

Federal Communications Commission.

**John A. Karousos,**

Chief, Allocations Branch, Policy and Rules  
Division, Mass Media Bureau.

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## DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

### Fish and Wildlife Service

#### 50 CFR Part 17

RIN 1018-AF43

#### Endangered and Threatened Wildlife and Plants; Reopening of the Comment Period on the Proposed Delisting of the Douglas County Population of the Columbian White- Tailed Deer

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

**ACTION:** Proposed rule; notice of  
reopening of comment period.

**SUMMARY:** We, the U.S. Fish and  
Wildlife Service (Service), pursuant to  
the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as  
amended (Act), provide notice of the  
reopening of the comment period for the  
proposed delisting of the Douglas  
County, Oregon population of the  
Columbian white-tailed deer  
(*Odocoileus virginianus leucurus*). The  
comment period has been reopened in  
order to conduct a peer review of the  
proposed rule.

**DATES:** Comments from all interested  
parties must be received by November  
18, 1999.

**ADDRESSES:** Written comments,  
materials, data, and reports concerning  
this proposal should be sent to the  
Supervisor, U.S. Fish and Wildlife  
Service, Southwest Oregon Field Office,  
2900 NW Stewart Parkway, Roseburg,  
Oregon 97470. Comments and materials  
received will be available for public  
inspection, by appointment, during  
normal business hours, at the above  
address.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:**  
David Peterson, at the address listed  
above (telephone 541/957-3474;  
facsimile 541/957-3475).

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:**

#### Background

The Columbian white-tailed deer  
(*Odocoileus virginianus leucurus*)  
resembles other white-tailed deer  
subspecies, ranging in size from 39 to 45  
kilograms (kg) (85 to 100 pounds (lbs))  
for females and 52 to 68 kg (115 to 150  
lbs) for males. Generally a red-brown  
color in summer, and gray in winter, the

species has white rings around the eyes  
and a white ring just behind the nose.  
Its tail is long and triangular in shape,  
and is brown on the dorsal (upper)  
surface, fringed in white, and the  
ventral (under) portion is white (Oregon  
Department of Fish and Wildlife  
(ODFW) 1995). The species was  
formerly distributed throughout the  
bottomlands and prairie woodlands of  
the lower Columbia, Willamette, and  
Umpqua River basins in Oregon and  
southern Washington (Bailey 1936). It is  
the westernmost representative of the 38  
subspecies of white-tailed deer. Early  
accounts suggested this deer was locally  
common, particularly in riparian areas  
along the major rivers (Gavin 1978). The  
decline in deer numbers was rapid with  
the arrival and settlement of pioneers in  
the fertile river valleys. Conversion of  
brushy riparian land to agriculture,  
urbanization, uncontrolled sport and  
commercial hunting, and perhaps other  
factors apparently caused the  
extirpation of this deer over most of its  
range by the early 1900s (Gavin 1984).  
Only a small herd of 200 to 400 animals  
in the lower Columbia River area of  
Clatsop and Columbia counties, Oregon,  
and Cowlitz and Wahkiakum counties,  
Washington, and a disjunct population  
of unknown size in Douglas County,  
Oregon, survived. These two remnant  
populations are geographically  
separated by about 320 kilometers (km)  
(200 miles (mi)) of unsuitable or  
discontinuous habitat.

Population declines led to  
classification of this subspecies as  
endangered in 1967 under the  
Endangered Species Protection Act of  
1966 (32 FR 4001). The subspecies was  
automatically included in the lists of  
threatened and endangered species  
when the Endangered Species Act was  
authorized in 1973 (16 U.S.C. 1531 *et  
seq.*). Prior to 1977, only the Columbia  
River population was listed as  
endangered since the Douglas County  
population was considered a black-  
tailed deer (*Odocoileus hemionus  
columbiana*) or a hybrid between the  
black-tailed deer and the Columbian  
white-tailed deer by the State of Oregon.  
In 1978, the State of Oregon recognized  
the white-tailed deer population in  
Douglas County as the Columbian  
white-tailed deer and prohibited  
hunting of white-tailed deer in that  
county (ODFW 1995). The Columbian  
White-tailed Deer Recovery Plan  
(Recovery Plan) was approved by us in  
1976, and a revised version was  
approved in 1983 (Service 1983).  
Because of the distance between the  
Douglas County and Columbia River  
populations, and differences in habitats

and threats, the Recovery Plan addresses  
the recovery of these two populations  
separately.

