

Section 104 of the MMPA also provides for Letters of Confirmation under a General Authorization for scientific research and permits for commercial and educational photography of marine mammals that involve only Level B harassment of marine mammals; permits for capture and/or import of marine mammals for public display; and inventory reporting pertaining to marine mammals in public display facilities.

The regulations pertaining to permits and associated reporting requirements under the MMPA and FSA are at 50 CFR part 216; the regulations for permit requirements under the ESA are at 50 CFR part 222. The required information in this collection is used to make the determinations required by the MMPA, FSA, ESA and their implementing regulations prior to issuing a permit; to establish appropriate permit conditions; to evaluate the impacts of the proposed activity on protected species; and, to ensure compliance with the Acts. The marine mammal inventory forms ensure compliance with MMPA reporting requirements and allow NMFS to maintain the National Inventory of Marine Mammals (NIMM), as required by the MMPA.

This information collection applies to certain protected species for which NMFS is responsible: Cetaceans (whales, dolphins and porpoises) and pinnipeds (seals and sea lions); and, for ESA scientific research and enhancement permits: Sawfish (largetooth and smalltooth), sea turtles (in water), sturgeon (Atlantic and shortnose), and certain foreign ESA-listed species. This information collection may be used for future ESA-listed species.

Affected Public: Individuals; Business or other for-profit organizations; Not-for-profit institutions; State, Local, or Tribal government; Federal government.

Frequency: Permit applications, once every five or ten years; permit reports, annually or more frequently if incidents occur; amendments and modifications to permits, as frequently as requested by permit holders; public display inventory reporting, 15 days prior to transporting or transferring marine mammals and 30 days after the date of birth or death of a marine mammal.

Respondent's Obligation: \$986.

This information collection request may be viewed at reginfo.gov. Follow the instructions to view Department of Commerce collections currently under review by OMB.

Written comments and recommendations for the proposed information collection should be sent within 30 days of publication of this

notice to OIRA_Submission@omb.eop.gov or fax to (202) 395-5806.

Sheleen Dumas,

Department PRA Clearance Officer, Office of the Chief Information Officer, Commerce Department.

[FR Doc. 2019-27890 Filed 12-26-19; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

[RTID 0648-XG573]

Endangered and Threatened Species; Recovery Plans

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

ACTION: Notice of availability.

SUMMARY: NMFS announces the adoption of a Final Endangered Species Act (ESA) recovery plan for the threatened Puget Sound steelhead Distinct Population Segment (DPS) (herein referred to as steelhead). The Final Recovery Plan for this species (Final Recovery Plan) is now available.

ADDRESSES: Electronic copies of the Final Recovery Plan are available online at: <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/resource/document/esa-recovery-plan-puget-sound-steelhead-distinct-population-segment-oncorhynchus>

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

David Price, (360) 753-9598, david.price@noaa.gov; or Elizabeth Babcock, (206) 526-4505, elizabeth.babcock@noaa.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Background

The Endangered Species Act of 1973 (ESA), as amended (16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.*) requires that we develop and implement recovery plans for the conservation and survival of threatened and endangered species under our jurisdiction, unless it is determined that such plans would not result in the conservation of the species. The Puget Sound steelhead (*Oncorhynchus mykiss*) DPS was listed as a threatened species under the ESA in May 11, 2007 (72 FR 26722). We published a Notice of Availability of the Draft Recovery Plan in the **Federal Register** on December 13, 2018 (83 FR 64110) to obtain comments on the Draft Plan. The public comment period for this action was set to end on February 11, 2019; however, we extended the public comment period through March 28,

2019, to provide additional opportunity for public comment (84 FR 1707). We received extensive comments on the Draft Plan, summarized the comments and identified comments that prompted revisions for the Final Recovery Plan. We revised the Draft Plan based on comments received, and this final version now constitutes the Recovery Plan for the Puget Sound steelhead DPS.

