



News Release

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Proposed Plan for Ensuring Long-Term Health of Recovered Songbird Available for Public Comment

In December 2016, as a result of collaborative conservation efforts with a range of long-standing partners, the Service determined the black-capped vireo had recovered and proposed removing it from the Federal List of Endangered and Threatened Wildlife. To ensure the species continues to thrive if the delisting is finalized, we are now announcing the availability of a Post-Delisting Monitoring Plan (PDMP) for the songbird.

Under the Endangered Species Act (ESA), once a species is delisted due to recovery, monitoring of the species for a minimum of five years is required to help ensure that the species remains stable and does not decline. Publication of the notice begins a 30-day public comment period of the PDMP.

Thirty years ago, the future for the black-capped vireo was not very bright. The population had been negatively impacted by habitat loss and nest parasitism by brown-headed cowbirds, and only 350 birds were known to exist in a few locations. Thanks to cooperative and collaborative conservation efforts by the Service, the states of Oklahoma and Texas, the U.S. Army, private landowners and non-governmental organizations there are now more than 5,200 known birds and more than 14,000 estimated across their breeding range.

The Service developed the draft PDMP for the black-capped vireo in collaboration with the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation, Fort Hood and Fort Sill Military Installations and The Nature Conservancy of Texas. The draft PDMP describes the methods we propose to monitor the status of the vireo and its habitat, in cooperation with our partners for a 12-year period if the vireo is delisted. The draft PDMP also provides a strategy for identifying and responding to any future population declines or habitat loss.

The black-capped vireo is the smallest member of the vireo family occurring regularly in the United States. It breeds in Texas, Oklahoma and northern Mexico and winters exclusively in Mexico along the Pacific Coast. Sporting a namesake black cap and white face mask, black-capped vireos build intricate hanging cup nests two to four feet above the ground fastened to the branches of shrubs with strands from spider webs, and return to the same breeding site year after year.

The draft PDMP is available for review at www.regulations.gov in Docket No. FWS-R2-ES-2016-0110, <http://endangered.fws.gov> and <https://www.fws.gov/southwest/es/ArlingtonTexas/>. Public comments must be received within 30 days, on or before April 13, 2018. You may submit comments by one of the following methods:

(1) *Electronically*: Go to the Federal eRulemaking Portal: <http://www.regulations.gov>. In the Search box, enter FWS-R2-ES-2016-0110. Then, click on the Search button. On the resulting page, in the Search panel on the left side of the screen, under the Document Type heading, click on the Proposed Rules link to locate this document. You may submit a comment by clicking on “Comment Now!”

(2) *By hard copy*: Submit by U.S. mail or hand-delivery to: Public Comments Processing, Attn: FWS-R2-ES-2016-0110; U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, MS: BPHC, 5275 Leesburg Pike, Falls Church, VA 22041-3803.

America’s fish, wildlife, and plant resources belong to all of us, and ensuring the health of imperiled species is a shared responsibility. We’re working to actively engage conservation partners and the public in the search for improved and innovative ways to conserve and recover imperiled species.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service works with others to conserve, protect, and enhance fish, wildlife, plants, and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. For more information on our work and the people who make it happen, visit <http://www.fws.gov/>. Connect with our [Facebook page](#), follow our [tweets](#), watch our [YouTube Channel](#) and download photos from our [Flickr page](#).

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