

TABLE 2—SUMMARY OF 96 SPECIES IN CALIFORNIA AND NEVADA FOR WHICH 5-YEAR REVIEWS WERE COMPLETED IN FY 2009 AND EARLY FY 2010—Continued

Common name	Scientific name	Recommendation	Lead fish and wild-life office	Contact
White sedge .....	<i>Carex albida</i> .....	No status change ..	Sacramento .....	Al Donner; (916) 414-6600.
Yadon's piperia .....	<i>Piperia yadonii</i> .....	No status change ...	Ventura .....	Lois Grunwald; (805) 644-1766.

**Authority:** This document is published under the authority of the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended (16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.*).

Dated: May 14, 2010.

**Alexandra Pitts,**

*Regional Director, Region 8, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.*

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**DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR**

**Fish and Wildlife Service**

[FWS-R2-R-2009-N274]  
[22570-1261-0000-K2]

**Limiting Mountain Lion Predation on Desert Bighorn Sheep on Kofa National Wildlife Refuge, Yuma and La Paz Counties, AZ**

**AGENCY:** Fish and Wildlife Service, Interior.

**ACTION:** Notice of availability of the final environmental assessment and a finding of no significant impact.

**SUMMARY:** We, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service), announce availability of our finding of no significant impact (FONSI) for the environmental assessment (EA) for limiting mountain lion (*Puma concolor*) predation on desert bighorn sheep (*Ovis canadensis mexicana*) on the Kofa National Wildlife Refuge (Refuge) in southwest Arizona. In the final EA and FONSI, we describe how we will manage mountain lion predation to help achieve bighorn sheep population objectives on the Refuge.

**ADDRESSES:** You may view or obtain copies of the FONSI and final EA by the following methods. You may request a hard copy or CD-ROM by U.S. mail from U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 9300 East 28th Street, Yuma, AZ 85365; via facsimile at 928-783-8611; or electronically to [KofaLionComments@fws.gov](mailto:KofaLionComments@fws.gov). You may also download a copy of the documents at: <http://www.fws.gov/southwest/refuges/arizona/kofa>.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Mitch Ellis, 928-783-7861 (phone); 928-

783-8611 (fax); or [Mitch\\_Ellis@fws.gov](mailto:Mitch_Ellis@fws.gov) (e-mail). If you use a telecommunications device for the deaf (TDD), you may call the Federal Information Relay Service (FIRS) at 1-800-877-8339, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:**

**Introduction**

With this notice, we announce our decision and the availability of the FONSI and final EA. We completed a thorough analysis of impacts on the human environment, which we include in the final EA that accompanies the FONSI. We solicited comments on a draft EA from August 4, 2009, to October 2, 2009, through a notice of availability in the **Federal Register** (74 FR 38667; August 4, 2009). We received 220 responses during the comment period, from 7 government agencies, 19 nongovernmental organizations, and 194 individuals. During preparation of the final EA, we considered all of the comments provided. Appendix C of the final EA contains a more detailed description of the substantive comments received and how we incorporated changes to the draft EA in response to comments we received.

**Background**

The Refuge contains a major portion of the largest contiguous habitat for desert bighorn sheep in southwestern Arizona and historically has been home to a population averaging 760 bighorns. The Refuge has served as the primary source of bighorn sheep for translocations to reestablish and supplement extirpated or declining populations throughout southern Arizona, New Mexico, Texas, and Colorado. Population estimates from systematic aerial surveys indicate that a 50-percent decline in the Refuge sheep population occurred between the years 2000 and 2006.

In response to this decline, the Refuge and the Arizona Game and Fish Department (AGFD) have conducted an analysis of its probable causes and are currently implementing a strategic management program intended to lead to the recovery of this important

wildlife resource. Several studies and monitoring projects have been initiated or enhanced. Some of the more important aspects of this broad program include more frequent bighorn population surveys, monitoring and maintaining water availability, assessing body condition and disease in the bighorn population, monitoring disturbance attributable to human recreation, and monitoring the extent of predation and its impacts on the population. Many of the elements in this management program have been addressed through prior planning documents and require little additional review. Others, such as the proposed lethal control of mountain lions, have not been previously addressed and therefore require analysis under the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, as amended (NEPA; 42 U.S.C. 4321 *et seq.*), as well as public review.

**Final Environmental Assessment—Selected Alternative**

The final EA identifies and evaluates three alternatives for managing mountain lion predation on desert bighorn sheep on the Refuge. After a thorough analysis, we have selected Alternative B for implementation. Under this alternative, we will allow the removal of specific, individually identified offending mountain lions, through translocation or lethal removal, from the Refuge under certain circumstances, in order to recover and maintain an optimal population of desert bighorn sheep. This program has several components. We will trap mountain lions and fit them with tracking devices to monitor their activities. When the Refuge bighorn sheep population estimate is below 600 animals, active mountain lion control will occur. Active mountain lion control is the removal (through lethal means or translocation) of each individual mountain lion found to kill two or more bighorn sheep within a 6-month period. The Service, or its agents, will carry out the lethal removal or translocation. However, when the Refuge bighorn sheep population estimate is between 600 and 800 animals, active mountain lion control may or may not be

employed based on the totality of the circumstances at the time. In order to meet the bighorn sheep population objectives while minimizing the necessary impacts to mountain lions, we desire some flexibility. We will base decisions regarding whether active mountain lion control is necessary on an adaptive management approach and on the following factors: The current sheep population estimate; the current sheep population trend; bighorn sheep lamb survival and recruitment; the estimate of the number of mountain lions currently using the Refuge and their predation rate on bighorn sheep; current and forecasted habitat conditions; available funding and manpower; and criticality of bighorn translocation needs. When the Refuge bighorn sheep population estimate is at or above 800 animals, active mountain lion control will not occur, although mountain lions on the Refuge will continue to be captured and fitted with tracking devices to aid in continuing research.

