



Contact: Kate Brogan (NOAA Fisheries)
301-427-8030
202-603-9651 (cell)
Brian Hires (U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service)
703-358-2191

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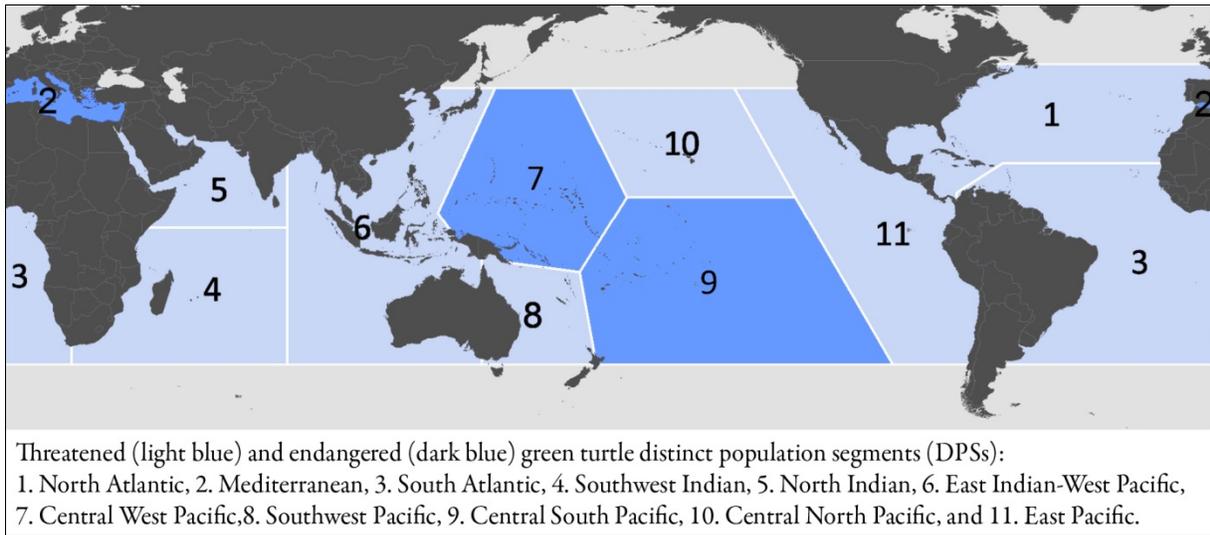
Comment Period Extended for Proposal to Revise the ESA Listing of the Green Sea Turtle

Reclassification into 11 Distinct Population Segments will provide more tailored conservation efforts globally, all green sea turtle populations will continue to be protected under the ESA

NOAA Fisheries and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service announced a 30-day extension to the public comment period for a proposal to reclassify the green sea turtle under the Endangered Species Act (ESA), and list turtles originating from two breeding populations currently considered endangered as threatened due to improvements in their populations.

After a review of the global status of green sea turtles, the agencies are proposing to reclassify the species into 11 Distinct Population Segments (DPS) under the ESA, which maintains federal protections while providing a more tailored approach for managers to address specific threats facing different populations. Years of coordinated conservation efforts have resulted in increasing numbers of turtles nesting in Florida and along the Pacific Coast of Mexico. As a result, the agencies are proposing threatened rather than endangered status for the two DPS that encompass those breeding populations.

More information about the 11 DPS and the proposed status of each population can be found [online](#). The Florida and Mexican Pacific Coast breeding populations are encompassed within the North Atlantic and East Pacific DPS respectively.



“Successful conservation and management efforts have, in effect, improved the listing status of two breeding populations of green sea turtles from endangered to threatened. This is an important step in building resilient ocean ecosystems,” said Eileen Sobeck, NOAA Assistant Administrator for Fisheries. “Identifying distinct population segments across the green sea turtle’s range would provide the flexibility necessary to help individual populations based on localized threats. NOAA and our partners continue to study green sea turtles to ensure that our conservation and management decisions are driven by the best available science.”

In 2012, the Association of Hawaiian Civic Clubs petitioned NOAA Fisheries to identify the green sea turtle population found in Hawaii as a distinct population segment, and to remove it from listing under the ESA. Although both agencies found that the Central North Pacific green sea turtle population in Hawaii does constitute a DPS, they also found that due to its small and narrowly distributed nesting population, and the threats of climate change and sea level rise, it warrants continued protections as a threatened species under the ESA.

“The proposal to revise the status of green sea turtles breeding in Florida and Mexico from endangered to threatened shows that conservation is making a difference, and once again demonstrates the effectiveness of the Endangered Species Act in protecting and recovering our most at-risk species,” said Fish and Wildlife Service Director Dan Ashe.

As part of the global status review, the agencies examined the best scientific information available on green sea turtles throughout their global range. The review included data gathered from researchers, non-governmental organizations, industry groups, other federal, state and local government agencies, and members of the public. Advances in genetic studies, and telemetry and tagging data have improved the agencies’ understanding of the green sea turtle’s population structure and distribution since its initial listing.

The agencies are continuing the public comment period for this proposal to gather new information relevant to the status change. This includes potential critical habitat for the green sea turtle and information that will help ensure that the final determination is based on the best available scientific and commercial information. Critical habitat in Puerto Rico that was designated in 1998 is proposed to remain in effect for the North Atlantic DPS. **The deadline for comments is August 26, 2015.**

Submit comments, information or data on this document, identified by the code NOAA-NMFS-2012-0154:

Electronic Submissions: Submit all electronic comments via the Federal eRulemaking Portal. Go to <http://www.regulations.gov/#!docketDetail;D=NOAA-NMFS-2012-0154>, click the “Comment Now!” icon, complete the required fields, and enter or attach your comments.

Mail: Submit written comments to Office of Protected Resources, NOAA Fisheries, 1315 East-West Highway, Silver Spring, MD 20910; or Green Turtle Proposed Listing Rule, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, North Florida Ecological Services Office, 7915 Baymeadows Way, Suite 200, Jacksonville, FL 32256.

To learn more about sea turtles, go to: <http://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/pr/species/turtles/>

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