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News Release



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Fish and Wildlife Service to Conduct Status Review of Marbled Murrelet

Comments due by December 1, 2008

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service announced today it will conduct a 12-month status review in response to a petition to delist the California/Oregon/Washington population of the marbled murrelet. The marbled murrelet is a robin-sized seabird that occurs from southern California to the Aleutian Islands in Alaska, but only the population in California, Oregon and Washington is listed under the federal Endangered Species Act.

The 12-month status review also will constitute the Service's second 5-year review of the listing status of marbled murrelets in California, Oregon and Washington, which are protected as a threatened species.

Today's decision is in response to a May 28, 2008, petition by the American Forest Resource Council, the Carpenters Industrial Council, Douglas County, Oregon, and Ron Stuntzner to remove the marbled murrelet from the federal list of protected species. In support of their petition, the petitioners cite the Service's 5-year status review in 2004, which found that the currently-listed population did not satisfy the agency's own criteria for designation as a Distinct Population Segment (DPS) and therefore, was not a listable entity.

The 2004 5-year review also stated that the Service would complete a rangewide status review prior to considering whether to delist the currently listed population. Therefore, concurrent with its 12-month review to determine whether the petitioned action is warranted, the Service intends to continue its evaluation of the rangewide status of the species.

Upon completion of the 12-month review, which will include both a review of information contained in the petition and of information gathered during the status review, the Service will determine whether the petitioned action is: (1) warranted, (2) not warranted or (3) warranted but precluded by higher priorities. Additionally, the Service may propose a determination concurrent with its 12-month finding regarding the rangewide status of the species or the configuration and status of marbled murrelet distinct population segments.

To ensure this status review is comprehensive, the Service is soliciting information from state, federal and tribal natural resource agencies and all interested parties regarding the marbled murrelet and its habitat, including but not limited to, information on:

- Discreteness and significance of the marbled murrelet in California, Oregon and Washington in light of our distinct population segment (DPS) policy (61 FR 4722; February 7, 1996);
- Discreteness, significance and status of other portions of the marbled murrelet's range;
- Differences or similarities in regulatory protection for marbled murrelets in the United States and Canada;
- The status, distribution, or population trends of the marbled murrelet throughout all or significant portions of its range;
- Ongoing conservation measures for the species and its habitat;
- Threats to the marbled murrelet and its habitat throughout all or a significant portion of its range.

Notice of the 90-day petition finding and initiation of status review will be published in the Federal Register on October 2, 2008. Comments and information are due by December 1, 2008. You may submit them by one of the following methods:

- Federal eRulemaking Portal: <http://www.regulations.gov>. Follow the instructions for submitting comments. Comments may be submitted via this portal beginning on the day the finding is published in the Federal Register;
- U.S. mail or hand-delivery: Public Comments Processing, Attn: FDMS - FWS-R1-ES-2008-0095, Division of Policy and Directives Management; U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service; 4401 N. Fairfax Drive, Suite 222; Arlington, VA 22203.

We will not accept e-mail or faxes or anonymous comments. We will post all comments on <http://www.regulations.gov>.

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.