

## Hualapai Mexican Vole - Proposed Rule, 12-month Petition Finding, and request for comments



### About the Document

**Title:** Hualapai Mexican vole (*Microtus mexicanus hualpaiensis*) Proposed Rule, 12-month Petition Finding, and Request for Comments.

**Dissemination Date:** June 4, 2015.

**Purpose:** The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service), announces a 12-month finding on a petition and a proposed rule to remove the Hualapai Mexican vole (*Microtus mexicanus hualpaiensis*) from the Federal List of Endangered and Threatened Wildlife because the original classification is no longer the most appropriate determination. This action is based on a thorough review of the best available scientific and commercial information, which indicates that the currently listed subspecies is not a valid taxonomic entity. We are seeking information, data, and comments from the public on this proposed rule.

### About the Peer Review Process

**Type of Review:** Influential. In accordance with our joint peer review policy with the National Marine Fisheries Service, “Notice of Interagency Cooperative Policy for Peer Review in Endangered Species Act Activities,” that was published in the Federal Register on July 1, 1994 (59 FR 34270), and the Office of Management and Budget’s Final Information Quality Bulletin for Peer Review, dated December 16, 2004, we will seek the expert opinions of at least three appropriate independent specialists regarding the science in this proposed rule. The purpose of peer review is to ensure that our delisting decision is based on scientifically sound data, assumptions, and analyses.

**Date of Peer Review:** The peer review will be conducted during the public review period for the public comment period from June 4 through August 3, 2015.

**Estimated Dissemination of the Final Rule:** December 2015.

**Type of Peer Review and Reviewer Selection Method/Expertise of Reviewers:** The Service has solicited reviews from independent scientific reviewers with expertise in

genetics, conservation biology, and ecology of voles and the ecosystems upon which they depend. Reviewers were selected based upon the following criteria:

- **Expertise:** Reviewers should have knowledge in one or more of the areas of conservation biology, taxonomy, and conservation genetics.
- **Independence:** Reviewers are not employed by the Service. Academic and consulting scientists have sufficient independence from the Service or the Department of the Interior if the government supports their work.
- **Objectivity:** Reviewers are recognized by their peers as being objective, open-minded, and thoughtful. The reviewers should be comfortable sharing their knowledge and identifying their knowledge gaps.
- **Advocacy:** Reviewers are not known or recognized for an affiliation with an advocacy position regarding the protection of this species 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 Proposed Rule, 12-month Petition Finding, and Request for Comments will begin June 4, 2015, during which time the public will have the opportunity to review and provide input to the proposed rule. The availability of the proposed rule will be made public through news releases, newspaper articles, and mailings, and will be posted on Service websites with solicitations for public comment.

The 12-month finding on a petition and a proposed rule to remove the Hualapai Mexican vole will be available at:

<http://ecos.fws.gov/speciesProfile/profile/speciesProfile.action?spcode=A0EU>

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.

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