



News Bulletin

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Arizona Ecological Services Field Office

www.fws.gov/southwest/es/arizona/

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Court Grants Extension on Deadline for Jaguar Critical Habitat Determination

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) requested and recently received an extension of the deadline to reach a final determination on critical habitat for the jaguar. The previous settlement agreement date for publishing a final decision was December 16; the new publication date is February 14, 2014.

The Service requested the extension due to the unavailability of required personnel (and related contractors) during the recent lapse of appropriations (furlough), as well as the rescheduling of court-ordered deadlines and other commitments for unrelated matters involving the same personnel since the restoration of appropriations. WildEarth Guardians (plaintiff) did not oppose the extension request, which was signed by D.C. Circuit Judge Emmet G. Sullivan on December 3, 2013.

The Service has [proposed](#) to designate 858,137 acres in southeastern Arizona and southwestern New Mexico as critical habitat for the jaguar (*Panthera onca*) under the Endangered Species Act. The proposal was informed by information compiled by and modeling conducted by the Service-assembled, bi-national, scientific Jaguar Recovery Team. A comment period on the proposal will not be reopened.

Critical habitat is a term in the Act that identifies geographic areas containing features essential for the conservation of a threatened or endangered species, and which may require special management considerations or protection. Federal agencies that undertake, fund, or permit activities that may affect critical habitat are required to consult with the Service to ensure such actions do not adversely modify or destroy designated critical habitat. Designation of critical habitat does not affect land ownership, or establish a refuge or preserve, and has no impact on private landowners taking actions on their land that do not require federal funding or permits.

More information on the proposed rule, maps, supporting analyses, and other details about the jaguar is available online at: <http://www.fws.gov/southwest/es/arizona/Jaguar.htm>.

The mission of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is working with others to conserve, protect, and enhance fish, wildlife, plants, and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. We are both a leader and trusted partner in fish and wildlife conservation, known for our scientific excellence, stewardship of lands and natural resources, dedicated professionals, and commitment to public service. For more information on our work and the people who make it happen, visit www.fws.gov. Connect with our Facebook page at www.facebook.com/usfws, follow our tweets at www.twitter.com/usfwshq, watch our YouTube Channel at <http://www.youtube.com/usfws> and download photos from our Flickr page at <http://www.flickr.com/photos/usfwshq>.