



United States Department of the Interior

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

1829 South Oregon Street

Yreka, California, 96097

Phone: (530) 842-5763 FAX: (530) 842-4517



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Matt Baun (FWS) 530-841-3119

U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE INITIATES REVIEW OF THE STATUS OF WEST COAST FISHER POPULATION

Yreka, Calif., — The US Fish and Wildlife Service today announced the opening of an information collection period regarding the status of the fisher throughout the range of its West Coast Distinct Population Segment (DPS) in the United States.

About the size of a large house cat, fishers are in the weasel family and occupy mixed conifer-hardwood forests. They once occurred throughout much of Canada, northeastern United States, Rocky Mountains, and the western United States. Today's announcement relates to the West Coast population of fishers in California, Oregon and Washington.

Fisher populations have declined primarily due to fur harvest, predator control, and loss of habitat from timber harvest activities and urbanization. In the western United States and Canadian Provinces, the number of fishers has been greatly reduced and their populations fragmented.

The West Coast fisher has been a "candidate species" since 2004. Candidates are species for which the agency has determined that a proposal to list as a threatened or endangered species is warranted but precluded by higher priority actions.

"The objective of the status review is to determine whether or not the West Coast population of the fisher should receive Endangered Species Act protections," said Erin Williams, Field Supervisor of the Service's Yreka Fish and Wildlife Office. "This determination will be made based on the best available scientific and commercial data available, and we encourage our industry and conservation partners and the public to participate in this data gathering process."

The Service is interested in information on the fisher's historical and current population status, threats to the species and its habitat, and scientific and commercial data to assist in development of any potential critical habitat designation.

If the fisher is proposed for listing, critical habitat would be proposed at the same time, so the Service is also interested in learning about any foreseeable economic impacts that may result from such a designation.

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The Service is particularly interested in any potential impacts on small entities, and the benefits of including or excluding areas from a proposed critical habitat designation.

Critical habitat will only be designated if ESA protections are warranted. Critical habitat identifies geographic areas that contain features essential to the conservation of a threatened or endangered species and which may require special management considerations.

A designation of critical habitat does not affect land ownership or establish a refuge or preserve. It does not allow government or the public access to private lands. A critical habitat designation has no impact on private landowners taking actions on their land that do not require federal funding or permits.

An information collection period is open from March 19, 2013 to May 3, 2013. Comments will be posted on <http://www.regulations.gov>. Comments may be submitted via email to FisherWestDPS@fws.gov or via website at: <http://www.regulations.gov>. Search for Docket No. FWS-R8-ES-2013-0054.

In addition, the public may submit information via mail: Public Comments Processing, Attn: FWS-R8-ES-2013-0054.; Division of Policy and Directives Management; U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service; 4401 N. Fairfax Drive, MS 2042-PDM; Arlington, VA 22203.

For additional information and guidance about submitting comments please see the Federal Register Notice regarding this announcement. The FR Notice is available at www.fws.gov/yreka.