

made available the Draft Management Plan (DMP) for the Wells National Estuarine Research Reserve (NERR). This DMP sets forth the program missions, goals and objectives of the Wells NERR, and establishes policies that will protect the natural resources and ecological integrity of the Wells NERR. This management plan, when finalized, will replace, as an update the NERR's current management plan.

The public comment period for the DMP ends 30 days from the date of this notice.

Copies of the document are available upon request to the Wells National Estuarine Research Reserve, 342 Laudholm Road, Wells, Maine 04090. 207/646-1555.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Doris Grimm, OCRM, Sanctuaries and Reserves Division, 1305 East-West Highway, 12th Floor (N/ORM2), Silver Spring, Maryland 20910. (301) 713-3132, extension 118.

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(Coastal Zone Management) Research Reserves

Dated: March 6, 1996.

David L. Evans,

Acting Deputy Assistant Administrator for Ocean Services and Coastal Zone Management.

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Endangered and Threatened Wildlife; Recovery Plans for Listed Sea Turtles

AGENCY: National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Commerce.

ACTION: Notice of availability; request for comments.

SUMMARY: NMFS and the Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), Department of the Interior, (collectively, the Services) announce the availability of the proposed recovery plans for U.S. Pacific populations of endangered and threatened sea turtles, as required by the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (ESA). These reviews and any written comments received shall be considered by the Services in their approval of the final recovery plans.

DATES: Written comments will be accepted on or before May 13, 1996.

ADDRESSES: Requests for copies of the proposed recovery plans may be submitted to the Chief, Endangered Species Division, Office of Protected

Resources, NMFS, 1315 East-West Highway, Silver Spring, MD 20910.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Therese Conant, 301-713-1401, or Richard Byles, 505-248-6647.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Background

The ESA is administered jointly by the Services. NMFS has jurisdiction over most species in the marine system while FWS has jurisdiction elsewhere. Listed endangered and threatened species under NMFS jurisdiction are enumerated in 50 CFR 222.23(a) and 50 CFR 227.4, respectively. The List of Endangered and Threatened Wildlife, which contains species under the jurisdiction of both Services, is found in 50 CFR part 17.11(h).

Pursuant to a Memorandum of Agreement between the two Services, the jurisdiction over listed sea turtles is shared: FWS has responsibility for sea turtles primarily in the terrestrial environment, while NMFS has responsibility for sea turtles primarily in the marine environment. Presently, all sea turtle species found in the United States are listed as follows: Kemp's ridley (*Lepidochelys kempii*), leatherback (*Dermochelys coriacea*), and hawksbill (*Eretmochelys imbricata*) are listed as endangered; loggerhead (*Caretta caretta*), green (*Chelonia mydas*), and olive ridley (*Lepidochelys olivacea*) turtles are listed as threatened, except for breeding populations of green turtles in Florida and on the Pacific coast of Mexico, and breeding populations of olive ridleys on the Pacific coast of Mexico, which are listed as endangered.

Section 4(f)(1) of the ESA requires that the Secretary of the Interior or the Secretary of Commerce develop and implement recovery plans for the conservation and survival of endangered and threatened species listed pursuant to section 4(c) of the ESA unless such plans would not promote the conservation of the species. Pursuant to section 4(f)(4) of the ESA, prior to final approval and implementation of a new or revised recovery plan, the Secretary shall provide public notice and an opportunity for public review and comment. The Secretary shall consider all information presented during the public comment period prior to approval of the plan. In addition, it is the policy (59 FR 34273, July 1, 1994) of the Services to minimize social and economic impacts in developing and implementing recovery plans while providing for the timely recovery of the species.

The proposed recovery plans are for the U.S. Pacific populations of the

loggerhead, olive ridley, leatherback, hawksbill, green and the East Pacific population of the green. These are the first comprehensive proposed recovery plans for sea turtle populations in the U.S. Pacific. To accomplish the drafting of these proposed recovery plans, NMFS formed a team of professional biologists (Recovery Team) with experience in the region and with marine turtles. The recovery plans proposed by the Services are essentially the recommendations of the Recovery Team.

While similar in format to previously drafted sea turtle recovery plans for the Atlantic and the Caribbean, the unique nature of the Pacific required some changes to that format. The geographic scope of these plans is much larger than any previously attempted, with over 5,000 islands and 3,000 miles of ocean, as well as the mainland United States, to consider. Furthermore, the amount of jurisdictional overlap between nations, commonwealths, territories and compact-of-free-association-states and the various turtle populations required a broader management perspective than has been attempted previously. Finally, sea turtles have not been studied as intensively in the Pacific as in other U.S. areas, and thus there is a large void in basic biological information on the species available. Thus, these plans have more extensive text on the general biology of the turtles, so that they might act as a resource to managers seeking a handy reference to the species. The plans are also subdivided into U.S. jurisdictional areas (i.e. the various commonwealths and territories), so that local managers can address issues within their respective regions more easily.

Request for Comments

The Services intend that the final recovery plans will take advantage of information and recommendations from all interested parties. Therefore, comments and suggestions are hereby solicited from the public, other concerned governmental agencies, the scientific community, industry, and any other person concerned with this proposed recovery plan area. The proposed recovery plans are available (see **ADDRESSES**).

Authority: 16 U.S.C. 1531-1543 *et seq.*

Dated: March 7, 1996.

Pat Montanio,

Deputy Director, Office of Protected Resources, National Marine Fisheries Service.

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