

SUMMARY: To further the recovery of the grizzly bear (*Ursus arctos horribilis*), the Fish and Wildlife Service announces the availability of the Bitterroot Ecosystem Grizzly Bear Recovery Plan Chapter. The Bitterroot ecosystem is located in Idaho and Montana. This chapter has been appended to the existing Grizzly Bear Recovery Plan approved in 1993. The availability of the draft of the chapter was announced to the public in the Federal Register on August 16, 1993 (58 FR 43373).

DATES: Bitterroot Ecosystem Chapter of the revised Grizzly Bear Recovery Plan was signed by the Regional Director, Denver Regional Office, Fish and Wildlife Service, on September 11, 1996.

ADDRESSES: The document announced in this notice is available from: Grizzly Bear Recovery Coordinator, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, University Hall, Room 309, University of Montana, Missoula, Montana 59812.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Dr. Christopher Servheen, Grizzly Bear Recovery Coordinator (see **ADDRESSES** above), at telephone (406) 329-3223.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Background

Restoring an endangered or threatened plant or animal to a point where it is again a secure, self-sustaining member of its ecosystem is a primary goal of the Fish and Wildlife Service's (Service) endangered species program. To help guide the recovery effort, the Service is working to prepare recovery plans for most of the listed species native to the United States. Recovery plans describe actions considered necessary for conservation of the species, establish criteria for the recovery levels for downlisting or delisting them, and estimate time and cost for starting the needed recovery measures.

Under the provisions of the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (Act) as amended (16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.*), the Service approved the revised Grizzly Bear Recovery Plan on September 10, 1993 (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service 1993). The Plan approved in 1993 did not contain a complete chapter on the Bitterroot ecosystem because the specific information necessary to develop this chapter was not available. On September 11, 1996, the Service approved the Bitterroot Ecosystem Grizzly Bear Recovery Plan Chapter. The agencies responsible for development of this chapter included the Service, U.S. Forest Service, Idaho Fish and Game Department, and

Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife, and Parks. This chapter was developed by a cooperative effort of the involved agencies and a wide range of interested citizens from throughout the area. Public involvement in drafting the chapter identified issues that include livestock depredation, effects on big game species/hunting, human health and safety, land use policy/restrictions, the role of the grizzly bear in the ecosystem (naturalness), economics, State and Federal authorities, private property rights, illegal killing/poaching, effects of grizzly bears on other species (such as listed salmon), and the size of the recovery area. The availability of the draft of the chapter was announced to the public in the Federal Register on August 16, 1993 (58 FR 43373).

The grizzly bear was once a common inhabitant of the Bitterroot ecosystem in east-central Idaho and western Montana. Grizzly bears were removed from the Bitterroot ecosystem by humans as they settled the West. Primary reasons for these removals included livestock protection, uncontrolled hunting, and trapping and shooting for sale of hides. The last documented grizzly was killed in the Bitterroot ecosystem in 1932 and the last known track was seen in 1946. The grizzly bear was listed as a threatened species in the conterminous 48 States in 1975 under the Act. The Recovery Plan Chapter for the Bitterroot ecosystem outlines the necessary actions to recover the grizzly bear in this ecosystem. Alternative actions to recover the grizzly bears in the Bitterroot ecosystem, including reintroduction, will be considered in a draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) being prepared by the Service. The notice of intent to prepare this EIS was announced to the public in January 1995. On January 9, 1995, a notice was published in the Federal Register (60 FR 2399). This draft EIS is expected to be available in 1996.

References Cited

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. 1993. Grizzly bear recovery plan. Missoula, Montana. 181 pp.

Authority

The authority for this action is section 4(f) of the Endangered Species Act, 16 U.S.C. 1533(f).

Dated: October 11, 1996.
Paul E. Gertler,
Acting Regional Director, Denver, Colorado.
[FR Doc. 96-26879 Filed 10-18-96; 8:45 am]

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Extension of Public Comment Period on a Permit Application and a Recirculated Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Impact Statement for Issuance of Permits To Allow Incidental Take of Threatened and Endangered Species Within the Multiple Species Conservation Program Planning Area in San Diego County, CA

AGENCY: Fish and Wildlife Service.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: This notice announces the extension of the public comment period on the above named permit application and recirculated draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Impact Statement for the proposed incidental take of species listed pursuant to the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended. In response to requests for a time extension, the original public comment period that closed October 15, 1996 (61 FR 45983), is reopened until October 29, 1996, to allow adequate time for review and response by the public.

DATES: Written comments on the Multiple Species Conservation Program Plan, Subarea Plans, Recirculated Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Impact Statement, and City of San Diego Implementation Agreement should be received on or before October 29, 1996.

ADDRESSES: Comments should be addressed to Mr. Gail Kobetich, Field Supervisor, Carlsbad Field Office, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 2730 Loker Avenue West, Carlsbad, California 92008. Comments also may be sent by facsimile to telephone (619) 431-9618.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Ms. Nancy Gilbert, Fish and Wildlife Biologist, at the above address, telephone (619) 431-9440.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: This notice is provided pursuant to section 10(c) of the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended, and National Environmental Policy Act regulations (40 CFR 1506.6). All comments received will become part of the public record and may be released.

Dated: October 15, 1996.
Thomas Dwyer,
Acting Regional Director, Region 1, Portland, Oregon.
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