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# News Release



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## **U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Proposes to Protect Oregon Spotted Frog under the Endangered Species Act**

*Agency Seeks Information from the Public, Scientific Community Before Making Final Decision*

As part of an effort to keep the Oregon spotted frog from becoming extinct in the foreseeable future, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) proposed today to protect the frog as a threatened species under the Endangered Species Act.

The Service also proposed to designate 68,192 acres and 23 stream miles as critical habitat for the Oregon spotted frog throughout Washington and Oregon. The Service now has up to one year to determine whether the proposed listing and proposed critical habitat in today's announcements should become final. Of the proposed designated (acres plus stream) critical habitat, 67 percent is Federally owned, 3 percent is state owned, 30 percent is under local municipality or private ownership, and less than 1 percent is under county jurisdictions. No Tribal lands were proposed as critical habitat.

"Aquatic species are good indicators of our water quality and wetland health, and because the Oregon spotted frog is the most aquatic native frog in the Pacific Northwest, it is particularly important that we pay attention to its plight," said Ken Berg, manager, Washington Fish and Wildlife Office.

Historically, the Oregon spotted frog ranged from the lower Fraser River in British Columbia to the Pit River drainage in northeastern California. It was known from at least 48 watersheds (three in British Columbia, 13 in Washington, 29 in Oregon, and three in California) and currently occupies 31 watersheds.

Oregon spotted frogs currently have a very limited distribution west of the Cascade crest in Oregon, are considered to be extirpated from the Willamette Valley in Oregon, and may be

extirpated in the Klamath and Pit River basins of California. They are known to exist in five counties in Washington (Whatcom, Skagit, Thurston, Skamania and Klickitat) and five counties in Oregon (Jackson, Lane, Wasco, Deschutes and Klamath).

The Service first identified the Oregon spotted frog as a candidate for ESA protection in 1993 due to the threat posed by ongoing habitat destruction, curtailment of the species range and introduction of exotic predators such as bullfrogs. The frog's historic range has been reduced by at least 76 percent and maybe as much as 90 percent, and habitat continues to be impacted and/or destroyed by human activities that result in the loss of wetlands, hydrologic changes, reduced water quality, and vegetation changes.

The final decision whether or not to protect the Oregon spotted frog under the Federal Endangered Species Act will be based on the best scientific and commercial data available. The Service will open a 60-day public comment period on Aug. 29, 2013, to allow the public to review and comment on the proposal and provide additional information. All relevant information received from the public, government agencies, the scientific community, industry, or any other interested parties by Oct. 28, 2013, will be considered and addressed in the agency's final listing determination for the species.

Comments and information must be received by 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time on Oct. 28, 2013. They may be submitted electronically at <http://www.regulations.gov> or in writing at Public Comments Processing, Attn: FWS-R1-ES-2013-0013; Division of Policy and Directives Management; U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service; 4401 N. Fairfax Drive, MS 2042-PDM; Arlington, VA 22203.

Requests for public hearings must be received, in writing, by Oct. 13, 2013, at the same mailing address noted above. More information on submitting comments is available online at <http://www.fws.gov/wafwo/>.

For more information about the Oregon spotted frog and the Federal Register notice, visit <http://www.fws.gov/wafwo/osf.html>.

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