

The Service has reviewed the petition, the literature cited in the petition, and other literature and information available in the Service's files, and contacted persons knowledgeable about this species. On the basis of the best scientific and commercial information available, the Service finds the petition is not warranted at this time.

In the 90-day finding the Service recognized the petitioners' concerns for the long-term survival of the Queen Charlotte goshawk. The Service continues to share those concerns. The U.S. Forest Service is evaluating its land management practices through the development of interim management guidelines to maintain viable populations of native wildlife, and considering long-term management actions through revision of the Tongass National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan. The Service believes there is opportunity to manage for the long-term viability of the goshawk through the implementation of these guidelines and the management plan. However, it is clear that without significant changes to the existing Tongass National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan, the long-term viability of the Queen Charlotte goshawk may be seriously imperiled. The Queen Charlotte goshawk will therefore be retained on the Service's list as a Category 2 candidate species. If additional data become available, the Service may reassess the need to list this species.

Author

The primary author of this document is John Lindell, Endangered Species Biologist, Ecological Services (see ADDRESSES section) (telephone 907/586-7240).

Authority

The authority for this action is the Endangered Species Act (16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.*).

Dated: May 19, 1995.

Mollie H. Beattie,

Director, Fish and Wildlife Service.

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50 CFR Part 17

Endangered and Threatened Wildlife and Plants; 90-Day Finding for a Petition To List the Southern Torrent Salamander

AGENCY: Fish and Wildlife Service, Interior.

ACTION: Notice of 90-day petition finding.

SUMMARY: The Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) announces a 90-day finding on a petition to list the southern torrent salamander (*Rhyacotriton variegatus*), under the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended. The Service finds that the petition presented substantial information indicating that listing this species may be warranted. The Service initiates a status review and will prepare a 12-month finding.

DATES: The finding announced in this document was made on June 7, 1995. The Service will consider all comments received by July 31, 1995 in the status review and 12-month finding for this species.

ADDRESSES: Questions, comments, or information concerning this petition should be submitted to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 2800 Cottage Way, Room E-1823, Sacramento, California, 95825-1846. The petition, petition finding, supporting data, and comments are available for public inspection, by appointment, during normal business hours at the above address.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Ann Crisney, staff biologist, at the above address or telephone 916-979-2725.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Background

Section 4(b)(3)(A) of the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended (Act) (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 to demonstrate that the petitioned action may be warranted. A finding is to be based on all information available to the Service at the time the finding is made. To the maximum extent practicable, a finding is to be made within 90 days of the date the petition was received, and the finding is to be published promptly in the **Federal Register**. If the finding is positive, the Service is required to commence a review of the status of the species involved if one has not already been initiated under the Service's internal candidate assessment process.

The Service has made a 90-day finding on a petition to list the southern torrent salamander (*Rhyacotriton variegatus*). On May 31, 1994, the Service received a letter from Stephan C. Volker, attorney for the Environmental Protection Information Center, Northcoast Environmental Center, Oregon Natural Resources Council, California Wilderness Coalition, Friends of the River, South

Fork Mountain Defense Committee, Mendocino Environmental Center, Sierra Club, California Sportfishing Protection Alliance, Willits Environmental Center, and Ancient Forest Defense Fund, to list the southern torrent salamander as a threatened species. The letter was dated May 24, 1994, and clearly identified the above mentioned parties as co-petitioners of a petition dated May 23, 1994, authored by John M. Gaffin of the Environmental Protection Information Center, Inc. The petition contained the name, signature, institutional affiliation, and address of the primary petitioner.

The southern torrent salamander has been identified as a species (Good and Wake 1992) that is distinct from the Olympic salamander (*Rhyacotriton olympicus*), and the original sub-species designation of *Rhyacotriton olympicus variegatus* is no longer applicable. The Service is using the species' common name, southern torrent salamander, in accord with Good and Wake (1992), and is not using the former sub-species common name, southern seep salamander, as identified in the petition.

The petitioners requested that the Service list the southern torrent salamander as threatened throughout its range. Historically, the southern torrent salamander has been described as occurring from Tillamook County, Oregon, south along the coast range into northwestern California including Del Norte, Humboldt, Siskiyou, Trinity, and Mendocino counties. The species resides in headwaters habitat of conifer-dominated mature and old-growth forests, and has restrictive habitat requirements. It inhabits mossy seeps of headwaters or the moss-covered rocky substrate (Corn and Bury 1989) of first and second order streams up to 1,200 feet in elevation (Nussbaum *et al.* 1983). They have a low thermal range of 5.8 to 12.0 °C (42 to 53 °F) (Brattstrom 1963, Nussbaum *et al.* 1983), are highly sensitive to desiccation (Ray 1958), and are aquatic obligates. They are probably communal nesters (Nussbaum 1969), and produce few eggs per year (8.4 to 10.0) (Nussbaum *et al.* 1983). The petitioners assert that these characteristics minimize the ability of southern torrent salamander populations to recover from radical habitat alterations.

The petitioners have concerns about localized extinction as a result of continued timber harvest, habitat degradation and fragmentation, and genetic isolation. Although the species appears to be present throughout its historical range, there is evidence of localized population suppression and extirpation in the short-term due to past

forest management activities. The petitioners are concerned that 90 percent of the total range of the southern torrent salamander has undergone rapid and large-scale harvesting of timber or is harvestable, and that there is a lack of protection for the species on those lands, which may place the viability of the species at risk.

The Service has reviewed information in Service files, the petition, and material referenced in the petition. On the basis of the best scientific and commercial information available regarding the present and future threats facing the petitioned species, the Service finds there is substantial information indicating that the listing of the southern torrent salamander may be warranted. This notice initiates a status review for the southern torrent salamander. The Service solicits any additional data, comments, and suggestions from the public, other concerned governmental agencies, the

scientific community, industry or any other interested party concerning the status of this species. Within 1 year from the date the petition was received, a finding will be made as to whether listing the southern torrent salamander is warranted, as required by section 4(b)(3)(B) of the Act.

Literature Cited

- Brattstrom, Baynard H. 1963. A preliminary review of the thermal requirements of amphibians. *Ecology* 44:238-255.
- Corn, Paul Stephen and R. Bruce Bury 1989. Logging in western Oregon: Responses of headwater habitats and stream amphibians. *Forest Ecology and Management* 29:39-57.
- Good, David A. and David B. Wake. 1992. Geographic variation and speciation in the torrent salamanders of the genus *Rhyacotriton* (Caudata: Rhyacotritonidae). University of California Press. Berkeley. 89 pp.
- Nussbaum, R.A. 1969. A nest site of the Olympic salamander, *Rhyacotriton olympicus* (Gaige). *Herpetologica* 25(4):277-278.
- Nussbaum et al. 1983. Amphibians and reptiles of the Pacific Northwest. University of Idaho Press. Moscow, Idaho, 332 pp.
- Ray, Carlton. 1958. Vital limits and rates of desiccation in salamanders. *Ecology*. 39:75-83.

Author

This notice was prepared by Alison Willy (Sacramento Field Office) (see ADDRESSES section).

Authority

The authority for this action is the Endangered Species Act (16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.*)

Dated: June 7, 1995.

Mollie H. Beattie,

Director, Fish and Wildlife Service.

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