

American Eel Listing Determination and Peer Review

About the Listing Decision

On October 8, 2015, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) published a 12-month not warranted finding on a petition to list the American eel (*Anguilla rostrata*) as an endangered species or a threatened species under the Endangered Species Act (Act) of 1973, as amended. This 12-month finding constituted a listing determination that the American eel did not warrant listing under the Act.

About the Peer Review Process

Peer Review Timeline: September 2014 to October 2014

Process:

- Per our 1994 Peer Review policy, we chose independent peer reviewers and invited comment letters from the peer reviewers.
- We solicited peer review from five individuals (one from the U.S. Forest Service, one from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, two from the U.S. Geological Survey, and one from the University of Maine), as well as a consolidated review from the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission – American Eel Technical Committee.
- Peer reviewers were requested to review the American Eel Biological Species Report (Report) that summarized the best available scientific and commercial biological information and was the primary supporting biological document for our 12-month petition finding.
- Peer reviewers were asked: to comment specifically on the quality of information and analyses used or relied on in the Report; to identify oversights, omissions, and inconsistencies; to provide advice on reasonableness of judgments made from the scientific evidence; to ensure that scientific uncertainties were clearly identified and characterized, and that potential implications of uncertainties for the technical conclusions drawn were clear; and to provide advice on the overall strengths and limitations of the scientific data used in the document.

Peer reviewers were selected based on the following criteria:

- **Expertise:** Reviewers were experts in the ecology of the American eel, in the stressors affecting the species, or in applicable fields.
- **Independence:** The reviewers were not employed by the Service. Academic and consulting scientists were sufficiently independent from the Service, as appropriate. Although there were Service members serving on the American Eel Technical Committee in their official capacity, they recused themselves from the peer review process.
- **Objectivity:** Reviewers were expected to be objective, open-minded, and thoughtful.
- **Advocacy:** Reviewers were not known or recognized for an affiliation with an advocacy position regarding the protection of this species.
- **Conflict of Interest:** Reviewers did not have any financial or other interest that conflicted with or impaired their objectivity.

About Public Participation

- The Service published a batched 12-month not warranted finding on petitions to list multiple species, including the American eel, in the *Federal Register* on October 8, 2015.
- The Report was made available as a Supplemental Document on the Service's Northeast Region American eel website following publication of the 12-month not warranted finding.
- This listing determination and peer review process document was posted to the Northeast Region's peer review website to allow the public to monitor our compliance with the Office of Management and Budget's Final Information Quality Bulletin for Peer Review.

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