



# Public Notice

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**Southwest Region (Arizona • New Mexico • Oklahoma • Texas) [www.fws.gov/southwest/](http://www.fws.gov/southwest/)**

## **Refuges Seek Input on Farming Program Draft Environmental Assessments and Compatibility Determination**

Cibola and Imperial National Wildlife Refuges (Refuges) are soliciting public comments on two draft Environmental Assessments (EAs) that evaluate each Refuge's farming program. The purpose of each EA is to determine the adequacy of the agricultural program in meeting the Refuge's purpose and fulfilling the needs of migratory birds and resident wildlife for which the Refuges were established. Both EAs, in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, evaluate the environmental impacts of the individual refuge's current management and two additional management alternatives.

In addition, Cibola NWR has prepared a draft Compatibility Determination (CD) that assesses the compatibility of cooperative farming with achieving the Refuge purpose. A CD is a written determination that a Refuge use will not materially interfere with or detract from the fulfillment of the System mission or the purposes of the refuge. In compliance with The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Policy on National Wildlife Refuge System Uses (603 FW 2), refuges are required to prepare CDs for Refuge uses, defined as recreational uses, refuge management economic activities, or other uses of a refuge by the public. Cooperative farming at Cibola NWR is a refuge management economic activity due to the generation of a commodity that is sold for income or revenue. Farming activities at Imperial NWR are conducted solely by Refuge staff for wildlife use, which is a refuge management activity that does not require the preparation of a CD; therefore, Imperial NWR was not required to prepare a CD.

The Refuges are announcing the availability of the prepared documents to the public and initiating the 30-day public comment period. Copies of all three draft documents will be available at the Southwest Arizona Refuge Complex, Refuge Headquarters, and on the Southwest Region Division of Planning website located at: <http://www.fws.gov/southwest/refuges/Plan/planindex.html>

Comments will be accepted until December 5, 2010, and will assist both Refuges in finalizing their EA. Comments should be sent to [Bill\\_Seese@fws.gov](mailto:Bill_Seese@fws.gov), or mailed to Deputy Complex Manager, Southwest Arizona Refuge Complex, 9300 E. 28th Street, Yuma, Arizona, 85365.

This review of the Refuge's farming program is part of a nationwide review of all Refuge farming programs. The status of all farming programs being reviewed throughout the southwest and draft documents are available at the aforementioned website as well.

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