

years. In addition, there has been widespread and intensive use of the shorezone since European settlement. Today, shorezone conditions are influenced by heavy recreational use, boating, construction of piers and boat launches, and dam operations that control lake elevation.

Annual surveys are conducted to determine population numbers, site occupancy, and general disturbance regimes. During the 2003 annual survey period, the lake level was approximately 6,224 ft (1,898 m). This was the third consecutive year of low water. The survey located Tahoe yellow cress at 45 of the 72 sites surveyed (65 percent occupied), up from 15 sites (19 percent occupied) in 2000 when the lake level was high at 6,228 ft. Approximately 25,200 stems were counted or estimated in 2003, whereas during the 2000 annual survey, the estimated number of stems was 4,590. Over the past 3 years, the survey effort has increased considerably, largely due to our elevation of this species to candidate status.

Many Tahoe yellow cress sites are intensively used for commercial and public purposes and are subject to various activities such as erosion control, marina developments, pier construction, and recreation. The U.S. Forest Service, California Tahoe Conservancy, and California Department of Parks and Recreation have management programs for Tahoe yellow cress that include monitoring, fenced enclosures, and transplanting efforts when funds and staff are available. Public agencies (including the Service), private landowners, and environmental groups collaborated to develop a conservation strategy, coupled with a Memorandum of Understanding/Conservation Agreement. The conservation strategy, completed in 2003, contains goals and objectives for recovery and survival and a research and monitoring agenda, and will serve as the foundation for an adaptive management program.

Because of the continued commitments to conservation demonstrated by regulatory and land management agencies participating in the conservation strategy, we have determined the threats to Tahoe yellow cress from various land uses have been reduced from a high magnitude to a moderate magnitude. However, since these threats are still ongoing, they are imminent. Thus, based on the change in magnitude of threats, we are changing the LPN from a 2 to an 8.

Request for Information

We request you submit any further information on these three species as soon as possible or whenever it becomes available. We are particularly interested in any information:

(1) Recommending areas that we should designate as critical habitat for a species, or indicating that designation of critical habitat would not be prudent for a species;

(2) Documenting threats to any of these three species;

(3) Describing the immediacy or magnitude of threats facing these species; and

(4) Pointing out taxonomic or nomenclature changes for any of the species.

Submit your comments on southern Idaho ground squirrel or *Rorripa subumbellata* (Tahoe yellow cress) to the Regional Director (TE), U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Eastside Federal Complex, 911 NE. 11th Avenue, Portland, Oregon 97232-4181 (503/231-6158).

Submit your comments on the sand dune lizard to the Regional Director (TE), U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 500 Gold Avenue SW., Room 4012, Albuquerque, New Mexico 87102 (505/248-6920).

Our practice is to make comments, including names and home addresses of respondents, available for public inspection. Individual respondents may request that we withhold their home addresses from the public record, which we will honor to the extent allowable by law. In some circumstances, we can also withhold from the public record a respondent's identity, as allowable by law. If you wish for us to withhold your name and/or address, you must state this request prominently at the beginning of your comments. However, we will not consider anonymous comments. We will make all submissions from organizations or businesses, and from individuals identifying themselves as representatives or officials of organizations or businesses, available for public inspection in their entirety.

Authority

This notice is published under the authority of the Endangered Species Act (16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.*).

Dated: December 17, 2004.

Marshall P. Jones, Jr.,

Acting Director, Fish and Wildlife Service.

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

50 CFR Part 648

[I.D. 121504I]

Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council; Public Hearings

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

ACTION: Notice of public hearing; request for comments.

SUMMARY: The Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council (Council) will hold a public hearing to solicit comments on "Draft Amendment 3 for Addressing EFH Requirements, Habitat Areas of Particular Concern (HAPCs), and Adverse Effects of Fishing in the Following Fishery Management Plans of the Gulf of Mexico: Shrimp, Red Drum, Reef Fish, Stone Crab, Coral and Coral Reef in the Gulf of Mexico and Spiny Lobster and the Coastal Migratory Pelagic Resources of the Gulf of Mexico and South Atlantic." The Amendment contains proposed alternatives to further identify essential fish habitat (EFH), establish HAPCs, and, to the extent practicable, prevent adverse impacts of fishing activities on coral in HAPCs.

DATES: The public hearing will be held January 4, 2005, beginning at 7 p.m. and concluding no later than 10 p.m. Public comments received by mail that are received in the Council office by 5 p.m., January 5, 2005, will be presented to the Council.

ADDRESSES: The public hearing will be held at the DoubleTree Grand Key Resort, 3990 South Roosevelt Boulevard, Key West, FL 33040; phone: (888) 310-1540.

Send written comments to: Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council, 3018 U.S. Highway 301, North, Suite 1000, Tampa, FL 33619.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Rick Leard, Deputy Executive Director, Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council; phone: (813) 228-2815.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Following the judicial decision in *American Oceans Campaign v. Daley* (Civil Action No. 99-982), NOAA Fisheries and the Council prepared an "Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Generic Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) Amendment to the Following Fishery Management Plans of the Gulf of Mexico: Shrimp, Red Drum, Reef Fish, Stone Crab, Coral and Coral Reef in the

Gulf of Mexico and Spiny Lobster and the Coastal Migratory Pelagic Resources of the Gulf of Mexico and South Atlantic." The EIS analyzes within each fishery a range of potential alternatives to: (1) describe and identify essential fish habitat for each fishery; (2) identify other actions to encourage the conservation and enhancement of such EFH; and (3) identify measures to minimize to the extent practicable any adverse effects of fishing on such EFH. Based on this EIS, the Council has

subsequently developed "Draft Amendment 3 for Addressing EFH Requirements, Habitat Areas of Particular Concern (HAPCs), and Adverse Effects of Fishing in the Following Fishery Management Plans of the Gulf of Mexico: Shrimp, Red Drum, Reef Fish, Stone Crab, Coral and Coral Reef in the Gulf of Mexico and Spiny Lobster and the Coastal Migratory Pelagic Resources of the Gulf of Mexico and South Atlantic."

This meeting is physically accessible to people with disabilities. Requests for sign language interpretation or other auxiliary aids should be directed to Dawn Aring at the Council (see **ADDRESSES**) by December 28, 2004.

Dated: December 17, 2004.

Alan D. Risenhoover,

Acting Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, National Marine Fisheries Service.

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