

September 16, 2010

Contact: Valerie Fellows 703/358 2285
Valerie_Fellows@fws.gov

Service Seeks Information on Petition To Halt Spread of Amphibian Disease

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service today announced it has posted a notice in the *Federal Register* seeking information concerning the possible designation of all live amphibians or their eggs that are infected with chytrid fungus (*Batrachochytrium dendrobatidis* or Bd) as “injurious wildlife” under the Lacey Act.

The fungus causes chytridiomycosis, a disease deadly to amphibians, and has been identified as a primary factor leading to the listing of a number of amphibian species as threatened or endangered. If finalized, the designation as injurious would require a health certification that live amphibians or their eggs are not infected with chytrid fungus prior to import or transportation across state lines.

The *Notice of Inquiry* will publish in the *Federal Register* on September 17, 2010, and explains the chytrid fungus issue and asks the public to provide information on the subject. The submissions will be reviewed and a decision made whether to proceed with a proposed rule or to take no further action.

“The worldwide decline of amphibians is of great concern to us. Chytrid is attributed as a major cause of this amphibian mortality. We understand that halting the spread of the fungus or eradicating it will take more than just regulating importation and transportation of infected amphibians, but it is a major step in the right direction,” said Acting Director Rowan Gould.

The petition and the *Notice of Inquiry* are available at: <http://www.regulations.gov> under Docket No. FWS-R9-FHC-2009-0093. The public will have until December 16, 2010, to provide information on the subject of the petition.

Under the Lacey Act, the Department of the Interior is authorized to regulate the importation and interstate transport of wildlife species determined to be injurious to humans; the interests of agriculture, horticulture or forestry; or the welfare and survival of wildlife resources of the United States. Current regulations prohibit the release into the wild of all species of live amphibians or their eggs, except as authorized. A listing under the Lacey Act would not affect a person or institution that currently owns an amphibian and does not transport it to another state or U.S. territory.

For information on injurious wildlife and how to send comments, as well as links to partner agencies, visit: <http://www.fws.gov/fisheries/ans/ANSInjurious.cfm>.

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.

-FWS-