

**Additional Questions to Address Recent Revisions**  
**Preble's Meadow Jumping Mouse–Designation of Critical Habitat**  
**6/20/03**

**Does the final critical habitat designation differ from the proposal?**

We made several changes to the proposed critical habitat designation in both Colorado and Wyoming based on review of public comments received on the proposed designation, the draft economic analysis, the draft environmental assessment and further evaluation of lands proposed as critical habitat.

**What changes were made to critical habitat in Colorado?**

In Colorado, five of the twelve units proposed as critical habitat were removed completely from the designation and two units were adjusted to reflect additional information obtained since the proposed rule. In total, this represents a reduction of approximately 16,720 acres from approximately 37,400 acres to 20,680 in Colorado.

**Which units were removed from the designation in Colorado and why?**

The unit proposed on Rocky Flats Environmental Technology Site unit (SP9) was removed in its entirety because special management and protections will be in place because the site is to be designated a national wildlife refuge in the near future.

Additionally, the Lone Tree Creek Unit (SP3), the Cedar Creek unit (SP 7) and the Cherry Creek unit (SP11) were removed because they occur in drainages within which no mice were verified as Preble's through morphological or genetic means. To strengthen the scientific basis of the critical habitat determination, we decided to remove all units in drainages within which all mice had been identified as Preble's only through field identification.

The South Boulder Creek unit (SP8), the West Plum Creek unit (SP12) and the Monument Creek unit (A1) were removed because they are contained within countywide Habitat Conservation Plans (HCP) currently under development.

**What changes were made to critical habitat in Wyoming?**

In Wyoming, five of the eight units proposed as critical habitat were removed completely from the designation and one unit (NP3, Chugwater Creek) was adjusted to reflect additional information regarding habitat quality of its tributaries. In total, this represents a reduction of approximately 9,711 acres, from approximately 20,253 acres to 10,542 acres in Wyoming.

**Which units in Wyoming were removed from the designation and why?**

The unit proposed on Warren Air Force Base (SP2) was removed in its entirety, because 1) Base lands already have special management and protection for Preble's through the Base's Integrated Natural Resources Management Plan and 2) the benefits of excluding the area greatly exceed the benefits of including the area.

Additionally, the Horseshoe Creek unit (NP2), the Friend Creek/Murphy Canyon unit (NP4), the Horse Creek unit (NP5), and the Lone Tree Creek Unit (SP3) were removed because they occur in

drainages within which no mice were verified as Preble's through morphological or genetic means. To strengthen the scientific basis of the critical habitat determination, we decided to remove all units in drainages within which all mice had been identified as Preble's only through field identification.

**What factors were used to determine exclusion of a Habitat Conservation Plan from the designated critical habitat?**

In general, the lands essential to the conservation of the Preble's that are managed by an approved individual HCP do not require special management and protections because their value for conservation has been addressed by the existing protective measures and actions addressed under the provisions of the HCP.

Pending HCPs, although at different stages of development, represent substantial biological analysis as well as substantial investment of public and private resources for the benefit of conservation. Exclusion of the lands within the pending HCPs benefits the species by providing an incentive to finalize the HCPs. Inclusion as critical habitat of the lands in the pending HCPs provides no benefit greater than that which would result from completion of the HCPs. HCPs provide greater actual conservation than the mere designation of critical habitat. Thus, the benefits of excluding these areas from designation as critical habitat outweigh the benefits of including them.

**What happens if the landowners do not finish their habitat conservation plans?**

If any pending HCP is not finalized as currently proposed, we will re-evaluate the need for critical habitat designation on lands not included in finalized HCPs.

**What is the status of the delisting proposals you received from members of the public?**

We received three requests to delist the Preble's meadow jumping mouse. At this time, a 90-day finding addressing the three requests has been drafted and is undergoing internal review.

**When will the Service complete the recovery plan for the Preble's meadow jumping mouse?**

A draft recovery plan should be made available for public review and comment by the end of the year (December 2003).

**Is the five-year review of the Preble's meadow jumping mouse scheduled?**

Not at this time. The draft recovery plan will be prepared first. At that time, a review of information made available for the recovery plan will be evaluated and a determination made as to when a five year review is needed.