#### Additional Refuge Information

Additional information on the history of the Refuge and its purpose, goals, objectives, and management strategies can be found in the *Kofa National Wildlife Refuge & Wilderness and New Water Mountains Wilderness Interagency Management Plan and Environmental Assessment: EA-AZ-055-95-1 05, October 1997*. Pertinent information can also be found in the April 2007 report titled *Investigative Report and Recommendations for the Kofa Bighorn Sheep Herd*, prepared jointly by the Service and the AGFD. Both documents, along with other detailed information, are available at the following web site: <http://www.fws.gov/southwest/refuges/arizona/kofa>.

#### Authorities

Environmental review of this project has been conducted in accordance with the requirements of NEPA, NEPA Regulations (40 CFR parts 1500-1508), other appropriate Federal laws and regulations, Executive Order 12996, the National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act of 1997, and Service policies and procedures for compliance with those laws and regulations.

Dated: December 18, 2009

**Benjamin N. Tuggle,**

*Regional Director, Region 2.*

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## DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

### Fish and Wildlife Service

[FWS-R4-R-2010-N051; 40136-1265-0000-S3]

#### Pine Island, Matlacha Pass, Island Bay, and Caloosahatchee National Wildlife Refuges, Lee and Charlotte Counties, FL

**AGENCY:** Fish and Wildlife Service, Interior.

**ACTION:** Notice of availability: draft comprehensive conservation plan and environmental assessment; request for comments.

**SUMMARY:** We, the Fish and Wildlife Service (Service), announce the availability of a draft comprehensive conservation plan and environmental assessment (Draft CCP/EA) for Pine Island, Matlacha Pass, Island Bay, and Caloosahatchee National Wildlife Refuges (NWRs) for public review and comment. In the Draft CCP/EA, we describe the alternative we propose to use to manage these four refuges for the 15 years following approval of the final CCP.

**DATES:** To ensure consideration, we must receive your written comments by June 21, 2010.

**ADDRESSES:** You may obtain a copy of the Draft CCP/EA by contacting Ms. Cheri M. Ehrhardt, via U.S. mail at J.N. "Ding" Darling National Wildlife Refuge Complex, 1 Wildlife Drive, Sanibel, FL 33957, or via e-mail at [DingDarlingCCP@fws.gov](mailto:DingDarlingCCP@fws.gov). Alternatively, you may download the document from our Internet Site at <http://southeast.fws.gov/planning> under "Draft Documents." Submit comments on the Draft CCP/EA to the above postal address or e-mail address.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Ms. Cheri M. Ehrhardt, Natural Resource Planner, telephone: 321/861-2368; or Mr. Paul Tritaik, Refuge Manager, telephone: 239/472-1100.

#### SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

##### Introduction

With this notice, we continue the CCP process for Pine Island, Matlacha Pass, Island Bay, and Caloosahatchee NWRs. We started the process through a notice in the **Federal Register** on June 27, 2007 (72 FR 35254), and extended the comment period in a notice in the **Federal Register** on April 2, 2008 (73 FR 17991). For more about the refuges, their purposes, and our CCP process, please see those notices.

## Background

### *The CCP Process*

The National Wildlife Refuge System Administration Act of 1966 (16 U.S.C. 668dd-668ee), as amended by the National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act of 1997, requires us to develop a CCP for each national wildlife refuge. The purpose for developing a CCP is to provide refuge managers with a 15-year strategy for achieving refuge purposes and contributing toward the mission of the National Wildlife Refuge System, consistent with sound principles of fish and wildlife management, conservation, legal mandates, and our policies. In addition to outlining broad management direction on conserving wildlife and their habitats, CCPs identify wildlife-dependent recreational opportunities available to the public, including opportunities for hunting, fishing, wildlife observation, wildlife photography, and environmental education and interpretation. We will review and update the CCP at least every 15 years in accordance with the Administration Act.

Totalling approximately 1,201 acres, the four refuges were established "as a preserve and breeding ground for native birds" and are managed as part of the J.N. "Ding" Darling NWR Complex (Complex). Predominantly mangrove swamp, these four refuges provide for native wildlife and habitat diversity through a mix of habitats, including mangrove islands and shorelines, saltwater marshes and ponds, tidal flats, and upland hardwood forests. They also provide protection for 12 Federal-listed and 25 State-listed species, as well as for wading birds, waterbirds, raptors and birds of prey, neotropical migratory birds, shorebirds, and seabirds. Although all four refuges are closed to public access to protect their sensitive resources, they exist in an estuarine system and are all viewable from the water.

*The priority management issues facing these four refuges are addressed in the Draft CCP/EA, including:* (1) Increasing and changing human population, development of the landscape, recreational uses and demands, and associated impacts; (2) issues and impacts associated with water quality, water quantity, and timing; (3) invasion and spread of exotic, invasive, and nuisance species; (4) climate change impacts; (5) need for long-term protection of important resources; (6) declines in and threats to rare, threatened, and endangered species; (7) insufficient baseline wildlife and habitat data and lack of