



News Release

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Service Announces Protection of the New Mexico Meadow Jumping Mouse Under the Endangered Species Act

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service today announced the final listing of the New Mexico meadow jumping mouse – a small furry mammal found on riparian areas and wetlands in New Mexico, southern Colorado and eastern Arizona – as endangered under the Endangered Species Act (ESA). The final rule will publish in the *Federal Register* on June 10, 2014, and will be effective 30 days after publication.

The Service's determination that the jumping mouse warrants listing as an endangered species is based on the significant decline of its populations in occupied localities due to cumulative habitat loss and fragmentation across its range, of which 95 percent is on federal and state lands. Ongoing habitat loss is expected to result in additional extirpations of populations. The primary sources of habitat loss include impacts from grazing, water management and use, drought (exacerbated by climate change) and wildfires (also exacerbated by climate change).

Since 2005, there have been 29 documented remaining populations (2 in Colorado, 15 in New Mexico and 12 in Arizona) spread across eight geographic management areas. Nearly all of these populations are isolated and widely separated, and all have patches of suitable habitat that are too small to support resilient populations of the mammal. Because of the current conditions of the 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.

Four of the eight geographic management areas since 2005 have two or more locations known to be occupied by the jumping mouse, but all are too small to support resilient populations. The remaining four areas have only one location known to be occupied since 2005, and each population is too small to be resilient. Therefore, the jumping mouse does not have the number and distribution of resilient populations needed to provide the genetic and ecological diversity required for viability of the species.

The New Mexico meadow jumping mouse hibernates about eight or nine months out of the year – longer than most mammals – and is only active three or four months during the summer. Within this short time frame, it must breed, birth, raise young and store up sufficient fat reserves to survive the

next year's hibernation period. In addition, the species only lives up to three years and has one litter annually with seven or less young. As a result, if resources are not available in a single season, populations are greatly stressed.

This final rule considered all comments received from peer reviewers, tribes, state agencies, federal agencies and the public regarding the proposed rule to list the jumping mouse. Copies of the final rule may be found at the Service's website at <http://www.fws.gov/southwest>. The Service plans to publish the final designation of critical habitat later this year.

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