

NEWS RELEASE
U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
Mountain-Prairie Region
134 Union Boulevard
Lakewood, Colorado 80228

For Immediate Release

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Contacts: Leith Edgar 303-236-4488, leith_edgar@fws.gov;
James Boyd 406-449-5225 ex. 216, james_boyd@fws.gov

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service to Initiate Status Review of Arctic Grayling

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) announced today the initiation of a status review under the Endangered Species Act (ESA) for the Distinct Population Segment (DPS) of Arctic grayling (*Thymallus arcticus*) in the upper Missouri River of Montana. This review will determine whether the DPS of Arctic grayling should be protected under the ESA.

To ensure that this status review is comprehensive, we are soliciting information from State and Federal natural resource agencies and all interested parties regarding the Upper Missouri River DPS of Arctic grayling, including its abundance, distribution, population trends, taxonomic status, and any new life history information. We are also seeking any new information regarding potential threats to the Arctic grayling and its habitat from human-caused and natural factors, including the potential effects of climate change. Following the status review, the Service will either publish a proposed rule to protect the Arctic grayling under the ESA, or a withdrawal from candidate status in the Federal Register by September 30, 2014.

The Arctic grayling is a fish belonging to the trout and salmon family (Salmonidae). Arctic grayling have a prominent sail-like dorsal fin, which is large and vividly colored with rows of orange to bright green spots, and often has an orange border. Historically, arctic grayling inhabited many of the larger rivers and streams in the upper Missouri River basin upstream of Great Falls, Montana. Multiple stressors are thought to have contributed to observed declines in Arctic grayling in the upper Missouri River basin, including; habitat alterations from land use practices, nonnative fish species introductions, climate change and drought.

Additional information is available in our Federal Register announcement initiating this status review. For more information on the Arctic grayling or for a copy of this announcement, see <http://www.fws.gov/mountain-prairie/species/fish/grayling/grayling.htm>, or contact the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Montana Field Office, 585 Shepard Way, Suite 1, Helena, MT 59602; telephone 406-449-5225.

Anyone wishing to submit information regarding the Arctic grayling may do so by writing to Public Comments Processing, Attn: FWS-R6-ES-2013-0120; Division of Policy and Directives Management; U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service; 4401 N. Fairfax Drive, MS 2042-PDM; Arlington, VA 22203, or electronically at <http://www.regulations.gov>. After accessing the regulations.gov

website, Search for Docket No. FWS-R6-ES-2013-0120 and then follow the instructions for submitting comments. Information must be received by December 26, 2013.

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