Crews (1939) estimated the  
population in the 1930s in Douglas  
County at 200 to 300 individuals within  
a range of about 78 square kilometers (sq  
km) (30 square miles (sq mi)). In 1970,  
ODFW estimated that 450 to 500 deer  
were present. By 1983, the number had  
increased to about 2,500 (Smith 1985).  
The population has continued to grow,  
and are presently are estimated to be  
between 5,900 to 7,900 deer (ODFW  
1999).

Along with this increase in numbers,  
the range also has expanded. The deer  
have expanded to the north and west in  
the last 10 years, and now occupy an  
area of approximately 800 sq km (308 sq  
mi) (ODFW 1995).

Most habitat for the Douglas County  
population is on private lands.  
Approximately 3,880 hectares (ha)  
(9,586 acres (ac)) of suitable habitat are  
presently considered secure on Federal,  
County and private lands. For the  
purpose of delisting, habitat is  
considered secure if it is protected by  
legally binding measures or law from  
adverse human activities for the  
foreseeable future.

The current total population size is  
estimated as approximately six times  
the population size required for  
downlisting, which greatly reduces the  
risk to the population. It is also  
anticipated that as habitat management  
and restoration activities are  
implemented by the Bureau of Land  
Management, which contains the  
majority of secure lands, the carrying  
capacity and numbers of deer on these  
lands will increase accordingly. The  
Douglas County population has met the  
objectives in the Recovery Plan, and  
greatly exceeded the habitat objectives.

We published a proposed rule to  
delist the Douglas County population of  
the Columbian white-tailed deer on May  
11, 1999 (64 FR 25263). The original  
comment period closed on June 25,  
1999. We will conduct a peer review of  
this proposal and solicit the opinions of  
three appropriate and independent  
specialists regarding the data,  
assumptions, and supportive  
information presented for the  
Columbian white-tailed deer, per our  
Interagency Cooperative Policy for Peer  
Review in Endangered Species Act  
Activities (59 FR 34270).

#### References Cited

Bailey, V. 1936. The mammals and life zones  
of Oregon. North American Fauna. U.S.  
Department of Agriculture, Washington DC  
55: 89-91.

- Crews, A.K. 1939. A study of the Oregon white-tailed deer, *Odocoileus virginianus leucurus* (Douglas). M.S. thesis. Oregon State College. Corvallis. 46 pp.
- Gavin, T.A. 1984. Pacific Northwest. *in*: White-tailed deer, ecology and management. L.K. Halls, editor. A Wildlife Management Institute publication. Pages 491-492.
- Gavin, T.A. 1978. Status of the Columbian white-tailed deer: some quantitative uses of biogeographic data. Pages 185-202 *in*: Threatened Deer. IUCN. Morges, Switzerland. 434 pp.
- Oregon Department of Fish Wildlife. 1999. Deer census and population trend data. Unpublished ODFW report, Southwest Regional Office. 4 pages.
- Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife. 1995. Columbian white-tailed deer biological status assessment. Report to Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission. 83 pp.
- Smith, W.P. 1985. Current geographic distribution and abundance on the Columbian white-tailed deer, *Odocoileus virginianus leucurus* (Douglas). Northwest Science 59:243-251.
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. 1983. Revised Columbian white-tailed deer recovery plan. Portland, Oregon. 75 pp.

Author: The primary author of this notice is Barbara Behan of the Regional Office, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 911 N.E. 11th Avenue, Portland, Oregon 97232-4181 (telephone 503/231-6131).

#### Authority

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

Dated: October 26, 1999.

