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News Release



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Fish and Wildlife Service Withdraws Proposal to List the Southwest Washington/Columbia River Distinct Population Segment of Coastal Cutthroat Trout

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) announced today it will again withdraw its proposal to list as threatened the Southwest Washington/Columbia River Distinct Population Segment (DPS) of Coastal Cutthroat Trout. Initially proposed for listing as a threatened species under the Endangered Species Act (Act) in 1999, the Service withdrew the proposal to list the DPS in 2002, after determining the trout were more numerous than previously known and not declining in number as had been thought. A district court upheld this decision in 2005, but the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals reversed the district court. In July 2008, the district court ordered the Service to reconsider whether coastal cutthroat trout in marine and estuarine areas of the DPS would meet the criteria for listing.

The Service published a notice announcing its review of the status of coastal cutthroat trout in the marine and estuarine areas of the DPS in March 2009 and invited the public to submit information relevant to the status review. Following a thorough review of the best available scientific and commercial data, the Service determined that the threats to coastal cutthroat trout in the marine and estuarine areas of its range within the DPS, as analyzed under the five listing factors described in section 4(a)(1) of the Act, are not likely to endanger the DPS now or in the foreseeable future. Since coastal cutthroat trout do not meet the definition of threatened or endangered under the Act throughout all or a significant portion of their range within the Southwestern Washington/Columbia River DPS, the Service is again withdrawing the listing proposal.

Coastal cutthroat trout live in 10 distinct population segments distributed from Alaska to California, and inland as far as the crest of the Cascades in Washington and Oregon. The Southwestern Washington/Columbia River segment includes the Columbia River and its tributaries from the mouth to the Klickitat River on the Washington side of the river and Fifteenmile Creek on the Oregon side; the Willamette River and its tributaries from its confluence with the Columbia upstream to Willamette Falls; Willapa Bay and its tributaries and Grays Harbor and its tributaries.

Coastal cutthroat trout differ from all other trout by their profusion of small- to medium-sized spots of irregular shape. In addition, they do not develop the coloration associated with interior forms of cutthroat trout. While these trout are at sea and during seaward migrations, this coloration and spotting are obscured by the silvery skin

color common to anadromous salmonids. At maturity, freshwater life-history forms of coastal cutthroat trout tend to be darker, with a "coppery or brassy" sheen.

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.

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