



# News Release

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## Public Hearing Scheduled on Proposed Downlisting of American Burying Beetle

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service will hold a public hearing in Tulsa, Okla. Sept. 24, 2019, to engage the public in the proposed downlisting of the American burying beetle (ABB) under the Endangered Species Act (ESA). Public comment on the proposal, which would downlist the beetle from endangered to threatened, will also be extended 30 days until October 9, 2019.

The ABB once had a historical range that covered 35 states plus the southern borders of three Canadian provinces. However, following decades of decline, in 1989 it was known to exist in only two locations – Oklahoma and Block Island, Rhode Island. Due to the efforts of diverse conservation partnerships with the Service, there are now ABB populations in nine states: Arkansas, Kansas, Nebraska, Oklahoma, South Dakota, Texas, Rhode Island (Block Island), Massachusetts (Nantucket Island) and Missouri.

In May 2019, after a thorough evaluation of the species' status using our Species Status Assessment framework, the Service proposed to downlist the ABB from endangered to threatened, along with a proposed rule under section 4(d) of the ESA that would tailor protections to just those needed for recovery.

The ABB open house and hearing will be held at the Schusterman Center, Perkins Auditorium LC1, 4502 East 41<sup>st</sup> Street, Tulsa, OK 74135. The public open house and hearing will include the opportunity to provide comments on the record from 5 p.m. – 8 p.m. The Service is committed to providing access to this meeting for all participants. Please direct all requests for sign language interpreting services, close captioning, or other accommodation needs to the Oklahoma Ecological Services Field Office at 918-382-4500, TTY 800-877-8339 with your request no later than one week before the meeting dates.

You may obtain copies of the proposed rule and Species Status Assessment Report at <http://www.regulations.gov> at Docket No. FWS-R2-ES-2018-0029, or by mail from the Oklahoma Ecological Services Field Office, 904 East 21<sup>st</sup> Street, Tulsa, Oklahoma, 74129-1428.

The Service encourages the public to review and provide comments on the downlisting proposal during the 30-day public comment period. Written comments may be submitted by one of the following methods:

(1) *Electronically*: Go to the Federal eRulemaking Portal: <http://www.regulations.gov>. In the Search box, enter FWS–R2–ES–2018–0029. You may submit a comment by clicking on “Comment Now!”

(2) *By hard copy*: Submit by U.S. mail or hand-delivery to: Public Comments Processing, Attn: FWS–R2–ES–2018–0029; U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Headquarters, MS: BPHC, 5275 Leesburg Pike, Falls Church, VA 22041–3803.

Written comments must be received by October 9, 2019.

America’s fish, wildlife, and plant resources belong to all of us, and ensuring the health of imperiled species is a shared responsibility. We’re working to actively engage conservation partners and the public in the search for improved and innovative ways to conserve and recover imperiled species.

*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 on our work and the people who make it happen, visit <http://www.fws.gov/>. Connect with our [Facebook page](#), follow our [tweets](#), watch our [YouTube Channel](#) and download photos from our [Flickr page](#).*

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