



News Release

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Service Proposes Endangered Species Act Protection with Critical Habitat for the New Mexico Meadow Jumping Mouse

(Public Comment Sought)

In order to conserve the New Mexico meadow jumping mouse (*Zapus hudsonius luteus*) and protect its habitat the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) is proposing to list the jumping mouse as an endangered species under the Endangered Species Act and proposing to designate critical habitat. A 60-day public comment period will begin on each of these two proposals when they are published in the *Federal register*. Comments should be received by COB August 19, 2013.

The threats to the jumping mouse are primarily the cumulative habitat loss and fragmentation across its range, compounded by their short lifespan and low birth rate.

The Service is proposing to designate approximately 14,561 acres of critical habitat along streams within Bernalillo, Colfax, Mora, Otero, Rio Arriba, Sandoval, and Socorro Counties, in New Mexico; Las Animas, Archuleta, and La Plata Counties in Colorado; and Greenlee and Apache Counties in Arizona.

The New Mexico meadow jumping mouse is a species 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.

The jumping mouse has exceptionally specialized habitat requirements such as tall (averaging at least 24 inches) dense riparian vegetation, only found when wetland vegetation achieves full growth potential associated with perennial flowing water. This vegetation is an important resource need for the jumping mouse because it provides vital food sources (insects and seeds), as well as the structural material for building day nests that are used for shelter from predators.

Since 2005, there have been 29 documented remaining populations spread across the 8 conservation areas (2 in Colorado, 15 in New Mexico, and 12 in Arizona). Nearly all of the current populations are isolated and widely separated, and all of the 29 populations located since 2005 have patches of suitable habitat that are too small to support resilient populations of the jumping mouse. Because of

the current conditions of isolated populations, when localities are extirpated there is little or no opportunity for natural recolonization of the area due to the species' limited dispersal capacity.

To find out what the Service is seeking information and comments on, how and where to comment on one or both of these proposals, see the *Federal Register* notice for each or visit our web site at <http://www.fws.gov/southwest/>.

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. Connect with our Facebook page at www.facebook.com/usfws, follow our tweets at www.twitter.com/usfwshq, watch our YouTube Channel at <http://www.youtube.com/usfws> and download photos from our Flickr page at <http://www.flickr.com/photos/usfwshq>.

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