



News Release

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Arizona Ecological Services Field Office

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FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE ANNOUNCES ANTICIPATED DECISION ON PIMA COUNTY ENDANGERED SPECIES PLAN

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has advanced its consideration of Pima County's request for an Endangered Species Act incidental take permit associated with the Draft Pima County Multi-Species Habitat Conservation Plan (MSCP). The Service announces its draft Record of Decision to issue the permit, 30 days prior to potentially issuing a final permit.

Pima County's MSCP is a part of the Sonoran Desert Conservation Plan, a 16-year conservation planning effort by the county. It seeks to achieve a balance between long-term conservation of natural vegetation communities and native species of plants and animals that make up an important part of the natural heritage and allure of Pima County, and the orderly use of land to promote a sustainable economy, health, well-being, customs, and culture of the growing population of Pima County.

Under the Endangered Species Act (Act) it is normally illegal to take (harm, harass, pursue, hunt, shoot, wound, kill, trap, capture, or collect) threatened and endangered species. The Service may, under limited circumstances, issue permits to take federally-listed and candidate species, incidental to and not the purpose of, otherwise lawful activities. Issuing such an incidental take permit to Pima County required the development of, and commitment to, a habitat conservation plan that minimizes and mitigates the effects of incidental take on federally-listed species.

Pima County has applied for a 30-year permit under the Act for incidental take of 44 species, including seven animal and two plant species currently protected under the Act. The incidental take is anticipated to occur in the form of habitat modification as a result of actions undertaken or authorized by the county, including the construction and maintenance of infrastructure and certain private residential and commercial development. The county's primary mitigation approach under the draft MSCP is to acquire and manage conservation lands to maintain and enhance habitat for the covered species and local ecosystems.

The Service has determined that the Pima County MSCP meets the requirements of the Act and is preparing to issue an incidental take permit. In compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), the Service sought input on a draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) in 2012 and has prepared a [final EIS](#) and draft [Record of Decision](#). The final EIS, together with an intra-Service section 7 consultation and resulting [biological opinion](#) (BO) have informed the Service's review of the MSCP and its permitting decision.

Downloadable copies of the final EIS, BO, draft Record of Decision and other information are available on the Internet at <http://www.fws.gov/southwest/es/arizona> and <http://www.pima.gov/mscp>. Printed or CD-ROM copy of these documents is available upon request to Ms. Julia Fonseca, Pima County Office of Sustainability and Conservation, 201 N. Stone, 6th floor, Tucson, AZ 85701, phone (520) 724-6460, or email mscp@pima.gov.

Questions or inquiries related to the Record of Decision can be submitted via e-mail to Pimamscp@fws.gov.

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, visit www.fws.gov, or connect with us through any of these social media channels: [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [YouTube](#) and [Flickr](#).

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