

Bulletin

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Petitions to Federally Protect Five Wildlife Species Move Forward to Next Review Phase

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has completed initial reviews of Endangered Species Act (ESA) petitions for five species and found that each presents substantial information that the petitioned action may be warranted. As a result, the oblong rocksnail, tricolored bat, sicklefin chub, sturgeon chub and Venus flytrap will each undergo a thorough status review to determine whether or not they warrant protection under the ESA.

The tricolored bat is found in 38 states and the District of Columbia, from Florida to Canada, west to Colorado, and in Mexico and Guatemala. One of the primary threats to the bat is thought to be white-nose syndrome (WNS), which is caused by a fungus that spreads between individuals in hibernating bat colonies. In recent years, WNS has killed millions of bats that hibernate in North America, including the northern long-eared bat, which was listed as threatened under the ESA in 2015. Conservation efforts are underway to better understand and address WNS by the Service, other federal agencies, universities and partners. To learn more, please visit www.whitenosesyndrome.org.

The insect-eating Venus flytrap naturally occurs within a narrow range of longleaf pine habitat in southeastern North Carolina and northeastern South Carolina. It is believed to have been lost from large portions of its historical range due to fire suppression and loss of habitat from agriculture, silviculture, and residential and commercial development. Poaching for illegal trade is also believed to be a threat, as well as inadequate existing regulations for protecting the species. The flytrap is legally grown commercially and by hobbyists, and these approved activities do not involve removing plants from the wild.

In addition to the five substantial findings, the Service is also publishing a correction to the 90-day finding on a petition to list the leopard as endangered under the ESA. Found in 62 countries in Africa and Asia, the correction clarifies the range and the entity we are evaluating in our status review.

The *Federal Register* docket numbers and links for the five substantial findings in this batch are:

Species	Range	Docket Number	Docket link
Sturgeon chub and sicklefin chub	AR, IL, IA, KS, KY, LA, MS, MO, MT, NE, ND, SD, TN, WY	FWS-R6-ES-2017-0010	http://www.regulations.gov/docket?D=FWS-

			R6-ES-2017-0010
Tricolored bat	AL, AR, CO, CT, DC, DE, FL, GA, IA, IL, IN, KS, KY, LA, MA, MD, ME, MI, MN, MO, MS, NC, NE, NH, NJ, NM, NY, OH, OK, PA, RI, SC, SD, TN, TX, VA, VT, WI, WV, Canada, Mexico, Guatemala	FWS-R5-ES-2017-0011	http://www.regulations.gov/docket?D=FWS-R5-ES-2017-0011
Venus flytrap	NC, SC, introduced in FL and NJ	FWS-R4-ES-2017-0041	http://www.regulations.gov/docket?D=FWS-R4-ES-2017-0041
Oblong rocksnail	AL	FWS-R4-ES-2017-0042	http://www.regulations.gov/docket?D=FWS-R-ES-2017-0042

The notice for the above findings will be available in the *Federal Register* Reading Room on December 19, 2017 at <https://www.federalregister.gov/public-inspection> by clicking on the 2017 Notices link under Endangered and Threatened Wildlife and Plants.

As the Service begins its in-depth review of these species, it is important that the agency has the best and most up-to-date information possible to inform the decision-making process. The public can play a role by sending pertinent scientific and commercial data and other information for us to consider in the status reviews. Complete instructions for submitting comments are provided in the *Federal Register* notice.

For more information on the ESA listing process, including 90-day findings and status reviews, please go to www.fws.gov/endangered/esa-library/pdf/listing.pdf.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service works with others to conserve, protect, and enhance fish, wildlife, plants, and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. For more information, visit www.fws.gov, or connect with us through any of these social media channels: [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Flickr](#), [YouTube](#).