

abundance of Kearney's blue star individuals has decreased since the time of listing, the quantity of the species' habitat does not appear to have declined. It is therefore believed that habitat quality for the species is changing due to a combination of factors, likely including poorly managed livestock grazing, nonnative plant presence and spread and the resulting altered wildfire regime, border activities, and drought and climate change. As a result, woodland habitats, such as those that support Kearney's blue star, are becoming more desertified, with fewer trees and more grassland species associates (Service 2012, p. 1).

Recovery Plan Goals

The objective of a recovery plan is to provide a framework for the recovery of a species so that protection under the ESA is no longer necessary. A recovery plan includes scientific information about the species and provides criteria and actions necessary for us to be able to reclassify the species to threatened status or remove it from the lists of endangered and threatened wildlife and plants. Recovery plans help guide our recovery efforts by describing actions we consider necessary for the species' conservation, and by estimating time and costs for implementing needed recovery measures.

The original Kearney's blue star recovery plan includes downlisting criteria; however, no delisting criteria were established due to the unknown nature of the species' life history and habitat requirements at that time (Service 1993). The downlisting criteria in the original plan focus on the maintenance of self-sustaining natural populations and establishing procedures to ensure continued protection of these populations from human and natural threats (Service 1993). Once these downlisting criteria were met, the intention was to revise the original recovery plan to establish specific delisting objectives. In this revised recovery plan, our core strategy is to ensure the viability of Kearney's blue star across its range, and to conserve and manage habitat for the species and its pollinators. Our population-based recovery objective is to conserve existing, newly discovered, and introduced plants and their seedbanks throughout the species' range to ensure the long-term survival of the taxon. Our habitat and threat-based recovery objective is to conserve, restore, and manage the quantity and quality of Kearney's blue star habitat and pollinator habitat. This may be accomplished by minimizing significant threats to the species, such as habitat

degradation, the spread of nonnative plant species, an altered fire regime, and other stressors such as climate change-induced drought and border activities.

The revised recovery plan establishes both population-based and habitat-based downlisting and delisting criteria. These criteria focus on maintaining a viable level of Kearney's blue star individuals, and conserving habitat of sufficient quantity and quality for the species and its pollinators. To achieve these recovery criteria, various actions are needed, such as monitoring and augmentation of existing sub-sites; surveying for and establishing new sub-sites; monitoring and minimizing threats; and conducting research, education, and outreach. When the recovery criteria established in this plan are met, we will review the species' status and consider downlisting and, ultimately, removal from the list of endangered and threatened plants.

Request for Public Comments

Section 4(f) of the ESA requires us to provide public notice and an opportunity for public review and comment during recovery plan development. It is also our policy to request peer review of recovery plans (July 1, 1994; 59 FR 34270). In an appendix to the approved recovery plan, we will summarize and respond to the issues raised by the public and peer reviewers. Substantive comments may or may not result in changes to the recovery plan; comments regarding recovery plan implementation will be forwarded as appropriate to Federal or other entities so that they can be taken into account during the course of implementing recovery actions. Responses to individual commenters will not be provided, but we will provide a summary of how we addressed substantive comments in an appendix to the approved recovery plan.

We invite written comments on the draft recovery plan. In particular, we are interested in additional information regarding the current threats to the species, ongoing beneficial management efforts, and the costs associated with implementing the recommended recovery actions.

Public Availability of Comments

All comments received, including names and addresses, will become part of the administrative record and will be available to the public. Before including your address, phone number, email address, or other personal identifying information in your comment, you should be aware that your entire comment—including your personal identifying information—will be

publicly available. 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.

Authority

We developed our draft recovery plan and publish this notice under the authority of section 4(f) of the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended (16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.*).

Jeffrey Fleming,

Acting Regional Director, Southwest Region.

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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Fish and Wildlife Service

[FWS-R8-ES-2020-N058;
FXES1114080000-190-FF08EVEN00]

Draft Environmental Assessment and Draft General Conservation Plan for Oil and Gas Activities in Santa Barbara County, California; Extension of Public Comment Period

AGENCY: Fish and Wildlife Service, Interior.

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

SUMMARY: The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) is extending the public comment period for the draft environmental assessment (DEA) and general conservation plan (GCP) for oil and gas activities in Santa Barbara County.

DATES: The comment period for the DEA and GCP, published on March 6, 2020, at 85 FR 13181, which expires on April 6, 2020, is extended. Please submit your comments by 11:59 p.m. PST on May 6, 2020.

ADDRESSES:

Document availability: To view the DEA and GCP, go to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Ventura Field Office website at <http://www.fws.gov/ventura>.

Submitting comments: You may submit comments by one of the following methods. If you have already submitted a comment, you need not resubmit it.

- *U.S. mail:* Stephen P. Henry, Field Supervisor, Ventura Fish and Wildlife Office, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 2493 Portola Road, Suite B, Ventura, CA 93003.

