



United States Department of the Interior



FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

Arcata Fish and Wildlife Office
1655 Heindon Road
Arcata, California 95521

In reply refer to:
8-14-06-2884

**Subject: Proposed Special Rule to Promote Conservation of the Pacific Coast
Population of Western Snowy Plover under Section 4(d) of the ESA**

Dear Interested Party:

On April 21, 2006, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (the Service), published in the Federal Register (**Federal Register**, p. 20625) a notice of a proposed special rule under Section 4(d) of the Endangered Species Act (the Act) for the Pacific Coast population of western snowy plover. This opens a 60-day public comment period on the proposed rule, closing on June 20, 2006.

The proposed rule would define specific prohibitions for the Pacific Coast western snowy plover in counties that have met the Breeding Bird Management Goals identified in Table 1 of the rule (based on the 2001 Draft Recovery Plan for the species). These specific prohibitions would replace the broader prohibitions currently in place for Pacific Coast western snowy plover. The special rule is intended to increase local public support for recovery of plover populations, provide an incentive for counties to develop management plans that will meet the recovery goals, and enable the Service to focus limited resources in counties where the recovery need is greatest. The attached news release and question-and-answer backgrounder provides more information, as do the websites: <http://arcata.fws.gov/es/birds/plover.html> or <http://www.fws.gov/sacramento/>.

The 4(d) rule was proposed concurrently with the Service's decision to continue protection for the plover under the Act. It rejected two petitions to delist the species. The Service concluded that, while significant progress has been made toward recovery, additional actions are needed to assure the plover's survival. Decline of the species is due to loss of nesting habitat, human disturbance, encroachment of exotic beach grass, and predation. The species was listed as threatened in 1993; critical habitat was designated in 2005.

The public is encouraged to review the proposed rule and submit comments and relevant information by June 20, 2006. Comments may be submitted to: Field Supervisor (Attn: WSP-4d), Arcata Fish and Wildlife Office, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 1655 Heindon Road, Arcata, California 95825. You may also send comments by fax to 707-822-8411 or by e-mail to: fw8snowyplover@fws.gov.

Sincerely,

Michael M. Long
Field Supervisor

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