



# News Release

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## **U.S. Fish and Wildlife Determines That Federal Protection for Arizona's Tucson Shovel-Nosed Snake is Not Warranted**

After a review of the best available scientific and commercial information, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) found that listing the Tucson shovel-nosed snake (*Chionactis occipitalis klauberi*) as an endangered or threatened species is not warranted, and, therefore, the Service will remove this subspecies from the candidate list.

The Service determined that, based primarily on new information available subsequent to the original 12-month finding, the previously recognized threats to the Tucson shovel-nosed snake do not rise to a level of significance such that the subspecies is in danger of extinction now or likely to become so in the foreseeable future.

At the time of the 2010 12-month finding, the Service understood that the Tucson shovel-nosed snake only occurred in the area between Tucson and Phoenix, Arizona. However, additional genetic work was conducted and this new genetic data indicates that the subspecies occupies a range approximately five million acres larger than the range the Service identified in the 12-month finding; this represents a 274 percent increase in the estimated range of the subspecies. The subspecies is found throughout central and western Arizona in Pinal, Maricopa, Yavapai, Yuma, Pima, and La Paz Counties.

This finding is available on the Internet at <http://www.regulations.gov> at Docket Number FWS-R2-ES-2014-0035. Please submit any new information, materials, comments, or questions concerning this finding to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Arizona Ecological Services Field Office, 2321 W. Royal Palm Road, Suite 103, Phoenix, AZ 85021.

The Tucson shovel-nosed snake is a small, non-venomous snake (9.84–16.73 inches in total length) in the family Colubridae, with a shovel-shaped snout, an inset lower jaw, and coloring that mimics

coral snakes. The snake is one of four subspecies of the western shovel-nosed snake (*Chionactis occipitalis*). The species has been a candidate for listing since 2010.

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