

rabbitsfoot and the availability of our draft environmental assessment (DNEPA-EA) and draft economic analysis (DEA) of the proposed critical habitat (78 FR 27171). The comment period was reopened for 30 days, ending on June 10, 2013.

Subsequently, we received two requests for the reopened comment period to be extended so the public could have additional time to review the DNEPA-EA and DEA. The requests were from Senator Mark Pryor of Arkansas and the Kansas Farm Bureau. In response to these requests, we reopened the comment period for an additional 60 days from August 27, 2013, to October 28, 2013 (78 FR 52894).

There has been significant interest in Arkansas about this proposed critical habitat designation. We received an additional request from Senator Pryor for the reopened comment period to be extended again so that the public could have more time to review the draft environmental assessment and draft economic analysis. We concurred with this request.

Therefore, with this notice we are reopening the comment period on the proposed designation of critical habitat and on the DEA and DNEPA-EA for an additional 60 days. Further, in order to facilitate a better understanding of the proposed designation and the potential effects on stakeholders, the Service intends to hold public information meetings in Arkansas. The date, time, and locations of these meetings will be coordinated with interested stakeholders and noticed in newspapers and other media outlets.

Additional information may be found in the October 16, 2012, proposed rule (77 FR 63440) and the May 9, 2013, and August 27, 2013, documents to reopen the comment period and announce the availability of the DNEPA-EA and DEA (78 FR 27171 and 78 FR 52894).

#### Public Comments

We are again seeking written comments and information during this reopened comment period on our proposed designation of critical habitat for Neosho mucket and rabbitsfoot that published in the **Federal Register** on October 16, 2012 (77 FR 63440), and on our DEA and DNEPA-EA of the proposed critical habitat designation that were made available for review on May 9, 2013, and August 27, 2013 (78 FR 27171 and 78 FR 52894).

With regard to the proposed critical habitat determination, we are particularly interested in comments concerning:

(1) The reasons why we should or should not designate habitat as “critical

habitat” under section 4 of the Act, including whether there are threats to the species from human activity, the degree of which can be expected to increase due to the designation, and whether that increase in threat outweighs the benefit of designation such that the designation of critical habitat is not prudent.

(2) Specific information on:

(a) The amount and distribution of the species’ habitat;

(b) What areas occupied by the species at the time of listing that contain features essential to the conservation of the species we should include in the designation and why;

(c) Special management considerations or protection that may be needed in critical habitat areas we are proposing, including managing for the potential effects of climate change; and

(d) What areas not occupied at the time of listing are essential for the conservation of the species and why.

(3) Land use designations and current or planned activities in the subject areas and their possible impacts on proposed critical habitat.

(4) Any foreseeable economic, national security, or other relevant impacts that may result from designating any area that may be included in the final designation. We are particularly interested in any impacts on small entities and the benefits of including or excluding areas from the proposed designation that are subject to these impacts.

(5) Whether our approach to designating critical habitat could be improved or modified in any way to provide for greater public participation and understanding, or to assist us in accommodating public concerns and comments.

If you submitted comments or information on the proposed rule (77 FR 63440) during the initial comment period from October 16, 2012, to December 17, 2012, or the reopened comment periods from May 9, 2013, to June 10, 2013 (78 FR 27171), or August 27, 2013, to October 28, 2013 (78 FR 52894), please do not resubmit them. We have incorporated them into the public record as part of the original comment period, and we will fully consider them in our final determination.

You may submit your comments and materials concerning the proposed rule by one of the methods listed in **ADDRESSES**. We request that you send comments only by the methods described in **ADDRESSES**.

If you submit a comment via <http://www.regulations.gov>, your entire comment—including any personal

identifying information—will be posted on the Web site. We will post all hardcopy comments on <http://www.regulations.gov> as well. If you submit a hardcopy comment that includes personal identifying information, you may request at the top of your document that we withhold this information from public review. However, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so.

Comments and materials we receive, as well as supporting documentation we used in preparing the proposed rule, are available for public inspection on <http://www.regulations.gov> at Docket No. FWS-R4-ES-2013-0007, or by appointment, during normal business hours, at the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Arkansas Ecological Services Field Office (see **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT**).

