



News Release

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For Release: August 26, 2010

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Service Releases Draft Ocelot Recovery Plan, First Revision, for Public Comment

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) announced in the Federal Register today the availability of the Draft Ocelot (*Leopardus pardalis*) Recovery Plan, First Revision. The Service requests review and comment from the public on this draft plan. New information on the status of the ocelot throughout its range should be received by the Service no later than October 25, 2010, and will be used to assist in finalizing the revised recovery plan.

The ocelot was listed as an endangered foreign species in 1972 under the authority of the Endangered Species Conservation Act of 1969. Currently, the ocelot is listed as endangered throughout its range from southern Texas and southern Arizona through Central and South America into northern Argentina and Uruguay.

A recovery plan was originally completed for the ocelot in 1990. This draft plan represents the work of a bi-national recovery team formed in 2002 with Mexico and the United States. The States of Texas and Arizona are active participants on the team.

While the draft ocelot recovery plan considers the ocelot throughout its range, its major focus is on two cross-border management units, the Tamaulipas Management Unit in the Lower Rio Grande Valley in southern Texas, and the Sonora Management Unit in southeast Arizona.

Habitat conversion, fragmentation, and loss are the primary threats to the ocelot today. The ocelot requires dense vegetation with more than 75 percent canopy cover. In Texas, over 95 percent of the dense thornscrub habitat in the Lower Rio Grande Valley has been converted to agriculture, rangelands, or urban land uses. There are 2 known remaining ocelot populations in Texas with less than 20 known individuals. They are found in dense thornscrub habitat on the Lower Rio Grande Valley and Laguna Atascosa National Wildlife Refuges, as well as on private lands.

In November 2009, a live ocelot was documented in Arizona with the use of camera traps. This was the first confirmed presence of an ocelot in Arizona since 1964 when one was legally shot. Several ocelots have also been recently documented 30-35 miles south of the Arizona border in Sonora, Mexico.

The Service will accept written comments and information during this comment period on the draft recovery plan. All comments received by the date specified above will be considered prior to approval of the final recovery plan.

An electronic copy of the recovery plan can be obtained from our website at <http://www.fws.gov/southwest/es/Library/>. Copies of the recovery plan are also available by request. To obtain a copy, contact Jody Mays by U.S. mail at Laguna Atascosa National Wildlife Refuge, 22817 Ocelot Road, Los Fresnos, TX 78566; by phone at (956) 748-3607; or by e-mail at Jody_Mays@fws.gov. Written comments and materials on the draft revised recovery plan may be mailed to Jody Mays at the address above.

The mission of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is working with others to conserve, protect and enhance fish, wildlife, plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. We are both a leader and trusted partner in fish and wildlife conservation, known for our scientific excellence, stewardship of lands and natural resources, dedicated professionals and commitment to public service. For more information on our work and the people who make it happen, visit www.fws.gov.

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