

**Peer Review Plan for the
Houston Toad (*Anaxyrus* [=*Bufo*] *houstonensis*) Draft Revised Recovery Plan**

About the Document

Title: Draft Revised Recovery Plan for the Houston Toad (*Anaxyrus* [=*Bufo*] *houstonensis*)

Anticipated Dissemination Date: May 2021

Purpose: This draft revised recovery plan describes strategies for recovering the Houston toad throughout its range. It provides specific criteria for reclassifying the Houston toad from endangered to threatened (downlisting), and removal of the Houston toad from the Federal List of Endangered and Threatened Wildlife (delisting), in accordance with section 4(f)(1) of the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended (16 U.S.C. 1531 et seq.). The draft revised recovery plan contains updated information on the Houston toad's life history, resource needs, current conditions, and threats and identifies objective, measurable criteria and the actions necessary for achieving recovery of the species. This draft recovery plan was prepared by the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service's Austin Ecological Services Field Office.

About the Peer Review Process

Type of Review: Influential

Date of Peer Review: Peer review of the draft revised recovery plan will be concurrent with the public comment period (60 days) that is identified in a Federal Register Notice of Availability.

Reviewers: The Service will solicit external peer review of the scientific background information used in the draft revised recovery plan from at least three or more independent scientific reviewers with expertise in ecology of amphibians, landscape ecology, captive breeding, or a related field.

Criteria for Reviewer Selection: Peer reviewers will be selected based on the following criteria:

- **Expertise:** Reviewers will be experts in ecology of amphibians or a related field and should have knowledge in one or more of the following areas: biology, Bufonidae biology, ecology, landscape ecology, fire ecology, invasive species, amphibian diseases, management and conservation of threatened or endangered amphibian species.
- **Independence:** Reviewers should not be employed by the Service. Academic and consulting scientists should have sufficient independence from the Service or the Department if the government supports their work.

- **Objectivity:** Reviewers should be recognized by their peers as being objective, open-minded, and thoughtful. Reviewers should be comfortable sharing their knowledge and identifying their knowledge gaps.
- **Advocacy:** Reviewers should not be known or recognized for an affiliation with an advocacy position regarding the protection of the Houston toad under the Endangered Species Act.
- **Conflict of Interest:** Reviewers should not have any financial or other interest that conflicts with or that could impair their objectivity.

About Public Participation: A 60-day public comment period for the draft revised recovery plan is anticipated to begin no later than May 2021, during which time the public will have the opportunity to review and provide input to the draft plan. The availability of the plan will be made public through news releases, newspaper articles, and mailings, and will be posted on Service websites with solicitations for public comment.

Both the draft and final plan will be available at [Houston toad species profile page](#).

This peer review plan is made available on this website to allow the public to monitor our compliance with the Office of Management and Budget's Final Information Quality Bulletin for Peer Review.

Contact: Hannah Gilbreath, hannah_gilbreath@fws.gov