

## *Questions and Answers*

### **Re-opening Comment Period on the Proposal to List Northern Long-eared Bat as Endangered**

#### **What action is the Service taking?**

The Service is reopening the comment period on our Oct. 2, 2013, proposed rule to list the northern long-eared bat (*Myotis septentrionalis*) as endangered under the Endangered Species Act. We recently received additional information from state agencies within the range of the species, this information is available at <http://www.fws.gov/midwest/endangered/mammals/nlba> Reopening the comment period will allow the public to review this information and provide comments on our proposed rule in light of that additional information. Additionally, the public may comment on any aspect of the proposed rule and provide new information, if available. However, comments previously submitted on the proposal need not be resubmitted, as they are already incorporated into the public record and will be considered fully in our final determination.

Notice of the comment period re-opening published in the *Federal Register* on Nov. 18, 2014, and opened a 30-day public comment period that will end on Dec. 18, 2014.

#### **Where do I get copies of the information provided by the states?**

The states, through regional chapters of the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies provided letters to the Service. The Midwest and Southeast chapters of the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies, along with regional state forester groups, provided one letter and the Northeast Chapter of the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies provided another letter. Those letters are available online at <http://www.fws.gov/midwest/endangered/mammals/nlba> or by mail from the Twin Cities Ecological Services Field Office:

Peter Fasbender, Field Supervisor  
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
Twin Cities Ecological Services Field Office  
4101 American Blvd. East  
Bloomington, Minn. 55425

Telephone 612-725-3548

#### **Where will the public hearing be held?**

We will hold an information meeting followed by a public hearing in Sundance, Wyo., on Dec. 2, 2014. The information meeting will be held in the Community Room at the Crook County Courthouse Basement, 309 Cleveland St. from 6 to 7 p.m., followed by a public hearing from 7 to 8 p.m.

**Is there specific information that the Service would like to receive?**

We want any final action resulting from the proposal to be as accurate as possible and based on the best available scientific and commercial data. In consideration of the scientific disagreements about the data used to support the proposed rulemaking, we are particularly interested in new information and comment regarding:

- (1) The northern long-eared bat's biology, range and population trends, including:
  - (a) Habitat requirements for feeding, breeding and sheltering,
  - (b) Genetics and taxonomy,
  - (c) Historical and current range, including distribution patterns,
  - (d) Historical and current population levels, and current and projected trends,
  - (e) Past and ongoing conservation measures for the species, its habitat or both.
  
- (2) Any information on the biological or ecological requirements of the northern long-eared bat and ongoing conservation measures for the species and its habitat.
  
- (3) Biological, commercial trade or other relevant data concerning any threats (or lack thereof) to this species and regulations that may be addressing those threats.
  
- (4) Current or planned activities in the areas occupied by the species and possible impacts of these activities on this species.
  
- (5) Additional information regarding the threats to the northern long-eared bat under the five listing factors, which are:
  - (a) The present or threatened destruction, modification or curtailment of its habitat or range,
  - (b) Overutilization for commercial, recreational, scientific or educational purposes,
  - (c) Disease or predation,
  - (d) The inadequacy of existing regulatory mechanisms,
  - (e) Other natural or manmade factors affecting its continued existence.
  
- (6) The reasons areas should or should not be designated as critical habitat as provided by section 4 of the Endangered Species Act (16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.*), including the possible risks or benefits of designating critical habitat, including risks associated with publication of maps designating any area on which this species may be located, now or in the future, as critical habitat.
  
- (7) The following specific information on:
  - (a) The amount and distribution of habitat for the northern long-eared bat,
  - (b) What areas, that are currently occupied and that contain the physical and biological features essential to the conservation of this species, should be included in a critical habitat designation and why,
  - (c) Special management considerations or protection that may be needed for the essential features in potential critical habitat areas, including managing for the potential effects of climate change,

- (d) What areas not occupied at the time of listing are essential for the conservation of this species and why,
- (e) The amount of forest removal occurring within known summer habitat for this species,
- (f) Information on summer roost habitat requirements that are essential for the conservation of the species and why,
- (g) Information on the features and requirements of the species' winter habitat (hibernacula).

(8) Information on the projected and reasonably likely impacts of changing environmental conditions resulting from climate change on the species and its habitat.

(9) Information on the data and reports submitted to the Service by affected states and how that information relates to our determination of whether the northern long-eared bat is an endangered or a threatened species.

### **How do I comment on the proposed rule?**

The 30-day comment period ends Dec. 18, 2014. You may submit comments by one of the following methods:

(1) *Electronically*: Go to the Federal eRule-making Portal: <http://www.regulations.gov>. In the Search box, enter Docket No. FWS-R5-ES-2011-0024, which is the docket number for this rulemaking. You may submit a comment by clicking on "Comment Now!" Please ensure that you have found the correct rulemaking before submitting your comment.

(2) *By hard copy*: Submit by U.S. mail or hand-delivery to: Public Comments Processing, Attn: FWS-R5-ES-2011-0024; Division of Policy and Directives Management; U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, MS: BPHC; 5275 Leesburg Pike, Falls Church, VA 22041-3803.

We will accept and consider comments and information we receive or postmarked on or before the closing date. We must receive comments submitted electronically using the Federal eRulemaking Portal by 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time on Dec. 18, 2014.

Please send your comments only by the methods described above. We will not accept verbal comments left on phone voicemail or comments sent to other postal or email addresses. The Service will post all information received on <http://www.regulations.gov>. This generally means that the Service will post any personal information you provide.

### **Where can I learn more about the northern long-eared bat and the proposal to list it as endangered?**

General information on the bat is online at <http://www.fws.gov/midwest/endangered/mammals/nlba>, and information related to the proposed listing, including a recorded informational webinar, is available at <http://www.fws.gov/midwest/nleb/>. You may also contact the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Twin Cities Field Office at:

Lisa Mandell, Deputy Field Supervisor  
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
Twin Cities Ecological Services Office  
4101 American Blvd. East, Bloomington, Minn. 55425  
Telephone: (612)725-3548, ext. 2201  
FAX: 612-725-3609

If you use a telecommunications device for the deaf (TDD), call the Federal Information Relay Service (FIRS) at 800-877-8339.