#### Authority

The authority for this action is the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended (16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.*).

Dated: May 7, 2014.

**Michael J. Bean,**

*Acting Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for Fish and Wildlife and Parks.*

[FR Doc. 2014-10944 Filed 5-13-14; 8:45 am]

**BILLING CODE 4310-55-P**

---

## DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

### Fish and Wildlife Service

#### 50 CFR Part 17

[Docket No. FWS-R5-ES-2013-0097; 4500030114]

RIN 1018-AY17

#### Endangered and Threatened Wildlife and Plants; Proposed Threatened Status for the Rufa Red Knot (*Calidris canutus rufa*)

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

**ACTION:** Proposed rule; extension of comment period; public hearing announcement.

---

**SUMMARY:** We, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service), announce the extension of the public comment period on our September 30, 2013, proposal to list the rufa red knot (*Calidris canutus rufa*) as a threatened species under the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended (Act). In accordance with section 4(b)(5) of the Act, we are holding a second public hearing in North Carolina. A public informational session will be held immediately

preceding the public hearing. Extending the comment period until June 15, 2014, will allow all interested parties an opportunity to attend the second North Carolina public hearing and provide testimony and additional comments on the proposed rufa red knot listing. Comments previously submitted need not be resubmitted, as they will be fully considered in preparation of the final rule.

**DATES:** The comment period for the proposed rule published September 30, 2013 (78 FR 60024), is extended. We will consider comments received or postmarked on or before June 15, 2014. Comments submitted electronically using the Federal eRulemaking Portal (see **ADDRESSES**, below) must be received by 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time on the closing date.

*Public Informational Session and Public Hearing:* We will hold a third public informational session and public hearing, and the second in North Carolina, on this proposed rule on June 5, 2014; see **ADDRESSES** for location:

- Manteo, NC: Public informational session from 5 p.m. to 6:30 p.m., followed by a public hearing from 7 p.m. to 8 p.m.

Registration to present oral comments on the proposed rule at the public hearing will begin at the start of the informational session.

**ADDRESSES: Document availability:** You may obtain copies of the September 30, 2013, proposed rule and its four supplemental documents on the Internet at <http://www.regulations.gov> at Docket Number FWS-R5-ES-2013-0097. Documents may also be obtained by mail from the New Jersey Ecological Services Field Office (see **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT**).

*Written comments:* You may submit written comments by one of the following methods:

(1) *Electronically:* Go to the Federal eRulemaking Portal: <http://www.regulations.gov>. In the Search box, enter FWS-R5-ES-2013-0097, which is the docket number for the proposed rulemaking. You may submit a comment by clicking on "Comment Now!"

(2) *By hard copy:* Submit by U.S. mail or hand-delivery to: Public Comments Processing, Attn: FWS-R5-ES-2013-0097; Division of Policy and Directives Management; U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service; 4401 N. Fairfax Drive, MS 2042-PDM; Arlington, VA 22203.

We request that you send comments only by the methods described above. We will post all comments on <http://www.regulations.gov>. This generally means that we will post any personal information you provide us (see the

Public Comments section below for more details).

*Public Informational Session and Public Hearing:* The informational session and public hearing will be located in:

- North Carolina—Alligator National Wildlife Refuge, Visitor Center, 100 Conservation Way, Manteo, NC 27954.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Eric Schradung, Field Office Supervisor, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, New Jersey Field Office, 927 North Main Street, Building D, Pleasantville, New Jersey 08232, by telephone 609-383-3938 or by facsimile 609-646-0352. Persons who use a telecommunications device for the deaf (TDD) may call the Federal Information Relay Service (FIRS) at 800-877-8339.

#### **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:**

##### **Public Comments**

We will accept written comments and information during this extended comment period on our proposal to list the rufa red knot as a threatened species that was published in the **Federal Register** on September 30, 2013 (78 FR 60024). We will consider information we receive from all interested parties. We intend that any final action resulting from this proposal will be based on the best scientific and commercial data available and be as accurate and as effective as possible.

