

June 6, 2014

Frequently Asked Questions for the final listing of the New Mexico Meadow Jumping Mouse

Q – What action is the Service taking?

A – The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) is publishing the final rule to list the New Mexico meadow jumping mouse (jumping mouse, *Zapus hudsonius luteus*) jumping mouse as an endangered species under the Endangered Species Act (Act).

Q – Why is the Service taking this action now?

A – On December 6, 2007, the Service determined that the jumping mouse was a candidate for listing under the Act. On June 20, 2013, we proposed to list the jumping mouse under the Act as an endangered species and proposed to designate critical habitat. The comment periods on these two proposals were open for 60 days from June 20 to August 19, 2013. After reviewing all comments the Service has determined that listing the jumping mouse is warranted.

Q – When will this action take effect?

A - The designation of endangered for the jumping mouse will become effective 30 days after publication of the final rule in the *Federal Register*.

Q – What are the threats to the jumping mouse?

A – Threats to the jumping mouse include grazing pressure (which removes the needed vegetation), water management and use (which causes vegetation loss from mowing and drying of soils), lack of water due to drought (exacerbated by climate change), wildfires (exacerbated by climate change), drought (also exacerbated by climate change), scouring floods, loss of beaver ponds, highway reconstruction, residential and commercial development, coalbed methane development, and unregulated recreation.

We found the jumping mouse is at an elevated risk of extinction now and no data indicate that the situation will improve without significant conservation intervention. Conservation of the species requires the restoration of habitat within each of the eight conservation areas to provide additional areas for local populations to expand and become established. Consequently, current populations should be expanded as rapidly as possible by protecting and restoring (through grazing management and water management) at least 9 to 24 km (5.6 to 15 mi) of continuous suitable habitat along stream reaches, ditches, or canals.

Q – Are the threats substantial?

A – Yes. At the current rate of population extirpations, without substantial conservation efforts, the probability of persistence of the species is expected to be severely compromised in less than 10 years with decreasing viability beyond 10 years, presenting an elevated risk of extinction.

Q - Where is the jumping mouse found?

A – The jumping mouse historical distribution likely included riparian wetlands along streams in the Sangre de Cristo and San Juan Mountains from southern Colorado to central New Mexico, including the Jemez and Sacramento Mountains and the Rio Grande Valley from Espanola to Bosque del Apache National Wildlife Refuge, and into parts of the White Mountains in eastern Arizona.

Since 2005, 29 populations have been located within 8 areas (2 in Colorado, 15 in New Mexico, and 12 in Arizona). All of the remaining populations are small and isolated, and 11 of them have been substantially compromised since 2011 (due to water shortages, grazing, or wildfire and flooding). Another seven populations in Arizona may also be compromised due to post-fire flooding following the 538,000-ac Wallow Fire that burned in 2011.

Q – What is a New Mexico jumping mouse?

A - The jumping mouse is a small mammal that hibernates about 8 or 9 months out of the year, longer than most mammals. Conversely, it is only active 3 or 4 months during the summer. Within this short time frame, it must breed, birth and raise young, and store up sufficient fat reserves to survive the next year's hibernation period. In addition, jumping mice only live 3 years or less and have one small litter annually with 7 or less young, so the species has limited capacity for high population growth rates due to this low fecundity. As a result, if resources are not available in a single season, jumping mice populations would be greatly stressed.