



News Release

Southwest Region

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FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE CLARIFIES RULE AND SEEKS CHIRICAHUA LEOPARD FROG INFORMATION

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has reopened the public comment period and will hold two public hearings to gather additional information on the status, threats, and conservation of the Chiricahua leopard frog. The Service proposes to list the Chiricahua leopard frog as threatened under the Endangered Species Act because it is imperiled by non-native predators, disease, loss of habitat, and potential natural events such as floods and drought. A species is designated as threatened when it is at risk of becoming an endangered species throughout all or a significant portion of its range.

The proposal includes a special rule encouraging cattlemen to continue their regular management of livestock tanks that are harboring leopard frog populations. In response to comments received during the initial comment period, the Service has published a clarification specifying that the special rule applies to livestock tanks on non-Federal (state, private, and tribal) lands.

Public hearings will be held from 7 - 9 p.m. on October 10, 2000, in Light Hall Auditorium, Western New Mexico University, 1000 College Street, Silver City, New Mexico and on October 11, 2000, in the Bisbee High School Auditorium, School Terrace Road (south of Highway 92), Bisbee, Arizona. Anyone wishing to make an oral statement for the record is encouraged to provide a written copy of their statement to a Service representative at the start of the hearing. In the event there is a large attendance, the time allotted for oral statements may have to be limited. Oral and written statements receive equal consideration. Written comments should be sent to the Field Supervisor, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 2321 W. Royal Palm Road, Suite 103, Phoenix, Arizona 85021 prior to the November 13, 2000, close of the comment period.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is the principal Federal agency responsible for conserving, protecting and enhancing fish, wildlife and plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. The Service manages the 93-million-acre National Wildlife Refuge System which encompasses more than 520 national wildlife refuges, thousands of small wetlands and other special management areas. It also operates 66 national fish hatcheries, 64 fishery resource offices and 78 ecological services field stations. The agency enforces Federal wildlife laws, administers the Endangered Species Act, manages migratory bird populations, restores nationally significant fisheries, conserves and restores wildlife habitat such as wetlands, and helps foreign governments with their conservation efforts. It also oversees the Federal Aid program that distributes hundreds of millions of dollars in excise taxes on fishing and hunting equipment to state fish and wildlife agencies.

– arizonaes.fws.gov –

NOTE TO EDITOR'S:

On June 14, 2000, Service distributed a detailed news release and Q&A on the proposal to list the Chiricahua leopard frog as threatened. Those products and photo support are available on the Service's website at <http://arizonaes.fws.gov/> or from the contacts listed above.