



News Bulletin Supplement

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Arizona and New Mexico Species Considered Under U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Petition Findings

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has completed initial reviews for 29 petitions to list or delist species under the Endangered Species Act. The following is a summary of the petition findings for species that occur in *Arizona and New Mexico*.

In response to the petitions on species occurring in Arizona or New Mexico, the Service has determined that five petitions provide substantial information and is initiating 12-month status reviews to determine whether the petitioned actions to list or delist these species are warranted. We request scientific and commercial data and other information regarding these species.

Six petitions did not present substantial information indicating that the petitioned actions may be warranted. Therefore, we will not take further action on the petitions for those species.

Summaries regarding the substantial findings:

Southwest willow flycatcher (AZ, CA, CO, NV, NM, TX, UT) The southwestern willow flycatcher breeds in (typically) broad riparian areas of the Southwest and migrates to central America for wintering. It was listed as endangered in 1995. A petition from multiple groups seeks to delist the flycatcher subspecies due to invalid taxonomy, a lack of threats, and the premise that other regulatory mechanisms sufficiently protect the flycatcher. We will further review the opposing points-of-view of the subspecies' taxonomic classification. The other elements of the petition were found to be not substantial.

Leoncita false-foxglove (NM, TX, Mexico) Leoncita false-foxglove is a pink-flowered ciénega (wet meadows in otherwise arid landscapes) plant. A petition to list the plant claims that groundwater depletion is one of the threats to false-foxglove. The occupied sites in New Mexico (Bitter Lake National Wildlife Refuge) and Texas (Diamond Y Spring) have been extensively analyzed as to groundwater depletion. Both sites are at high risk of drying from groundwater withdrawal. The petition for listing Leoncita false-foxglove does present substantial scientific or commercial information indicating that the petitioned action may be warranted.

Rio Grande chub (NM, CO, TX) The Rio Grande chub is a 5- to 10-inch stream-dweller from the Rio Grande and Pecos River drainages and headwaters of the Canadian River. We received a petition to list this species as threatened/endangered. The petition claims that dams and irrigation diversions have led to altered stream flows, habitat fragmentation, and poor habitat quality and quantity, impairing the chub's ability to

reproduce and overall affecting their abundance. In addition, the petition states that channelization increases sedimentation which removes vegetation, reduces prey availability and decreases water quality. The petition presents substantial information and a full status assessment will be conducted to determine if listing is warranted.

Rio Grande sucker (CO, NM, Mexico) The Rio Grande sucker is a small- to medium-sized sucker native to the Rio Grande and its tributaries in southern Colorado, New Mexico and Mexico. Breeding males are identified by a bright red lateral stripe. We received a petition to list the fish, that claims that habitat fragmentation, changes in stream morphology, stream erosion, sedimentation, and dewatering of streams from dams and diversion are threats to the sucker by causing poor water quality conditions, increased stress due to crowding, increased vulnerability to terrestrial predators, or higher water temperatures. In addition the petition states that overgrazing and other land use practices have negatively affected sucker abundance and condition by limiting the availability of food. These assertions are supported by the references included with the petition. The petition for the Rio Grande sucker does present substantial information indicating that listing may be warranted. A full status assessment will be conducted.

Western bumble bee (AZ, AK, CA, CO, ID, MT, NE, NM, ND, NV, OR, SD, UT, WA, WY, and western Canada.) The western bumble bee was once one of the most common bumble bee species with an extensive range. The Service was petitioned to list the western bumble bee. Western bumble bee populations have declined rangewide over the last 20-30 years, with the most severe declines recorded in the western portions of the range. We found the petition includes substantial information on impacts to the species from disease; inadequate regulatory mechanisms; and pesticide use, population structure, and climate change. We did not find substantial information that listing may be warranted due to threats from agricultural intensification, urban development, livestock grazing, or fire and fire suppression, although these activities remain a potential concern given the observed population declines, and we will evaluate them further at the 12-month finding stage.

Summaries regarding the not substantial findings:

Acuña cactus (AZ, Mexico) The acuña cactus is a small spherical cactus found in valleys and on small knolls and gravel ridges in the Sonoran desert scrub of southern Arizona and in Sonora, Mexico. The total rangewide population is estimated at 3,600 plants and has been recognized as an endangered species since 2013. Petitioners requested the cactus be delisted citing its taxonomic classification based upon morphometrics and a larger range than previously known. We find that for this complex group of cacti, further evidence provided by genetic analysis is necessary to define taxa, not morphometrics alone. Per existing peer-reviewed, we accept the current nomenclature for this taxon. In 2013 we reported on all locations in the listing document and do not find that the acuña cactus is more prevalent than previously concluded. Therefore, the information presented by the petitioner does not warrant a change in our determination regarding the status of this taxon.

Arizona night lizard (AZ) Arizona night lizards are live-bearers found in western Yavapai County, Arizona. We received a petition requesting the Arizona night lizard be listed. The petitioner identified habitat degradation, scientific collection, inadequacy of existing regulatory mechanisms, and small, isolated population dynamics to be the factors impacting the species. References cited to support the petitioner's claims were either non-specific, general conservation biology texts, or non-specific in showing that threats affected the species. No further information was provided in the petition demonstrating the likelihood that the identified threats are impacting the Arizona night lizard.

Arizona wetsalts tiger beetle (AZ, UT) The Arizona wetsalts tiger beetle is a flying beetle found in the Grand Canyon. We received a petition to emergency list this species. The petition described threats to the

beetle's habitat, including springs and seeps in the Grand Canyon, from future development and resulting groundwater withdrawals in Tusayan, Arizona. However, the petition does not provide information to substantiate that groundwater pumping at Tusayan will affect any of the perennial tributaries listed as beetle habitat, and only provides information for 6 of the 8 tributaries known to be beetle habitat.

Bezy's night lizard (AZ) This spotted lizard occupies rock crevices in mountains of south-central Arizona. We received a petition requesting the Bezy's night lizard be listed. The petitioner identified habitat degradation (via reptile collectors using devices to pry up rocks to collect specimens), commercial collection, inadequacy of existing regulatory mechanisms, and lack of gene flow to be the factors impacting the species. References cited to support the petitioners claims were either be non-specific, general conservation biology texts, or non-specific in showing threats affecting the species. No further information was provided in the petition demonstrate the likelihood that the identified threats are impacting Bezy's night lizard.

MacDougal's yellowtops (AZ) MacDougal's yellowtops is a yellow-flowered shrub of the aster family that grows to three-feet tall. We received a petition to emergency list this plant. The petition presented groundwater pumping as the primary threat to this plant, with potential for negative effects to seeps and springs in the Grand Canyon from large potential developments near Tusayan, Arizona. The petitioner claims these developments would pump from the Redwall-Muav aquifer and lead to drying of the seeps and springs where the species occurs. The source of water for these potential developments has not been identified however, and only 7 of 51 known plant locations occur within the boundary of the Redwall-Muav aquifer.

Patagonia eyed silkmoth (AZ, Sonora Mexico) Patagonia eyed silkmoth is a 2½ - inch brownish orange moth of Madrean evergreen woodlands. We received a petition to list the species due to overgrazing and the introduction of exotic grasses as a threat to the silkmoth. The petition did not include any information describing livestock grazing management within these populations or whether exotic grasses currently occur or are likely to occur in known silkmoth habitat. The petition also claims that the construction and operation of the Hermosa and Sunnyside mines will eliminate silkmoth habitat and the use of lights for nighttime work will harm the species. However, information cited in the petition indicates these mines are not conducting activities in known occupied silkmoth habitat and plans for future mine development have not been proposed.

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