The Final Plan

We are responsible for developing and implementing recovery plans for Pacific salmon and steelhead listed under the ESA. Section 4(f)(1) of the ESA requires that recovery plans include, to the extent practicable: (1) Objective, measurable criteria which, when met, would result in a determination that the species is no longer threatened or endangered; (2) site-specific management actions necessary to achieve the plan's goals; and (3) estimates of the time required and costs to achieve the recovery plan's goal. Our goal is to restore Puget Sound steelhead to the point where they are viable and no longer need the protections of the ESA. The ESA requires the development of recovery plans for each listed species unless such a plan would not promote its recovery.

We believe it is essential to have local support of recovery plans by those whose activities directly affect the listed species and whose continued commitment and leadership will be needed to implement the necessary recovery actions. We therefore support and participate in collaborative efforts to develop recovery plans that involve state, tribal, and federal entities, local communities, and other stakeholders. For this Final Recovery Plan for threatened Puget Sound steelhead, we worked collaboratively with local, state, tribal, and federal partners to produce a recovery plan that satisfies the ESA requirements. We have determined that this ESA recovery plan for Puget Sound steelhead meets the statutory requirements for a recovery plan and are adopting it as the Final Recovery Plan for this threatened species. This notice provides a notice of availability of the Plan.

The geographic area covered by the Final Recovery Plan is the Puget Sound basin, from the Elwha River (inclusive) eastward, including rivers in Hood Canal, South Sound, and North Sound, including steelhead from six artificial propagation programs: the Green River Natural Program; White River Winter Steelhead Supplementation Program; Hood Canal Steelhead Supplementation Off-station Projects in the Dewatto, Skokomish, and Duckabush Rivers; and

the Lower Elwha Fish Hatchery Wild Steelhead Recovery Program.

For the purpose of recovery planning for the ESA-listed species of Pacific salmon and steelhead in Idaho, Oregon, and Washington, NMFS designated five geographically based “recovery domains.” The Puget Sound Steelhead DPS spawning range is in the Puget Sound domain. For each domain, NMFS appointed a team of scientists, nominated for their geographic and species expertise, to provide a solid scientific foundation for recovery plans. The Puget Sound Steelhead Technical Recovery Team included biologists from NMFS, other federal agencies, state agencies, tribes, and academic institutions.

We also collaborated with the state of Washington, tribes, other federal agencies, local governments, representatives of industry and environmental groups, other stakeholders, and the public to develop the Plan. The Final Recovery Plan for the Puget Sound steelhead DPS was developed by NMFS in cooperation with a recovery team made up of experts from the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission, Nooksack Tribe, Seattle Light, Long Live the Kings, Puget Sound Partnership, and NMFS’ Northwest Fisheries Science Center. These groups provided vital input during the planning process, and their continued involvement during recovery plan implementation is critical to the success of our joint efforts to recover Puget Sound steelhead.

Contents of the Plan

The Final Recovery Plan contains biological background and contextual information that includes description of the DPS, the planning area, and the context of the plan’s development. It presents relevant information on DPS structure and guidelines for assessing salmonid population and DPS status. It provides background on the natural history of steelhead, population status, and threats to their sustainability.

The Puget Sound steelhead DPS consists of three Major Population Groups (MPGs) and 32 Demographically Independent Populations (DIPs). Major risk factors facing Puget Sound steelhead are widespread declines in abundance and productivity for most natural steelhead populations in the DPS, including those in Skagit and Snohomish Rivers, previously considered strongholds for steelhead in the DPS; the low abundance of several summer-run populations; and the sharply diminishing abundance of some steelhead populations, especially in

south Puget Sound, Hood Canal, and the Strait of Juan de Fuca. Continued releases of out-of-DPS hatchery fish from Skamania-derived summer run were a major concern for diversity in the DPS.

The most recent status assessment of the DPS found “[t]he biological risks faced by the Puget Sound steelhead DPS have not substantively changed since the listing in 2007 (NMFS 2016; 81 FR 33468). The abundance of natural spawners is very low and productivity remains predominately negative. Degradation and fragmentation of freshwater habitat, with consequential effects on connectivity, remain the primary limiting factors and threats facing the Puget Sound steelhead DPS. The DPS is at very low viability, as are all three of its constituent MPGs, and many of its 32 DIPs.

