Peer Review Plan: Listing Decision for the Warton Cave meshweaver (*Cicurina wartoni*)

About the Document

The Service will remove this species from the candidate list, which means we will propose it for listing as threatened or endangered or prepare a not warranted finding. A listing proposal will include proposed critical habitat, if prudent and determinable. Following a listing proposal, a final listing determination will follow within statutory deadlines.

About the Peer Review Process

Estimated Peer Review Timeline: September- November 2014

Peer review process:

- If we move forward with a proposed listing rule, we, the Service, will chose three or more independent peer reviewers and invite comment letters from the peer reviewers.

- This scientific peer review will be held concurrently with the public review process of the proposal. Therefore, no public comments will be available or provided to the peer reviewers.

- Peer reviewers will not be asked to provide recommendations on the listing determination or designation of critical habitat. Peer reviewers will be asked to comment specifically on the quality of any information and analyses used or relied on in the draft rulemaking document(s); identify oversights, omissions, and inconsistencies; provide advice on reasonableness of judgments made from the scientific evidence; ensure that scientific uncertainties are clearly identified and characterized, and that potential implications of uncertainties for the technical conclusions drawn are clear; and provide advice on the overall strengths and limitations of the scientific data used in the document.

- Peer reviewers will be selected based on the following criteria:
    - Expertise in karst invertebrate ecology, genetics, or a related field.
    - Independence: Reviewers will not be employed by the Service. Academic and consulting scientists should have sufficient independence from the Service, if the government supports their work.
    - Objectivity: Reviewers will be 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 will not be known or recognized for an affiliation with an advocacy position regarding the protection of these species under the Endangered Species Act.

- Conflict of Interest: Reviewers will not have any financial or other interest that conflicts with or that could impair their objectivity.

- If we move forward with a final listing rule, we will use the information received from the peer review in the final rule for listing and designating critical habitat for Warton's cave meshweaver, as appropriate.

- The estimated start of the peer review will be September 2014.

About public participation

Our listing decision document will be made available to the public through news releases, direct mailings, and posting on Service websites (with solicitations for public comment if it is a proposed rule). If appropriate, the Service will implement an outreach plan to provide ample opportunity for public involvement in the review process. The public will be invited to review and comment on the same documents as the peer reviewers. If appropriate, the Service will publish a final listing and designation of critical habitat following consideration of all comments received from the public and peer reviewers.

This peer review plan is made available to allow the public to monitor our compliance with the Office of Management and Budget's Final Information Quality Bulletin for Peer Review.

Contact

For more information, contact Adam Zerrenner, Field Supervisor, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Austin Ecological Services Office, at (512) 490-0057. Also see the Warton's cave meshweaver species profile via the Service's Endangered Species website, at:

http://ecos.fws.gov/speciesProfile/profile/speciesProfile.action?spcode=J01C

A copy of the proposed and final determinations will be posted on this website upon completion.