

Commission's rules. Ex parte presentations are permissible if disclosed in accordance with Commission rules, except during the Sunshine Agenda period when presentations, ex parte or otherwise, are generally prohibited. Persons making oral ex parte presentations are reminded that a memorandum summarizing a presentation must contain a summary of the substance of the presentation and not merely a listing of the subjects discussed. More than a one- or two-sentence description of the views and arguments presented is generally required. Additional rules pertaining to oral and written presentations are set forth in Section 1.1206(b).

D. Filing Requirements

28. *Comments and Replies.* Pursuant to Sections 1.415 and 1.419 of the Commission's rules, interested parties may file comments on or before June 27, 2008, and reply comments on or before July 14, 2008 using: (1) The Commission's Electronic Comment Filing System ("ECFS"), (2) the Federal Government's eRulemaking Portal, or (3) by filing paper copies.

- *Electronic Filers:* Comments may be filed electronically using the Internet by accessing the ECFS: <http://www.fcc.gov/cgb/ecfs/> or the Federal eRulemaking Portal: <http://www.regulations.gov>. Filers should follow the instructions provided on the Web site for submitting comments.

- For ECFS filers, if multiple docket or rulemaking numbers appear in the caption of this proceeding, filers must transmit one electronic copy of the comments for each docket or rulemaking number referenced in the caption. In completing the transmittal screen, filers should include their full name, U.S. Postal Service mailing address, and the applicable docket or rulemaking number. Parties may also submit an electronic comment by Internet e-mail. To get filing instructions, filers should send an e-mail to ecfs@fcc.gov, and include the following words in the body of the message, "get form." A sample form and directions will be sent in response.

- *Paper Filers:* Parties who choose to file by paper must file an original and four copies of each filing. If more than one docket or rulemaking number appears in the caption of this proceeding, filers must submit two additional copies for each additional docket or rulemaking number.

Filings can be sent by hand or messenger delivery, by commercial overnight courier, or by first-class or overnight U.S. Postal Service mail (although we continue to experience

delays in receiving U.S. Postal Service mail). All filings must be addressed to the Commission's Secretary, Office of the Secretary, Federal Communications Commission.

- The Commission's contractor will receive hand-delivered or messenger-delivered paper filings for the Commission's Secretary at 236 Massachusetts Avenue, NE., Suite 110, Washington, DC 20002. The filing hours at this location are 8 a.m. to 7 p.m. All hand deliveries must be held together with rubber bands or fasteners. Any envelopes must be disposed of before entering the building.

- Commercial overnight mail (other than U.S. Postal Service Express Mail and Priority Mail) must be sent to 9300 East Hampton Drive, Capitol Heights, MD 20743.

- U.S. Postal Service first-class, Express, and Priority mail must be addressed to 445 12th Street, SW., Washington, DC 20554.

29. *Availability of Documents.* Comments, reply comments, and *ex parte* submissions will be available for public inspection during regular business hours in the FCC Reference Center, Federal Communications Commission, 445 12th Street, SW., CY-A257, Washington, DC 20554. These documents will also be available via ECFS. Documents will be available electronically in ASCII, Word 97, and/or Adobe Acrobat.

30. *Accessibility Information.* To request information in accessible formats (computer diskettes, large print, audio recording, and Braille), send an e-mail to fcc504@fcc.gov or call the FCC's Consumer and Governmental Affairs Bureau at (202) 418-0530 (voice), (202) 418-0432 (TTY). This document can also be downloaded in Word and Portable Document Format (PDF) at: <http://www.fcc.gov>.

E. Additional Information

31. For more information on this Order on Reconsideration and Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking, please contact Lyle Elder, Lyle.Elder@fcc.gov, or Eloise Gore, Eloise.Gore@fcc.gov, of the Media Bureau, Policy Division, (202) 418-2120.

III. Ordering Clauses

32. *It is further ordered* that the Commission's Consumer and Governmental Affairs Bureau, Reference Information Center, shall send a copy of this Order on Reconsideration and Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking, including the Supplemental Final and Initial Regulatory Flexibility Analyses, to the Chief Counsel for Advocacy of the Small Business Administration.

Federal Communications Commission.

Marlene H. Dortch,
Secretary.

[FR Doc. E8-11889 Filed 5-27-08; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 6712-01-P

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Fish and Wildlife Service

50 CFR Part 17

[FWS-R2-ES-2008-0065; 1111 FY07 MO-B2]

Endangered and Threatened Wildlife and Plants; Initiation of Status Review for the Northern Mexican Gartersnake (*Thamnophis eques megalops*)

AGENCY: Fish and Wildlife Service, Interior.

ACTION: Notice; initiation of status review and solicitation of new information.

SUMMARY: We, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service), announce the initiation of a status review for the northern Mexican gartersnake (*Thamnophis eques megalops*). Through this action, we encourage all interested parties to provide us information regarding the status of, and any potential threat to, the northern Mexican gartersnake.

DATES: To allow us adequate time to conduct this review, we request that information be submitted on or before July 14, 2008.

ADDRESSES: You may submit information by one of the following methods:

- Federal eRulemaking Portal: <http://www.regulations.gov>. Follow the instructions for submitting comments.

- U.S. mail or hand-delivery: Public Comments Processing, Attn: FWS-R2-ES-2008-0065; Division of Policy and Directives Management; U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service; 4401 N. Fairfax Drive, Suite 222; Arlington, VA 22203.

We will not accept e-mail or faxes. We will post all information on <http://www.regulations.gov>. This generally means that we will post any personal information you provide us (see the Information Solicited section below for more information).

