
From: Picco, Angela </O=EXCHANGELABS/OU=EXCHANGE ADMINISTRATIVE GROUP (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/CN=RECIPIENTS/CN=7718C2B5A56649248DE10148148D5684-ANGELA_PICC>
To: Russell, Daniel; Crowell, Heidi
Sent: 3/13/2020 11:26:35 AM
Subject: Fw: fisher listing decision (internal - predecisional)

Just making sure you have this for the record. It likely came in from Sue also, but just in case.

Angela

--

Angela Picco, Ph.D.
Deputy Chief of Ecological Services and Regional Recovery Coordinator
California-Great Basin Region 10 (formerly Pacific Southwest Regional Office-Region 8)
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
2800 Cottage Way, Room W-2606
Sacramento, CA 95825
(916) 414-6490 (office)
(916) 335-5169 (work cell)

From: Souza, Paul <paul_souza@fws.gov>
Sent: Friday, March 13, 2020 6:32 AM
To: Picco, Angela <Angela_Picco@fws.gov>; Fris, Michael <michael_fris@fws.gov>
Subject: Fwd: fisher listing decision (internal - predecisional)

FYI

Paul Souza
Regional Director
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Department of the Interior Region 10
2800 Cottage Way, Suite W-2606
Sacramento, CA 95825
916-414-6469
916-208-2457 mobile
<https://www.fws.gov/cno>

Begin forwarded message:

From: "Henson, Paul" <paul_henson@fws.gov>
Date: March 5, 2020 at 10:51:09 AM CST
To: "Souza, Paul" <paul_souza@fws.gov>
Subject: Fwd: fisher listing decision (internal - predecisional)

As discussed yesterday, my position to the record.

Thx for the good coord.

Paul

Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

From: "Henson, Paul" <paul_henson@fws.gov>

Date: February 25, 2020 at 2:50:42 PM PST

To: "Livingston, Sue" <sue_livingston@fws.gov>, "Garner, Kim" <kim_garner@fws.gov>, "Thraillkill, Jim" <jim_thraillkill@fws.gov>

Cc: "Rowland, Craig" <craig_rowland@fws.gov>

Subject: Fw: fisher listing decision (internal - predecisional)

Hi Kim, Sue, and Jim,

I just wanted to confirm to you all, and to the record, my position re the recent back and forth on the decision to list the fisher.

Unfortunately there was a bit of recent confusion re. where the lead office for the Service was going to land on this decision, thus making your job of finalizing the document more difficult as the weeks and months went by. This uncertainty was resolved when, on a Feb 4 conference call, Paul Souza directed his staff to prepare a draft final listing concluding the SSN population should be listed as a DPS (as T or E to be recommended by staff), while the NCSO population did not merit listing as a DPS.

For reasons we've already discussed I wish this decision was rendered earlier in the process. Be that as it may, I wanted to let you know that I support the decision for several reasons, and this position is consistent with where all or most of us have been up here in Oregon and in the RO for several years (see my March 15, 2019 email below, and the April 2016 memo from OFWO/WFWO):

- the status of the NCSO pop is relatively stable (or at least not showing significant negative or positive population trends)
- we have completed multiple conservation agreements with the State and with private landowners that both reduce threats and incrementally provide positive conservation measures such as monitoring, research, and retention of habitat structure
- animals continue to be reintroduced into WA state. Altho this does not directly affect the NCSO pop status, it sets a foundation for continued expansion via reintro into other parts of the historic range, inc. northern/central OR, in my opinion.
- significant amounts of unoccupied or potentially occupied habitat within the historic range are being managed for conservation.

It is my recollection that RD Souza cited to these same reasons for supporting his position to the group. He also acknowledged the concerns re the risk of toxicants and wildfire that still impinge on the fisher populations, but that these potential threats did not rise to a level to meet the need to list the NCSO. In contrast, the small population size and relatively greater exposure to wildfire threats put the SSN pop much closer to a listing threshold. I generally agreed with this as well.

I know that you already knew my position on these items, but I thought it would be useful to put them in writing once again to make sure the updated record is clear where we stand on this issue. Overall I am relatively optimistic about the conservation outlook for fisher, at least in the PNW, given the reasons cited above. I think the decision is well justified, both scientifically and legally, and I also think it will result in the most positive net conservation outcomes, especially when state and private land management factors are considered.

Thanks for yours and everyone else's hard work on this process.

Paul

Paul Henson
State Supervisor

From: Henson, Paul <paul_henson@fws.gov>
Sent: Friday, January 24, 2020 8:35 AM
To: Fris, Michael <michael_fris@fws.gov>; Senn, Michael J <michael_senn@fws.gov>
Subject: Fwd: fisher rtm

Hi Mikes

In prepping for fisher discussion I found this email re my recommendation for the RTM. Not sure if you ever saw it. FYI only.

