

News Release
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Golden-winged Warbler May Warrant Protection Under the Endangered Species Act

The golden-winged warbler, a small songbird found in the north-central and eastern United States, may warrant federal protection as a threatened or endangered species, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service announced today. The announcement follows an initial review of a petition seeking to protect the golden-winged warbler under the Endangered Species Act.

The Service will undertake a more thorough status review of the species to determine whether to propose adding the species to the federal lists of endangered and threatened wildlife and plants.

Today's decision, known as a 90-day finding, is based on scientific information about the species provided in the petition asking the Service to list the warbler. The petition finding is the first step in a process that triggers a more thorough review of all the biological information available.

To ensure this status review is comprehensive, the Service is asking for information from state and federal natural resource agencies and all interested parties regarding the golden-winged warbler and its habitat.

Based on the status review, the Service will make one of three possible determinations:

- 1) Listing is not warranted, in which case no further action will be taken.
- 2) Listing as threatened or endangered is warranted. In this case, the Service will publish a proposal to list, solicit independent scientific peer review of the proposal, seek input from the public, and consider the input before a final decision about listing the species is made. In general, there is a one-year period between the time a species is proposed and the final decision.
- 3) Listing is warranted but precluded by other, higher priority activities. This means the species is added to the federal list of candidate species, and the proposal to list is deferred while the Service works on listing proposals for other species that are at greater risk. A warranted but precluded finding requires subsequent annual reviews of the finding until such time as either a listing proposal is published, or a not warranted finding is made based on new information.

The Endangered Species Act makes it illegal to kill, harm or otherwise "take" a listed species, or to possess, import, export or engage in interstate or international commerce of a listed species without authorization in the form of a permit from the Service. The Act also requires all federal agencies to minimize the impact of their activities on listed species, and directs the Service to

work with federal agencies and other partners to develop and carry out recovery efforts for those species. Listing also focuses attention on the needs of the species, encouraging conservation efforts by other agencies (federal, state and local), conservation groups and other organizations and individuals.

Golden-winged warblers historically nested in areas that were previously disturbed by natural fires, storms or other events that resulted in early successional growth. Loss of such habitat due to reforestation and fire suppression is thought to be contributing to a decline in the warbler's population throughout its breeding range. The species winters in Central and South America.

Information on the species may be submitted by one of the following methods:

- Federal eRulemaking Portal: <http://www.regulations.gov>. Follow the instructions for submitting comments to Docket No. [FWS-R3-ES-2011-0028].
- U.S. mail or hand-delivery: Public Comments Processing, Attn: Docket No. [FWS-R3-ES-2011-0028]; Division of Policy and Directives Management; U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service; 4401 N. Fairfax Drive, MS 2042-PDM; Arlington, VA 22203.

To allow us adequate time to conduct our review, we request that we receive information on or before August 1, 2011.

For more information about the golden-winged warbler and this finding, please visit the Service's web site at http://www.fws.gov/midwest/MidwestBird/birds_golden_winged_warbler.htm

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. Connect with our Facebook page at www.facebook.com/usfws, follow our tweets at www.twitter.com/usfwshq, watch our YouTube Channel at <http://www.youtube.com/usfws> and download photos from our Flickr page at <http://www.flickr.com/photos/usfwshq>