

# **U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) Peer Review Plan for the Golden Conure - Species Status Assessment Report**

## **About the Document**

**Title:** Draft Species Status Assessment Report for the Golden Conure (*Guaruba guarouba*), Version 1.0

**Estimated Timeline of Peer Review:** March 2018

**Determination Regarding Species' Status:** This Species Status Assessment (SSA) Report for the golden conure is intended to provide the biological support for the decision on whether or not to delist or downlist the species from its current designation as endangered under the Endangered Species Act (ESA). This decision is expected by September 2018. If we determine that the species warrants delisting or downlisting, we will publish a proposed rule to delist or downlist the species in the Federal Register with appropriate opportunities for public input.

## **About the Peer Review Process**

In accordance with our July 1, 1994, peer review policy (59 FR 34270), the Service's August 22, 2016, Director's Memo on the Peer Review Process, and the Office of Management and Budget's December 16, 2004, Final Information Quality Bulletin for Peer Review, we will solicit independent scientific reviews of the information contained in our SSA for the golden conure. The purpose of seeking independent peer review is to ensure use of the best scientific and commercial information available and to ensure and to maximize the quality, objectivity, utility, and integrity of the information upon which the report is based, as well as to ensure that reviews by recognized experts are incorporated into the Species Status Assessment process.

We will request peer review from three or more independent experts. We will consider the following criteria.

- **Expertise:** The reviewer should have knowledge of or experience with the golden conure or similar bird species' biology, the Amazon ecosystem, and/or climate change.
- **Independence:** The reviewer should not be employed by the Service. Academic, consulting, or government scientists should have sufficient independence from the Service if the government supports their work.
- **Objectivity:** The reviewer should be recognized by his or her peers as being objective, open- minded, and thoughtful. In addition, the reviewer should be comfortable sharing his or her knowledge and perspectives and openly identifying his or her knowledge gaps.
- **Conflict of Interest:** The reviewer should not have any financial or other interest that conflicts or that could impair his or her objectivity or create an unfair competitive advantage. If an otherwise qualified reviewer has an unavoidable conflict of interest, the Service may publicly disclose the conflict.

While expertise is the primary consideration, the Service will select peer reviewers (considering, but not limited to, these selections) that add to a diversity of scientific perspectives relevant to the SSA for the golden conure. We will not be providing financial compensation to peer reviewers.

The Service will provide each peer reviewer with information explaining their role and instructions for fulfilling that role, the SSA, and a conflict of interest form. Peer reviewers will be asked to comment specifically on (1) the quality of the scientific information and analyses and whether the best available information was used or relied on in the document; (2) identify oversights, omissions, and inconsistencies; (3) provide advice on reasonableness of judgments made from the scientific evidence; (4) help ensure that scientific uncertainties are identified and characterized; (5) provide advice on the overall strengths and limitations of the scientific data used in the document; and (6) inform us of any scientific information that we did not use. Peer reviewers will be advised that they are not to provide advice on policy.

Peer reviewers will be asked to provide individual, written responses to the Service. Peer reviewers will be advised that their reviews, including their names and affiliations, will: (1) be included in the decisional record of our determinations regarding this species' status (i.e., final rules or withdrawals); and, (2) be available to the public upon request once all reviews are completed. We will summarize and respond to the issues raised by the peer reviewers in the record supporting our determinations. A decision on whether or not the golden conure warrants delisting or downlisting under the ESA is expected by September 2018.

### **About Public Participation**

This peer review plan is made available to allow the public to monitor our compliance with the Office of Management and Budget's Final Information Quality Bulletin for Peer Review. The SSA along with the final decision document will be made available to the public through a news release, direct mail to interested parties, and posts on Service websites (with solicitations for public comment if we prepare a proposed rule to delist or downlist the species). If appropriate, we will follow our proposed rule by publishing a final rule to delist or downlist the golden conure after consideration of all comments received from the public.

### **Contact**

For more information, contact Don Morgan, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Ecological Services Office, Chief, Branch of Delisting and Foreign Species, (703) 358-2444 or [don\\_morgan@fws.gov](mailto:don_morgan@fws.gov).