Thx

Paul

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Henson, Paul** <paul_henson@fws.gov>
Date: Fri, Mar 15, 2019 at 2:55 PM
Subject: fisher rtm
To: Sue Livingston <Sue_Livingston@fws.gov>, Kim Garner <kim_garner@fws.gov>
Cc: Kit Hershey <Kit_Hershey@fws.gov>, Rollie White <Rollie_White@fws.gov>, Jim Thrailkill <Jim_Thrailkill@fws.gov>, Kate Norman <Kate_Norman@fws.gov>, Craig Rowland <Craig_Rowland@fws.gov>

Hi Sue and Kim,

Sorry I won't be able to participate in the fisher RTM next week. I have to accompany the RD to Bend for a Deschutes River event and meet with Sen. Merkley.

However, I thought it might be helpful for me to jot down a few thoughts, give you my informal position on this decision, and let you decide how best to fold it into the larger discussion.

I read through the science slides from Heidi. I also read through several of the more recent scientific papers that were not available during the previous withdrawal decision process regarding population trends, fire, and climate change.

My overall position today is similar to where I and most (all?) of the R1 folks were before. I will provide that after giving my summary of what I think are some of the key points of the species' status documents.

1. Population: In general, it looks to me like the overall population is for the most part stable. Although there are relatively wide confidence intervals around this estimate, it remains remarkable (and surprising) that critter numbers seem relatively unchanged for the last decade or two (with some localized exceptions). It is even more impressive that this has occurred in the areas where animals were captured and translocated at a relatively high rate (20%?!). When I was ARD in Sacto way back in 2004, I supported the initial warranted finding in part because of the concern of a small and probably shrinking population. Fifteen years later that expectation as thus far not been realized. I like the use of the term "fragile stability" from the pwrpt to describe the population.

I am curious if anyone has read the paper by Mathews and Green (in review) to see if there are even newer insights on population trend?

2. Habitat/Fire/Climate: As you have heard me say before, and the pwrpt does nothing to change this, habitat for fisher is not limiting. There are localized concerns due to wildfire and climate change, and due perhaps to fuels management and timber harvest projects. But, at the landscape scale, there seems to be plenty of suitable unoccupied habitat that is protected on federal lands. Perhaps the biggest concern is that, due to fire, some displacement of fisher could occur at rates faster than they can populate new habitat (assisted or unassisted). But again, this will occur in a patchy distribution over space and time. Overall, the habitat is not limiting. It is worth noting

that there continues to be conflicting conclusions regarding wildfire projections and the potential effects on fisher. As we have stated in our spotted owl documents, I believe that overall fire threat is increasing due to past management legacy and climate change. However, within that context, I think fisher will persist due to the large amounts of habitat available and the likely pattern of fire timing and severity. Hopefully, this risk will be further ameliorated by some informed management.

3. Toxicants: Clearly the fisher is subject to adverse effects from the legal and illegal use of pesticides. It is quite chilling how widespread use of these chemicals seem to be (Note Robin Bown's report that barred owls collected from Cle Elum WA are showing up with exposure as well). I know some authors (eg. Sweitzer et al) suggested that legalization and LE efforts should reduce exposure in the future, but other interpretations of the data and policies conflict with this expectation. Regardless of either perspective, the population has persisted at stable levels even while suffering what has to be several decades of exposure; I recognize that exposure rates may have increased in recent years, which should be weighed against the potential impact of recent legalization policies and the fact of population persistence.

4. Predation: I was surprised to see predation rated as not a threat, at least when compared to toxicants. I thought I saw in one of the papers that predation is the largest source of documented mortality, perhaps 7 times more than rodenticides (Gabriel et al 2015) in CA, although I recognize this pattern varies between northern and southern pops. And I have heard people discuss how the bobcat and mt lion populations are believed to be artificially high, and they are effective predators of fisher. I don't think predation is such a threat as to cause endangerment or extinction, but if it is a greater source of mortality than rodenticides, I am confused why we focus on rodenticides but not predation; Gabriel et al. called for some consideration of habitat manipulation to reduce rates of interaction with predators.

Having said all that, my recommendation follows. These are not hard recommendations, as they do not benefit from the discussion you all will have next week. (In other words, I reserve my right to adjust them and have someone convince me otherwise... :-)). But, based on everything I know today, this is how I feel.

Preferred Option 1. Designate the SSN pop as a DPS and list as T or E. Even though it too has remained relatively stable these last 10-15 years, it is so small and vulnerable, and it is likely to suffer the impacts of climate and fire sooner and much more intensely than the northern pop. Designate the NCSO pop as a DPS but not list because, even in the face of some threats, it has remained relatively stable, and land management in both states seems committed to its conservation and is implementing a variety of proactive conservation measures to conserve and expand this population.

Acceptable Option 2. Designate both pops as DPSs, and list SSN as E and NCSO as T.

I do not believe it is in the interest of fisher conservation to list the rest of the range (ie, northern OR and WA), but we should make clear that the rest of the historic range is where much fisher conservation and reintroduction can and should occur, as is already underway.

thanks,

Paul

--

Paul Henson, Ph.D.
State Supervisor
Oregon Fish and Wildlife Office
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
(503) 231-6179
See us on [Facebook](#)