#### Thomas Dwyer,

Regional Director, Fish and Wildlife Service.  
[FR Doc. 99-28696 Filed 11-2-99; 8:45 am]

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## DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

### National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

#### 50 CFR Part 679

[I.D. 102699G]

### Groundfish Fisheries of the Gulf of Alaska and the Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands Area

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

**ACTION:** Notification of draft alternatives; extension of scoping and comment period.

**SUMMARY:** NMFS is publishing draft alternatives to be analyzed in a programmatic supplemental

environmental impact statement (SEIS) on Federal groundfish fishery management in the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) off Alaska. This document also provides an extension of the scoping period from November 15 until December 15, 1999.

**DATES:** Written comments must be received on or before December 15, 1999.

**ADDRESSES:** Written comments should be sent to Lori Gravel, Sustainable Fisheries Division, National Marine Fisheries Service, P.O. Box 21668, Juneau, AK 99802. Comments may also be hand delivered to Room 457-1 Federal Office Building, 907 West 9 Street, Juneau, AK.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Steven Davis, NMFS, (907) 271-3523 or steven.k.davis@noaa.gov.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** NMFS published in the **Federal Register**, a notice of intent to prepare an SEIS on Federal groundfish fishery management in the EEZ off Alaska and announced scoping meetings (64 FR 53305, October 1, 1999). The reason for undertaking the analysis, and the issues to be analyzed, are detailed in the notice of intent and are not repeated here. In the notice, NMFS indicated that, prior to the scoping meetings, NMFS will publish in the **Federal Register** draft alternatives to be developed further during the scoping process.

NMFS manages the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands (BSAI) and Gulf of Alaska (GOA) groundfish fisheries to achieve the goals and objectives of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (Magnuson-Stevens Act) and the Fishery Management Plans (FMPs) for the Groundfish Fisheries in the BSAI Area, and the Groundfish of the GOA. The goals and objectives reflect the complicated array of often competing concerns that affect the Alaska groundfish fisheries. In some instances, contradictory objectives are articulated within a single goal. For example, paraphrasing from the Magnuson-Stevens Act and the FMPs, we find they generally contain the following goals and objectives: Assure continuing availability of food supply and recreational opportunities; minimize irreversible adverse effects on fishery resources and the marine environment, including essential fish habitat; maximize economic benefits to the Nation and to the states; provide for sustained participation of fishing communities; minimize waste, reduce bycatch and the mortality of bycatch, encourage development of underused fisheries; control effort; promote

equitable allocations; keep management options open for the future; prevent overfishing and rebuild overfished stocks; manage stocks as a unit; promote protection of the safety of human life at sea; promote regulatory and fishing efficiency; use the best available data; account for all fishery related removals. In deciding on particular new management measures, NMFS and the North Pacific Fishery Management Council review reasonable alternatives for achieving one or more of those goals and objectives, then base decisions according to the views of competing interests and concerns.

With this programmatic environmental impact analysis, NMFS will evaluate how successfully the current management regime achieves those goals and objectives. The SEIS will support these determinations by presenting an analysis of the environmental impacts of the current regime and compare them to configurations of alternatives management measures that would also achieve those goals and objectives.

#### Alternatives

NMFS has chosen to analyze broad thematic alternatives that will provide, in a programmatic sense, a conceptual framework for understanding how effectively alternative harvest management regimes achieve the articulated goals and objectives and what their environmental impacts would be. The SEIS will look at the themes: (1) Who harvests groundfish; (2) what groundfish is harvested; (3) when and where is groundfish harvested; and (4) how groundfish is harvested. Sub-alternatives will be developed for each theme. The alternatives and sub-alternatives NMFS is currently considering include the following:

#### *Allocative Schemes (Who harvests groundfish?)*

Sub-alternative 1 - Status quo: Allocation of groundfish harvest is currently based on the species or species group and is made to individuals, cooperatives, and Olympic-style fisheries (i.e., non-Community Development Quota (CDQ), non-Individual Fishing Quota (IFQ) fisheries) by sector.

Sub-alternative 2 - IFQ: Expand or reduce allocations to individuals by species or species group.

Sub-alternative 3 - Cooperatives: Expand or reduce allocations to cooperatives by species or species group.

Sub-alternative 4 - Open access: Reduce or remove limited access systems.