The Final Recovery Plan presents NMFS’ recovery goals and the viability and listing factor criteria for making a delisting decision. The viability criteria for the Puget Sound steelhead DPS are designed to improve the DPS so it “has a negligible risk of extinction due to threats from demographic variation, local environmental variation, and genetic diversity changes over a 100-year time frame” based on the status of the MPGs and DIPs, and supporting ecosystems (McElhany *et al.*, 2000). A self-sustaining viable population has a negligible risk of extinction due to reasonably foreseeable changes in circumstances affecting its abundance, productivity, spatial structure, and diversity characteristics and achieves these characteristics without dependence upon artificial propagation. The viability criteria for Puget Sound steelhead require that all three MPGs be viable because the three MPGs differ substantially in key biological and habitat characteristics that contribute in distinct ways to the overall viability, diversity, and spatial structure of the DPS.

The Final Recovery Plan lays out a recovery strategy to address the potential threats based on the best available science and includes goals that incorporate objective, measurable criteria which, when met, would result in a determination that the species be removed from the list. The Final Recovery Plan is not regulatory, but presents guidance for use by agencies and interested parties to assist in the recovery of steelhead. The Final Recovery Plan identifies substantive actions needed to achieve recovery by addressing the threats to the species. The strategy for recovery includes a linkage between management actions and an active research and monitoring

program intended to fill data gaps and assess effectiveness. The Final Recovery Plan incorporates an adaptive management framework by which management actions and other elements will evolve and adapt as we gain information through research and monitoring. The Final Recovery Plan references many of the significant efforts already underway to allow steelhead in the Puget Sound to access a diversity of high quality habitats that have been lost or degraded due to human land use.

The Final Recovery Plan also describes specific information on the following: Current status of Puget Sound steelhead; pressures (limiting factors) and threats throughout the life cycle that have contributed to the species decline; recovery strategies to address the threats based on the best available science; site-specific actions with timelines; and an adaptive management framework for focusing needed research and evaluations and revising our recovery strategies and actions. The Final Recovery Plan also summarizes time and costs required to implement recovery actions.

How NMFS and Others Expect To Use the Plan

With this Final Recovery Plan, we commit to implementing the actions in the plan for which we have authority and funding; encourage other federal, state and local agencies and tribal governments to implement recovery actions for which they have responsibility, authority, and funding; and work cooperatively with the public and local stakeholders on implementation of other actions. We expect the recovery plan to guide us and other federal agencies in evaluating federal actions under ESA section 7, as well as in implementing other provisions of the ESA and other statutes. For example, the plan will provide greater biological context for evaluating the effects that a proposed action may have on a species by providing delisting criteria, information on priority areas for addressing specific limiting factors, and information on how the DPS can tolerate varying levels of risk.

When we are considering a species for delisting, the agency will examine whether the section 4(a)(1) listing factors have been addressed. To assist in this examination, we will use the delisting criteria described in Chapter 4 of the Plan, which include both viability criteria and listing factor criteria addressing each of the ESA section 4(a)(1) listing factors, as well as any other relevant data and policy considerations.

Conclusion

NMFS has reviewed the Plan for compliance with the requirements of the ESA section 4(f), determined that it does incorporate the required elements and is therefore adopting it as the Final Recovery Plan for the Puget Sound steelhead DPS.

Literature Cited

The complete citations for the references used in this document can be obtained by contacting NMFS (See **ADDRESSES** and **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT**).

Authority: 16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.*

Dated: December 20, 2019.

Angela Somma,

Chief, Endangered Species Conservation Division, Office of Protected Resources, National Marine Fisheries Service.

[FR Doc. 2019-27913 Filed 12-26-19; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

[RTID 0648-XR060]

Endangered and Threatened Species; Take of Anadromous Fish

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

ACTION: Notice of availability; extension of public comment period.