If you submitted comments or information on the proposed rule (78 FR 60024) during the initial comment period from September 30, 2013, to November 29, 2013, or during the reopened public comment period that started on April 4, 2014, please do not resubmit them. We have incorporated them into the public record as part of the previous comment period, and we will fully consider them in the preparation of our final determination.

You may submit your comments and materials concerning the proposed listing rule by one of the methods listed in **ADDRESSES**. We request that you send comments only by the methods described in **ADDRESSES**.

If you submit a comment via <http://www.regulations.gov>, your entire comment—including any personal identifying information—will be posted on the Web site. We will post all hardcopy comments on <http://www.regulations.gov> as well. If you submit a hardcopy comment that includes personal identifying information, you may request at the top of your document that we withhold this information from public review. However, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so.

Comments and materials we receive, as well as supporting documentation we used in preparing the proposed rule, are available for public inspection on <http://www.regulations.gov> at Docket No. FWS-R5-ES-2013-0097, or by appointment, during normal business hours, at the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, New Jersey Ecological Services Field Office (see **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT**).

##### **Background**

It is our intent to discuss only those topics directly relevant to the rufa red knot threatened listing proposal in this document. For more information on previous Federal actions concerning the rufa red knot, or information regarding its biology, status, distribution, and habitat, refer to the proposed rule published in the **Federal Register** on September 30, 2013 (78 FR 60024) and its four supplemental documents, all of which are available online at <http://www.regulations.gov> at Docket No. FWS-R5-ES-2013-0097 or by mail from the New Jersey Ecological Services Field Office (see **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT**).

In our September 30, 2013, proposed rule (78 FR 60024), we proposed to list the rufa red knot as threatened. We have determined that the rufa red knot is threatened due to loss of both breeding and nonbreeding habitat; potential for disruption of natural predator cycles on the breeding grounds; reduced prey availability throughout the nonbreeding range; and increasing frequency and severity of asynchronies ("mismatches") in the timing of the birds' annual migratory cycle relative to favorable food and weather conditions.

On April 4, 2014, we reopened the comment period on the proposed listing rule for 45 days, to end on May 19, 2014, to accommodate two public hearings, one in Morehead City, North Carolina, and one in Corpus Christi, Texas (79 FR 18869). Both of those public hearings will be held on May 6, 2014. We subsequently received a request, dated April 15, 2014, to hold a second public hearing in North Carolina, specifically in Dare County. We concur with the request and will hold a second public hearing as described above. Therefore, we are extending the reopened comment period to June 15, 2014, to accommodate the second North Carolina public hearing.

##### **Authors**

The primary authors of this notice are the staff members in the Endangered Species Program, Northeast Regional Office, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

**Authority**

The authority for this action is the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended (16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.*).

Dated: May 2, 2014.

**Rowan W. Gould,**

*Director, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.*

[FR Doc. 2014-10873 Filed 5-13-14; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4310-55-P

**DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE****National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration****50 CFR Part 216**

[Docket No. 140304190-4190-01]

RIN 0648-BE03

**Subsistence Taking of Northern Fur Seals on the Pribilof Islands; Summary of Fur Seal Harvests for 2011-2013 and Proposed Annual Harvest Estimates for 2014-2016**

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

**ACTION:** Notice of availability; request for comments.

**SUMMARY:** Pursuant to the regulations governing the subsistence taking of northern fur seals, this document summarizes the annual fur seal subsistence harvests on St. George and St. Paul Islands (the Pribilof Islands) for 2011-2013 and proposes annual estimates of fur seal subsistence harvests for 2014-2016 on the Pribilof Islands, Alaska. NMFS solicits public comments on the proposed estimates.

**DATES:** Comments must be received no later than June 13, 2014.

**ADDRESSES:** You may submit comments, identified by FDMS docket Number NOAA-NMFS-2011-0187, by either of the following methods:

*Electronic Submissions:* Submit all electronic public comments via the Federal e-Rulemaking Portal. Go to [www.regulations.gov](http://www.regulations.gov)

*#!docketDetail;D=NOAA-NMFS-2011-0187*, click the "Comment Now!" icon, complete the required fields, and enter or attach your comments.

*Mail:* Submit written comments to Jon Kurland, Assistant Regional Administrator for Protected Resources, Alaska Region NMFS, Attn: Ellen Sebastian, P.O. Box 21668, Juneau, AK 99802-1668.