- *Email:* sbc-oilandgasgcp@fws.gov.

We request that you submit comments by only the methods described above.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Rachel Henry, by phone at 805-677-3312 or via the Federal Relay Service at 1-800-877-8339 for TTY assistance.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The GCP was developed by the Service in accordance with section 10(a)(2)(A) of the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended (ESA; 16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.*). The GCP meets the issuance criteria as required by section 10(a)(2)(B) of the ESA for issuance of a section 10(a)(1)(B) incidental take permit (ITP). For more information, see the March 6, 2020 (85 FR 13181), notice.

We are extending the public comment period on the DEA and GCP documents (see **DATES** and **ADDRESSES**).

Authority

We issue this notice pursuant to section 10(c) of the ESA (16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.*) and its implementing regulations (50 CFR 17.22 and 17.32), and the National Environmental Policy Act (42 U.S.C. 4321 *et seq.*) and its implementing regulations (40 CFR 1506.6 and 43 CFR 46.305).

Stephen Henry,

Field Supervisor, Ventura Fish and Wildlife Office, Ventura, California.

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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Fish and Wildlife Service

[FWS-R5-ES-2020-N042; FXES11130500000-201-FF05E00000]

Endangered and Threatened Species; Receipt of Recovery Permit Applications

AGENCY: Fish and Wildlife Service, Interior.

ACTION: Notice of receipt of permit applications; request for comments.

SUMMARY: We, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, have received applications for permits to conduct activities intended to enhance the propagation or survival of endangered or threatened species under the Endangered Species Act. We invite the public and local, State, Tribal, and Federal agencies to comment on these applications. Before issuing any of the requested permits, we will take into consideration any information that we receive during the public comment period.

DATES: We must receive your written comments on or before April 27, 2020.

ADDRESSES: Use one of the following methods to request documents or submit comments. Requests and comments should specify the applicant name(s) and application number(s) (*e.g.*, TE123456):

- *Email:* permitsR5ES@fws.gov.
- *U.S. Mail:* Abby Gelb, Ecological Services, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 300 Westgate Center Dr. Hadley, MA 01035.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Abby Gelb, 413-253-8212 (phone), or permitsR5ES@fws.gov (email). Individuals who are hearing or speech

impaired may call the Federal Relay Service at 1-800-877-8339 for TTY assistance.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: We, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, invite the public to comment on applications for permits under section 10(a)(1)(A) of the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended (ESA; 16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.*). The requested permits would allow the applicants to conduct activities intended to promote recovery of species that are listed as endangered or threatened under the ESA.

Background

With some exceptions, the ESA prohibits activities that constitute take of listed species unless a Federal permit is issued that allows such activity. The ESA’s definition of “take” includes such activities as pursuing, harassing, trapping, capturing, or collecting in addition to hunting, shooting, harming, wounding, or killing.

A recovery permit issued by us under section 10(a)(1)(A) of the ESA authorizes the permittee to conduct activities with endangered or threatened species for scientific purposes that promote recovery or for enhancement of propagation or survival of the species. Our regulations implementing section 10(a)(1)(A) for these permits are found at 50 CFR 17.22 for endangered wildlife species, 50 CFR 17.32 for threatened wildlife species, 50 CFR 17.62 for endangered plant species, and 50 CFR 17.72 for threatened plant species.

Permit Applications Available for Review and Comment

We invite local, State, and Federal agencies; Tribes; and the public to comment on the following applications.

Application No.	Applicant	Species	Location	Activity	Type of take	Permit action
TE69330D	Allied Whale, College of the Atlantic, Bar Harbor, ME.	Kemp’s ridley sea turtle (<i>Lepidochelys kempii</i>), Leatherback sea turtle (<i>Dermodochelys coriacea</i>), Loggerhead sea turtle (<i>Caretta caretta</i>), Green sea turtle (<i>Chelonia mydas</i>), Hawksbill sea turtle (<i>Eretmodochelys imbricata</i>).	Maine	Stranding response, Necropsy, Transport.	Salvage, Capture, Collect.	New.
TE69332D	Maine Department of Marine Resources, Augusta, ME.	Atlantic salmon (<i>Salmo salar</i>).	Maine	Capture, Marine rearing, Saltwater readiness testing, Hold more than 45 days, Transport, Release, Monitor.	Trap, Capture, Collect, Wound, Kill, Salvage.	New.
TE69329D	Marine Mammals of Maine, Bath, ME.	Kemp’s ridley sea turtle (<i>Lepidochelys kempii</i>), Leatherback sea turtle (<i>Dermodochelys coriacea</i>), Loggerhead sea turtle (<i>Caretta caretta</i>), Green sea turtle (<i>Chelonia mydas</i>).	Maine	Stranding response, Necropsy, Transport.	Salvage, Capture, Collect.	New.