

for cold (but not freezing) temperatures during hibernation. The fact that Indiana bats congregate and form large aggregations in only a small percentage of known caves suggests that very few caves meet their requirements. Exclusion of Indiana bats from hibernacula by blockage of entrances, gates that do not allow for bat flight or proper air flow, and human disturbance to hibernating bats have been major documented causes of Indiana bat declines.

During the summer, Indiana bats roost in trees and forage for insects primarily in riparian and upland forest. The most important characteristics of roost trees are probably structural (i.e., exfoliating bark with space for bats to roost between the bark and the bole of the tree). To a limited extent, tree cavities and crevices are also used for roosting. Maternity colonies use multiple primary roost trees which are used by a majority of the bats most of the summer, and a number of "secondary" roosts that are used intermittently and by fewer bats, especially during periods of precipitation or extreme temperatures. Thus, there may be more than a dozen roosts used by some Indiana bat maternity colonies. Indiana bats feed exclusively on flying insects.

The Indiana Bat Recovery Plan was approved by the Service in 1983. In October 1966, the Service solicited input from Service personnel, species experts, and state agencies within the range of the species on the Technical Draft Indiana Bat Revised Recovery Plan, prepared by the Indiana Bat Recovery Team. The agency draft incorporates most of the comments and suggestions received on the technical draft. The agency draft identifies priority research tasks that will help determine the limiting factors for the species. This is essential before adequate steps can be taken to halt the continued decline in the species' numbers. The current agency draft reflects an increased emphasis on necessary following discussions among members of the Indiana Bat Recovery Team and comments received from reviewers of the technical draft.

The primary objectives of the agency draft revised recovery plan are to: (1) Summarize research findings that have accumulated since the original plan was approved in 1983, (2) identify priority research tasks intended to pinpoint reasons for the species' continued precipitous decline, and (3) establish realistic objectives that will lead to the recovery and eventual delisting of the species. The species may be reclassified to threatened following documentation of stable or increasing populations for

three consecutive census periods (6 years) and permanent protection [i.e., public ownership or long-term easement/lease, and gate/fence [where necessary and feasible]] at all Priority One hibernacula. Delisting will be considered when the reclassification criteria are met, in addition to protection and documentation of stable or increasing populations for three consecutive census periods at 50 percent of the Priority Two hibernacula in each state, and the overall population level must be restored to that of 1980. The year 1980 was chosen as the baseline for the Indiana bat because some of the currently known major hibernacula were not known prior to 1980, and it is the first year that systematic surveys were conducted at all major hibernation sites. In addition, the 1980 level is believed to be sufficient to maintain enough genetic diversity to enable the species to persist over a large geographical area and avoid extinction.

Public Comments Solicited

The Service solicits written comments on the recovery plan described. All comments received by the date specified above will be considered prior to approval of the revised recovery plan.

Authority

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

Dated: April 2, 1999.

Charles M. Wooley,

Assistant Regional Director, Ecological Services, Region 3, Fort Snelling, Minnesota.

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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Fish and Wildlife Service

Marine Mammal Annual Report Availability, Calendar Year 1996

AGENCY: Fish and Wildlife Service, Interior.

ACTION: Notice of availability of calendar year 1996 marine mammal annual report.

SUMMARY: The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Biological Resources Division of the U.S. Geological Survey have issued their joint 1996 annual report on marine mammals under the jurisdiction of the U.S. Department of the Interior, as required by section 103(f) of the Marine Mammal Protection Act of 1972. The report covers the period January 1 to December 31, 1996,

and was submitted to Congress on February 25, 1999. This notice informs you that the 1996 report is available and that copies may be obtained on request to the Service.

ADDRESSES: You should address written requests for copies to: Publications Unit, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, National Conservation Training Center, Route 1, Box 166, Shepherd Grade Road, Shepherdstown, WV 25443.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Jeffrey L. Horwarth, Division of Fish and Wildlife Management Assistance, Telephone (703) 358-1718.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The U.S. Department of the Interior is responsible for eight species of marine mammals, as assigned by the Marine Mammal Protection Act of 1972. These species are polar bear, sea and marine otters, walrus, manatees (three species) and dugong. Administrative actions discussed include appropriations, marine mammals in Alaska, endangered and threatened marine mammal species, law enforcement activities, scientific research and public display permits, certificates of registration, research, Outer Continental Shelf environmental studies and international activities.

Dated: March 31, 1999.

Jamie Rappaport Clark,

Director.

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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Bureau of Land Management

[CA-360-1220-00]

Designation of Off-Road Vehicle Use Areas and Trails Within Shasta County, California

SUMMARY: The BLM has formulated off-road vehicle use designations for public lands within the Lower Clear Creek and Mule Mountain management areas located in Shasta County, California. These designations were specified within the Record of Decision for the Redding Resource Area Management Plan approved June, 1993. Under authority of 43 CFR 8342, motor vehicles within the Lower Clear Creek and Mule Mountain management areas are "limited" to designated roads and trails.

Roads and trails available for all registered motor vehicles on public land within the management area will be signed and include two roads connecting Muletown Road to two separate parcels of private property located within Township 31 North,