*Instructions:* Comments sent by any other method, to any other address or individual, or received after the end of

the comment period, may not be considered by NMFS. All comments received are a part of the public record and will generally be posted for public viewing on [www.regulations.gov](http://www.regulations.gov) without change. All personal identifying information (e.g., name, address, etc.), confidential business information, or otherwise sensitive information submitted voluntarily by the sender will be publicly accessible. NMFS will accept anonymous comments (enter "N/A" in the required fields if you wish to remain anonymous). Attachments to electronic comments will be accepted in Microsoft Word, Excel, or Adobe PDF file formats only.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:**

Michael Williams, NMFS Alaska Region, 907-271-5117, [Michael.Williams@noaa.gov](mailto:Michael.Williams@noaa.gov); or Shannon Bettridge, NMFS Office of Protected Resources, 301-427-8402, [Shannon.Bettridge@noaa.gov](mailto:Shannon.Bettridge@noaa.gov).

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:****Electronic Access**

An Environmental Impact Statement is available on the Internet at the following address: <http://alaskafisheries.noaa.gov/protectedresources/seals/fur/eis/final0505.pdf>.

**Background**

The subsistence harvest from the depleted stock of northern fur seals (*Callorhinus ursinus*), on the Pribilof Islands, Alaska, is governed by regulations found in 50 CFR part 216, subpart F. The purpose of these regulations, published under the authority of the Fur Seal Act (FSA), 16 U.S.C. 1151, *et seq.*, and the Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA), 16 U.S.C. 1361, *et seq.*, is to limit the take of fur seals to an allowable harvest level providing for the subsistence needs of the Pribilof residents, while restricting taking by sex, age, and season for herd conservation. To further minimize negative effects on the Pribilof Islands' fur seal population, the harvest has been limited to a 47-day season annually (June 23 to August 8).

Pursuant to the regulations governing the taking of fur seals for subsistence purposes, NMFS must publish a summary of the fur seal harvest for the previous 3-year period and an estimate of the number of seals expected to be taken in the subsequent three-year period to meet the subsistence needs of the Aleut residents of the Pribilof Islands. Beginning in 2000, the allowable take ranges of estimated annual northern fur seal subsistence harvests have been discussed with each

tribal government as part of the co-management relationship and agreement. Accurately predicting the annual subsistence needs of the Pribilof communities has faced practical and social difficulties; however, the process to develop estimates of the number of fur seals required to meet subsistence needs has resulted in acceptance of the different allowable take ranges since those first established in 1986. The current upper harvest take limit of 2,500 sub-adult (juveniles, 2-4 years old) male fur seals has been accepted every year since 1997. The lower harvest take limit of 1,945 provides a degree of flexibility the communities feel comfortable with regarding changes and unanticipated needs within the community and the environment.

Several factors and conditions affect both the subsistence harvest of northern fur seals and the number of fur seals required to meet subsistence needs. Weather conditions and availability of animals varies annually. The availability of wage earning jobs reduces the time available for community members to harvest fur seals and hunt other subsistence resources. Thus, individual community members may be unavailable to harvest fur seals during the season in certain years or have more financial resources to hunt other marine mammals in subsequent years or seasons. Several specific seasonal employment opportunities may interfere with community members' ability to harvest fur seals under the current regulations. The current timing of the northern fur seal subsistence harvest season overlaps with the local halibut fishing season, and many of the community members who participate in the harvest are also fishermen. In addition, crab fishery rationalization and a renewal of the crab harvest in the Pribilof region has provided local job opportunities that may extend into the spring hunting season for Steller sea lions. Both Steller sea lions and northern fur seals combine to meet the subsistence needs of the local communities along with numerous other species, though one species does not replace the lack of another. Northern fur seals provide the more reliable resource of the two species, despite being available during a 6-week harvest season.

The communities of St. Paul and St. George Islands rely on marine mammals as a major food source and a cornerstone of their culture. The harvest of sub-adult male northern fur seals has occurred for well over 200 years and the biological implications of this harvest are reasonably well understood. Subsistence harvests under the current