

December 30, 1982, and the Service seeks information until December 13, 1990.

DATES: The finding announced in this notice was made on July 30, 1990. Comments and information should be submitted by December 13, 1990, in order to be incorporated into the 12-month finding.

ADDRESSES: Information, comments, or questions should be submitted to the Field Supervisor, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Ecological Services Field Office, 3530 Pan American Highway, NE., suite D, Albuquerque, New Mexico 87107. The petition, findings, supporting data, and comments are available for public inspection, by appointment, during normal business hours at the above address.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: John Peterson, Field Supervisor, at the above address (505/883-7877 or FTS 474-7877).

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Background

Section 4(b)(3)(A) of the Endangered Species Act (Act) of 1973, as amended (16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.*), requires that the Service make a finding on whether a petition to list, delist, or reclassify a species presents substantial scientific or commercial information indicating that the petitioned action may be warranted. To the maximum extent practicable, this finding is to be made within 90 days of receipt of the petition, and the finding is to be published promptly in the **Federal Register**. If the finding is positive, the Service is also required to promptly commence a status review of the species. In the case of the Jemez Mountains salamander, a status review was initiated by a Notice of Review published December 30, 1982 (47 FR 58454).

The Service has received and made a 90-day finding on the following petition:

Dr. James R. Dixon submitted a petition to the Service to list the Jemez Mountains salamander (*Plethodon neomexicanus*) as a threatened or endangered species. The petition was dated February 13, 1990, and was received by the Service on February 21, 1990.

The Jemez Mountains salamander occurs only in the Jemez Mountains of northcentral New Mexico. It is found primarily within the Santa Fe National Forest. Required habitat for the salamander includes densely wooded, shady canyons on north-facing slopes at elevations of about 2190-2800 meters (7200-9200 feet). These areas are typically vegetated with conifers.

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Fish and Wildlife Service

50 CFR Part 17

Endangered and Threatened Wildlife and Plants; Findings on a Petition To List the Jemez Mountains Salamander as Threatened or Endangered

AGENCY: Fish and Wildlife Service, Interior.

ACTION: Notice of petition finding.

SUMMARY: The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) announces a 90-day finding for a petition to amend the List of Endangered and Threatened Wildlife and Plants. The petition has been found to present substantial information indicating that listing the Jemez Mountains salamander (*Plethodon neomexicanus*) as a threatened or endangered species may be warranted. A status review was initiated on

including white fir, Engelmann spruce, blue spruce and Douglas fir, and have the following characteristics: Multi-storied stands, moderately closed canopy, large trees and stand decadence as indicated by the presence of standing dead trees and falling logs. The total range of the species is estimated to be approximately 1,640 square kilometers (630 square miles). Within its range populations of the species are fragmented by elevation, soil type, and vegetation. Most lands where the salamander is found are part of the Santa Fe National Forest. The salamander is also found on Los Alamos National Laboratory, Santa Clara Pueblo, Bandelier National Monument and private lands.

Within the Jemez Mountains the species is known to occur at approximately 23 locations, and it is never abundant. Between 1986 and 1989, 130 sites likely to have salamanders were visited. Of these sites, only 16 were found to have 5 or more salamanders. For the last three years, the U.S. Forest Service has funded distributional and research studies on the salamander. These studies have been conducted by the New Mexico Department of Game and Fish and to date have not provided any indication that the salamander population in the Jemez Mountains is larger than previously assumed.

The petition stated that the Jemez Mountains salamander merits listing under the Act for the following reasons: Its current population numbers are low; the intensity and frequency of logging within its range is increasing; and the effects on the salamander of the soil disturbance, erosion, dessication, and decrease in the number of large downed logs associated with logging are not known. In addition to these threats, salamander populations and habitat are being threatened by the proposed expansion of a pumice mine.

After a review of the petition, and information otherwise available to the Service, the Service has found that the petition presented substantial information that listing the Jemez Mountains salamander as a threatened or endangered species may be warranted. Within one year from the date the petition was received, the Service is required under section 4(b)(3)(B) of the Act to make a finding as to whether the petitioned action is warranted.

The Service would appreciate any additional data, information, or comments from the public, government agencies, the scientific community, industry, or any other interested party

concerning the status of the Jemez Mountains salamander.

Author

The notice was prepared by Gerald L. Burton, Albuquerque Ecological Services Field Office, at the above address, and Sonja Jahrsdoerfer, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, P.O. Box 1306, Albuquerque, New Mexico 87103.

Authority

The authority for this action is the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended (16 U.S.C. 1531-1543).

List of Subjects in 50 CFR Part 17

Endangered and threatened species, Exports, Imports, Reporting and record-keeping requirements, and Transportation.

Dated: August 28, 1990.

Richard N. Smith,

Acting Director, Fish and Wildlife Service.

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