

News Bulletin

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U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Invites Comment on Proposal to Amend Listing of Southern Selkirk Mountains Population of Woodland Caribou

30-Day Comment Period Reopens in Light of New Scientific Information

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) has announced the reopening of the public comment period on the proposed amended listing of the southern Selkirk Mountains population of woodland caribou (*Rangifer tarandus caribou*). The Service invites public comment on the proposed amended listing during a 30-day comment period, which closes April 23, 2015.

The reopening is in light of new scientific information that recently became available to Service biologists. Anyone may consider this previously unavailable scientific information when commenting on the amended listing proposal.

The new scientific information that caused the reopening is a 2014 assessment by the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC). COSEWIC reviewed the status of the Southern Mountain caribou population, changing it from threatened to endangered in Canada under Canada's federal Species At Risk Act pending review by the federal Environment Minister. A copy of the assessment is available here: www.registrelep-sararegistry.gc.ca/document/default_e.cfm?documentID=2575.

Previously submitted comments on the proposed amended listing do not need to be resubmitted, as they will be fully considered in preparation of the final amended listing determination. All comments and information received during the comment period will be considered and, as a result, the final determination may differ from the proposal.

Comment may be submitted electronically at www.regulations.gov. In the Keyword box, enter Docket No. FWS-R1-ES-2012-0097. For detailed information about the comment period reopening, woodland caribou and the listing process to date, visit: www.fws.gov/idaho/Caribou.html.

The southern Selkirk Mountains population of woodland caribou occupies high-elevation habitat in the Selkirk Mountains of northern Idaho, northeastern Washington and southern British Columbia. It is currently listed as an endangered species under the Endangered Species Act (ESA), with designated critical habitat.

After a review of the best available scientific and commercial information available, the Service determined that continued protection under the ESA continues to be necessary. To define a Distinct Population Segment (DPS) that is consistent with the Service's 1996 distinct population segment policy, however, the Service proposed to amend the current listing by recognizing a new DPS: the ***Southern Mountain Caribou DPS***, to include a broader range of mountain caribou in British Columbia.

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