SUMMARY: We, NMFS, announce the extension of the comment period for the receipt of 14 (Permit Numbers 23271, 23276, 23278, 23279, 23280, 23284, 23285, 23286, 23287, 23288, 23289, 23290, 23291, 23434) applications for enhancement of survival permits under the Endangered Species Act (ESA) of 1973, as amended (16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.*), and proposed entry into an associated Template Safe Harbor Agreement (Agreement) between the applicants and NMFS. The notice of receipt for the 14 applications published on October 15, 2019. The proposed enhancement of survival permits and Agreement are intended to promote the survival and recovery of the Southern Oregon/Northern California Coast (SONCC) coho salmon (*Oncorhynchus kisutch*) Evolutionary Significant Unit (ESU), which is listed as threatened under the ESA. On November 4, 2019, we announced the extension of the comment period to December 31, 2019. We continue to solicit review and comment from the public and all

interested parties on the applications and associated documents. The close of the comment period is being extended from December 31, 2019, to February 15, 2020 to provide additional opportunity for public comment.

DATES: Comments or requests for a public hearing on the actions proposed in the applications must be received at the appropriate address or fax number (see **ADDRESSES**) no later than 5 p.m. Pacific standard time on February 15, 2020.

ADDRESSES: Written comments on the applications should be submitted to the California Coastal Office, NMFS, 1655 Heindon Road, Arcata, CA 95521, 707-822-7201. Comments may also be submitted via fax to 707-822-4840, or by email to Shasta.sha@noaa.gov (include the permit numbers in the subject line of the fax or email).

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Jim Simondet, Arcata, CA (ph.: 707-822-7201; Fax: 707-825-4840; email: Shasta.sha@noaa.gov. Permit application are available upon request through the contact information above, or online at <https://apps.nmfs.noaa.gov> and <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/resource/document/shasta-river-template-safe-harbor-agreements-and-site-plans-review>.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Extension of Comment Period

On October 15, 2019 (84 FR 55145) we (NMFS) published in the **Federal Register** a request for public comment 14 applications for enhancement of survival permits. The public comment period for this action was set to end on November 15, 2019. On November 4, 2019, we extended the public comment period through December 31, 2019. The comment period is now being extended through February 15, 2020, to provide additional opportunity for public comment.

Species Covered in This Notice

The following ESA-listed species is covered in this notice:

- Threatened coho salmon (*Oncorhynchus kisutch*): Southern Oregon/Northern California Coast (SONCC) Evolutionary Significant Unit (ESU).

Authority

Enhancement permits are issued in accordance with section 10(a)(1)(A) of the ESA (16 U.S.C. 1539(a)(1)(A)) and regulations governing listed fish and wildlife permits (50 CFR part 222, subpart C). NMFS issues permits based on findings that such permits: (1) Are applied for in good faith; (2) if granted

and exercised, would not operate to the disadvantage of the listed species that are the subject of the permit; (3) are consistent with the purposes and policies of Section 2 of the ESA; (4) would further a bona fide and necessary or desirable scientific purpose or enhance the propagation or survival of the endangered species, taking into account the benefits anticipated to be derived on behalf of the endangered species; and additional issuance criteria (as listed at 50 CFR 222.308(c)(5-12)). The authority to take listed species is subject to conditions set forth in the permits.

Anyone requesting a hearing on an application listed in this notice should set out the specific reasons why a hearing on that application would be appropriate (see **ADDRESSES**). Such hearings are held at the discretion of the Assistant Administrator for Fisheries, NMFS.

Permit Applications Received

Fourteen applicants are requesting individual enhancement of survival permits and entry of an associated Agreement that was developed by NMFS, California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW), the Shasta Watershed Conservation Group (SWCG) and the Applicants. The 14 Applicants (Table 1) each developed site plans for their respective properties (*i.e.*, Enrolled Properties) that describe management activities that will be implemented, including beneficial activities for SONCC coho salmon (the covered species). The site plans, Agreement, and enhancement of survival permits are expected to promote the recovery of the covered species on non-federal property within the Shasta River in the Agreement Area (see Figure 1 in the Agreement). The Shasta River is a tributary to the Klamath River and is in Siskiyou County, California. The proposed duration of the Agreement and the associated enhancement of survival permits is 20 years. The proposed enhancement of survival permits would authorize the incidental taking of SONCC coho salmon that may be associated with covered activities, including beneficial management activities, routine ranch management activities, and the potential future return of the enrolled properties to baseline conditions at the end of the Agreement, as defined in the Agreement. The site plans and Agreement specify the beneficial management activities to be carried out on the enrolled properties and a schedule for implementing those activities. The site plan and Agreement are expected to promote the recovery of