



Recovery Plan for California Tiger Salamander (Central Distinct Population) *Questions and Answers*

Q: What is the habitat of the Central California tiger salamander?

A: A large, dark and stocky amphibian, the Central California tiger salamander spends most of its life underground in the burrows of small mammals like gophers and ground squirrels. They migrate from burrows across grasslands to seasonal ponds, taking advantage of these pond for breeding.

The Central California tiger salamander is restricted to disjunct populations throughout the foothills of the Central Valley and Inner Coast Range from San Luis Obispo, Kern, and Tulare Counties in the south, up through Sacramento and Yolo Counties in the north.

Q: What is the current status of the California tiger salamander?

A: The Central California Distinct Population Segment (DPS) of the California tiger salamander was listed as threatened in 2004, with final critical habitat established in 2005. The state of California listed the California tiger salamander throughout its entire range (including the Central California, Santa Barbara, and Sonoma DPSs) as threatened in 2010.

Q: Will the CTS recovery plan assist other animals and imperiled species?

A: Healthy, self-sustaining populations of Central California tiger salamanders require open areas of grasslands, woodlands and seasonal breeding pools, home to many other wildlife species, including the burrowing owl and red-tail hawk, and vernal pool dependent species such as the western spadefoot toad and vernal pool tadpole shrimp will also benefit from this recovery plan.

Q: What are the threats to the California tiger salamander?

A: Multiple factors have contributed to population declines of this species, including habitat loss and fragmentation; predation from, and competition with, invasive species; hybridization with non-native barred tiger salamanders; mortality from road crossings; contaminants; and small mammal burrow control efforts. Potential threats include introduction of diseases such as ranaviruses and climate change.

Q: What are the recovery goals for the California tiger salamander?

A: To facilitate recovery and management decisions, the plan has classified four recovery units based on genetic variability of the Central California tiger salamander. Recovering the population in all four units is necessary for the long-term sustainability of the population. In some cases, the amount of protected

habitat required to achieve delisting criteria have already been met. Recovery actions described in the draft plan for the Central California tiger salamander are consistent with many current land uses within the species' range.

The recovery plan provides several strategies designed to conserve and manage their habitat, maintain genetic diversity, minimize threats from disease, contamination, invasive animals and predators, and improve understanding of the species through research and monitoring.

Q: Does the recovery plan represent regulatory requirements or restrictions for landowners?

A: The plan will not result in any regulatory framework or requirements and all recommendations are entirely voluntary. This plan provides a roadmap for the Service and its partners to save a threatened species.

Q: Will the recovery plan impact ranching or grazing practices?

A: Protecting rangelands is key to the survival of the Central California tiger salamander and its recovery is consistent with current livestock practices. Further, livestock practices have been covered under an existing "4(d) rule". Special 4(d) rules protect species listed as threatened under the Endangered Species Act (ESA). These rules typically incentivize positive conservation actions and allow landowners to manage their lands without additional restrictions.

Q: What are the costs associated with the California tiger salamander recovery plan?

The total estimated cost of recovering Central California tiger salamander through 2067 is \$85,375,000. There is no funding allocated with this plan, however. The actions recommended in it are advisory only.

Q. What is a Distinct Population Segment?

A: A Distinct Population Segment is identified as being discrete from the rest of the species' population due to geographic, genetic, ecological, behavioral, morphological, or other distinct factors, and due to the significance of the population to the species. The Distinct Population Segment must also meet the definition of threatened or endangered under the Endangered Species Act. The geographic scope of the draft Recovery Plan follows the geographic range of the Central California Distinct Population Segment of the California tiger salamander.

Q: How can the public assist with this plan or California tiger salamander recovery?

A: The Service is seeking comments that provide new information pertinent to the plan, such as observed occurrences of the salamander, new scientific information, or evaluation of the plan's recovery elements. Please submit all information by May 10, 2016. Written comments can be sent by U.S. Mail or facsimile to: Rick Kuyper, Endangered Species Program, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service - Sacramento Fish and Wildlife Office, 2800 Cottage Way, Room W-2605, Sacramento, California 95825, Fax: (916) 414-6713. You may also submit comments electronically to fw8sfwocomments@fws.gov.

Q: What does "recovery" mean under the Endangered Species Act?

A: Recovery is the process that stops the decline of an endangered or threatened species by removing or reducing threats. Recovery ensures the long-term survival of the species in the wild. At that point, the species is recovered, and protection of the ESA is no longer necessary.

Q. What are ESA recovery plans and how do they help species?

A: Recovery plans are non-regulatory documents that provide guidance on how best to stop the decline of listed species and recover them so they can be downlisted or removed from the ESA. As such, these plans provide a road map with detailed, voluntary, management actions for private, federal, and state cooperation in conserving listed species and their ecosystems.

Recovery Plans also include estimates of the time and costs necessary to implement the recommended actions. The creation and release of a recovery plan is intended to pull together and inspire local, state and federal agencies, private landowners and the public on behalf of recovery implementation. Recovery plans trigger the development of regional working groups for purposes of more in-depth implementation of recovery actions at a local level.