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News Release



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U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Releases Annual List of Candidates for Endangered Species Act

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service today released its Candidate Notice of Review, a yearly appraisal of the current status of plants and animals that are considered candidates for protection under the Endangered Species Act (ESA). Four species have been removed from candidate status, five have been added, and eight have a change in priority from the last review in December 2008. There are now 249 species recognized by the Service as candidates for ESA protection.

In the Service's Pacific Region, no species were added or removed from the candidate list. One species, the White Bluffs bladderpod (*Physaria douglasii* ssp. *tuplashensis*), a plant found only in Franklin County, Washington, was lowered in priority from five to nine. This reflects new information indicating that threats to the species are not as high as previously believed. The name was also changed from *Physaria tuplashensis* to reflect new peer review analysis showing the plant is a subspecies and not a species.

Candidate species are plants and animals for which the Service has enough information on their status and threats to propose them as threatened or endangered, but developing a proposed listing rule is precluded by higher priority listing actions.

As part of this review, the Service is soliciting additional information on these candidate species, as well as information on other species that may be eligible for addition to future candidate updates. This information will be valuable in preparing listing documents and future revisions or supplements to the notice of review.

“We will continue to work closely with our partners representing federal and state agencies, tribes, conservation organizations as well as private citizens to conserve these at-risk species before they require the protection of the Endangered Species Act,” said Service Director Sam Hamilton. “Voluntary conservation efforts enable us to leverage our resources to protect these species and the habitats upon which they depend.”

Candidate species do not receive protection under the ESA, although the Service works to conserve

them. The annual review and identification of candidate species provides resource managers advance notice of species in need of conservation, allowing them to address threats and work to preclude the need to list the species.

The Service has several tools for protecting candidate species and their habitat, including a grants program that funds conservation projects by private landowners, states and territories. In addition, the Service can enter into Candidate Conservation Agreements (CCA), formal agreements between the Service and one or more parties to address the conservation needs of proposed or candidate species, or species likely to become candidates, before they become listed as endangered or threatened. CCA participants voluntarily commit to implementing specific actions that will remove or reduce the threats to these species, thereby contributing to stabilizing or restoring the species. Another similar tool is the Candidate Conservation Agreements with Assurances (CCAAs). While these voluntary agreements are only between the Service and non-Federal landowners, they have the same goals as CCAs of addressing threats to candidate species.

The four species removed from candidate status are two plants from Puerto Rico - *Calliandra locoensis* and *Calyptanthus estremerae*; the troglobitic groundwater shrimp found in Puerto Rico, Barbuda, and the Dominican Republic; and the fat whorled pondsnail from Utah. The Service removed these species after a review of the information found that they do not face threats to an extent that ESA protection is needed.

Today's notice also identifies five new candidate species: the Florida bonneted bat, currently found at 12 locations in central/south Florida; the rabbitsfoot mussel, found in only 49 streams in AL, AR, GA, IL, IN, KS, KY, LA, MS, MO, OH, OK, PA, TN, and WV; the Kentucky glade cress (*Leavenworthia exigua* var. *laciniata*), a plant found in Bullitt and Jefferson Counties, KY; the Florida bristle fern (*Trichomanes punctatum floridanum*), found in small areas of Miami-Dade and Sumter Counties, FL; and the diamond darter, a small fish found only in portions of the Elk River, WV.

All candidates are assigned a listing priority number based on the magnitude and imminence of the threats they face. When additional discretionary funding is available, the Service addresses species with the highest listing priority first. The eight changes in priority announced in today's notice are based on new information in the updated assessments of continuing candidates. Two species have had their priority increased while six species have had their priority lowered.

The complete notice and list of proposed and candidate species that appears in the Federal Register and can be found online at <http://www.fws.gov/endangered/candidates/index.html>.

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.