

# DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

news release

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

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## CALIFORNIA GOLDEN TROUT SUBSPECIES LISTED AS THREATENED

California's Little Kern golden trout has been added to the list of threatened species because of hybridization from introduced rainbow trout and potential habitat modification, Keith M. Schreiner, Associate Director of the Interior Department's U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, announced today.

The rulemaking, published in the April 13, 1978, Federal Register, also lists the habitat critical to the survival of the species.

The major factor in the decline of this species is the hybridization which has occurred since rainbow trout were introduced into the Little Kern River system in the 1930's. At present, pure populations of Little Kern golden trout exist only in headwater streams which were not stocked with rainbow trout or which have barrier falls that have prevented upstream migration of rainbows.

In the Little Kern River watershed, the water quality of the streams inhabited by the Little Kern golden trout is generally good. However, some forest management plans now under consideration call for logging activities in a portion of the drainage basin where the trout occurs. This could result in an alteration of existing water quality by increasing temperature and siltation which could threaten the survival of the species, Fish and Wildlife Service biologists believe. Most of the habitat that would be affected is in the Sequoia National Forest.

Listing as threatened will not necessarily prohibit sport fishing since the rulemaking leaves management of the species up to the State of California, which currently allows limited sport fishing. Such fishing is not considered a threat. Both the U.S. Forest Service and the State of California support this listing.

Listing as threatened means that the Little Kern golden trout will now benefit from the protection of the Endangered Species Act of 1973 which prohibits any Federal agency from authorizing, funding, or carrying out any action that would threaten the continued existence of any listed species.

"Endangered" means that a species is in danger of extinction throughout all or a significant portion of its range. "Threatened" means that a species is likely to become endangered within the foreseeable future throughout all or a portion of its range.