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News Release



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32 Species of Springsnails Warrant Review for Possible Protection Under the Endangered Species Act

LAS VEGAS — The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) today announced it will conduct an in-depth status review of 32 Great Basin and Mojave Desert springsnails to determine if any or all of them warrant federal protection as a threatened or endangered species under the Endangered Species Act (ESA).

Today's decision, commonly known as a 90-day finding, is based on scientific information in the Service's files and provided in a petition requesting the listing of 42 species of Great Basin and Mojave Desert springsnails in Nevada, Utah, and California as threatened or endangered with the designation of critical habitat under the ESA.

"The 90-day finding does not mean that the Service has decided it is appropriate to list the springsnails," said Jill Ralston, Deputy State Supervisor for the Nevada Fish and Wildlife Office. "This is the first step in a process and triggers a review of all available biological information. We encourage the public to provide information about the 32 springsnail species and their habitat for consideration during the comprehensive review."

The Service made this determination in response to a February 27, 2009, petition from the Center for Biological Diversity, Tierra Curry, Noah Greenwald, Dr. James Deacon, Don Duff, and the Freshwater Mollusk Conservation Society.

The springsnails (aquatic mollusks) covered in this finding are endemic (found nowhere else) to freshwater springs in the Great Basin and Mojave Desert. Springsnails vary in size and are very small; no larger than 4mm.

To ensure this status review is comprehensive, the Service is soliciting information from the public, other concerned governmental agencies, Native American tribes, the scientific community, industry, or any other interested parties concerning the status of the springsnails.

The specific types of information the Service is seeking are described in the finding. Based on the in-depth status review, the Service will issue a 12-month finding on the petition making one of three possible determinations:

- Listing is not warranted, in which case no further action will be taken.

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- Listing as threatened or endangered is warranted. In this case, the Service will publish a proposal to list, solicit independent scientific peer review of the proposal, seek input from the public, and consider the input before a final decision about listing the species is made. In general, there is a one-year period between the time a species is proposed and the final decision.
- Listing is warranted but precluded by other, higher priority activities. This means the species is added to the Federal list of candidate species, and the proposal to list is deferred while the Service works on listing proposals for other species that are at greater risk. A warranted but precluded finding requires subsequent annual reviews of the finding until such time as either a listing proposal is published, or a not warranted finding is made based on new information.

The finding will publish in the *Federal Register* on September 13, 2011. Written comments regarding the springsnails proposal may be submitted by one of the following methods

- Federal eRulemaking Portal: <http://www.regulations.gov>. Follow the instructions for submitting comments to Docket No. [FWS-R8-ES-2011-0001].
- U.S. mail or hand-delivery: Public Comments Processing, Attn: Docket No. [FWS-R8-ES-2011-0001]; Division of Policy and Directives Management; U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service; 4401 N. Fairfax Drive, MS 2042-PDM; Arlington, VA 22203.

Comments must be received within 60 days, on or before November 14, 2011. The Service will post all comments on <http://www.regulations.gov>. This generally means the agency will post any personal information provided through the process. The Service is not able to accept email or faxes.

For more information about the springsnails and this finding, please visit the Service's Nevada Fish and Wildlife Office web site at <http://www.fws.gov/nevada/>.

The ESA provides a critical safety net for America's native fish, wildlife and plants. The Service working to actively engage conservation partners and the public in the search for improved and innovative ways to conserve and recover imperiled species. To learn more about the Endangered Species Program, visit <http://www.fws.gov/angered/>.

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. Connect with our Facebook page at www.facebook.com/usfws, follow our tweets at www.twitter.com/usfwsHQ, watch our YouTube Channel at <http://www.youtube.com/usfws> and download photos from our Flickr page at <http://www.flickr.com/photos/usfwsHQ>.