goats, sheep, and rabbits were removed from the islands. Feral cats were successfully removed from San Nicolas Island in 2010. Although there are still cats on San Clemente Island, they do not pose a significant threat to the island night lizard.

An estimated 21 million island night lizards currently inhabit San Clemente Island, about 15,300 on San Nicolas Island, and 17,600 on Santa Barbara Island.

Both the Navy and National Park Service are actively cultivating native plants to further habitat restoration on San Nicolas and Santa Barbara islands.

Adult island night lizard adults average between 2.6 to 4.3 inches in length from snout to vent. Their coloration varies from pale ash gray and beige to shades of brown and black with varying uniform, mottled, and striped patterns. This species of lizard lives about 11 to 13, years, although some individuals have been estimated to be up to 30 years old. A photo of the lizard is available on [Flickr](#)

The ESA provides a critical safety net for America's native fish, wildlife and plants. This landmark conservation law has prevented the extinction of hundreds of imperiled species and promoted the recovery of many others, including America's national bird the bald eagle.

If the island night lizard is removed from the List of Endangered and Threatened Wildlife, Federal agencies will no longer need to consult with the Service on actions they authorize, fund, or carry out.

Comments and information related to the proposed delisting of the island night lizard and a draft post-delisting monitoring plan will be accepted until April 5. Requests for a hearing on the proposed rule or post-delisting monitoring plan will be accepted until March 21.

Comments can be submitted electronically at www.regulations.gov, beginning on Feb. 4. In the Enter Keyword or ID box, enter FWS-R8-ES-2012-0099, which is the docket number for this rulemaking.

Written comments may be sent to:

Public Comments Processing, Attn: FWS-R8-ES-2012-0099; Division of Policy and Directives Management; U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service; 4401 N. Fairfax Drive, MS 2042-PDM; Arlington, VA 22203.

Requests for a public hearing must be submitted in writing to the above street address.

Images of Santa Barbara Island, courtesy of the National Park Service are online at [SBI Images](#)

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 download photos from our Flickr page at http://www.flickr.com/photos/usfws_pacificsw/