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Steve Spangle, Field Supervisor, Arizona Ecological Services Office, 2321 West Royal Palm Road, Suite 103, Phoenix, AZ 85021-4951; telephone 602-242-0210; facsimile 602-242-2513. If you use a telecommunications device for the deaf (TDD), call the Federal Information Relay Service (FIRS) at 800-877-8339.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:**Information Solicited**

To ensure that the status review is complete and based on the best available scientific and commercial information, we are soliciting information concerning the status of the northern Mexican gartersnake (*Thamnophis eques megalops*). We request any additional information from the public, other concerned governmental agencies, Native American Tribes, the scientific community, industry, or any other interested parties on the status of the northern Mexican gartersnake throughout its range, including:

(1) Information from the United States and Mexico regarding the subspecies' historical and current population status, distribution, and trends; taxonomy; biology and ecology; and habitat selection;

(2) Information on the effects of potential threat factors in the United States and Mexico that are the basis for a listing determination under section 4(a) of the Act, which are:

(a) The present or threatened destruction, modification, or curtailment of the subspecies' habitat or range;

(b) Overutilization for commercial, recreational, scientific, or educational purposes;

(c) Disease or predation;

(d) The inadequacy of existing regulatory mechanisms; or

(e) Other natural or manmade factors affecting its continued existence.

Please note that submissions merely stating support or opposition to the action under consideration without providing supporting information, although noted, will not be considered in making a determination, because section 4(b)(1)(A) of the Act (16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.*) directs that determinations as to whether any species is a threatened or endangered species must be made "solely on the basis of the best scientific and commercial data available." At the conclusion of the status review, we will determine whether listing is warranted, not warranted, or warranted but precluded.

You may submit your information concerning this status review by one of the methods listed in the **ADDRESSES** section. We will not consider submissions sent by e-mail or fax or to an address not listed in the **ADDRESSES** section.

If you submit information via <http://www.regulations.gov>, your entire submission—including any personal identifying information—will be posted on the Web site. If your submission is

made via a hardcopy that includes personal identifying information, you may request at the top of your document that we withhold this personal identifying information from public review. However, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so. We will post all hardcopy submissions on <http://www.regulations.gov>.

Information and materials we receive, as well as supporting documentation we used in preparing this proposed rule, will be available for public inspection on <http://www.regulations.gov>, or by appointment, during normal business hours, at the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Arizona Ecological Services Office (see **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT**).

Background

Section 4(b)(3)(A) of the Endangered Species Act (Act) of 1973, as amended (16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.*), requires that we make a finding on whether a petition to list, delist, or reclassify a species presents substantial scientific or commercial information indicating that the petitioned action may be warranted. We are to base this finding on information provided in the petition and supporting information submitted with the petition. To the maximum extent practicable, we are to make this finding within 90 days of our receipt of the petition and publish our notice of the finding promptly in the **Federal Register**. Section 4(b)(3)(B) also requires that, for any petition to revise the Lists of Threatened and Endangered Wildlife and Plants that contains substantial scientific or commercial information that the action may be warranted, we make a finding within 12 months of the date of the receipt of the petition on whether the petitioned action is: (a) Not warranted, (b) warranted, or (c) warranted but precluded by other pending proposals. Such 12-month findings are to be published promptly in the **Federal Register**.

On December 19, 2003, we received a petition from the Center for Biological Diversity requesting that we list the northern Mexican gartersnake as threatened or endangered, and that we designate critical habitat concurrently with the listing. On May 17, 2005, the petitioners filed a complaint for declaratory and injunctive relief, challenging our failure to issue a 90-day finding in response to the petition as required by 16 U.S.C. 1533(b)(3)(A) and (B). In a stipulated settlement agreement, we agreed to submit a 90-day finding to the **Federal Register** by December 16, 2005, and, if the petition presented substantial scientific information indicating that listing the

northern Mexican gartersnake may be warranted, submit a 12-month finding to the **Federal Register** by September 15, 2006 (*Center for Biological Diversity v. Norton*, CV-05-341-TUC-CKJ (D. Az)). On January 4, 2006, we published our 90-day finding that the petition presented substantial scientific information indicating that listing the northern Mexican gartersnake may be warranted and initiated a 12-month status review (71 FR 315).

On September 26, 2006, we published our 12-month finding that listing of the northern Mexican garter snake was not warranted because we determined that not enough information on the subspecies' status and threats in Mexico was known at that time (71 FR 56227).

Since the time of the 12-month finding, a formal opinion has been issued by the Solicitor of the Department of the Interior, "The Meaning of In Danger of Extinction Throughout All or a Significant Portion of Its Range" (U.S. DOI 2007), which provides further guidance on how to conduct a detailed analysis of whether a species is in danger of extinction throughout a significant portion of its range.

In December 2007, the Service withdrew the September 26, 2007, 12-month finding. This notice initiates a new status review for the northern Mexican gartersnake that is consistent with current policies, including any subsequent analysis relevant to the "significant portion of its range." We will incorporate any new information received as requested above.

At this time, we are soliciting new information on the status of and potential threats to the northern Mexican gartersnake. We will base our new determination as to whether listing is warranted on a review of the best scientific and commercial information available, including all such information received as a result of this notice. For more information on the biology, habitat, and range of the northern Mexican gartersnake, please refer to our previous 90-day finding published in the **Federal Register** on January 4, 2006 (71 FR 315), and our previous 12-month finding published in the **Federal Register** on September 26, 2006 (71 FR 56227).

Author

The primary author of this notice is the staff of the Arizona Ecological Services Office.

Authority

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

Dated: May 9, 2008.

Kenneth Stansell,

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

[FR Doc. E8-11756 Filed 5-27-08; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

50 CFR Part 679

RIN 0648-AR72

Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone Off Alaska; Improved Retention/Improved Utilization

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

ACTION: Notice of availability of a proposed amendment to a fishery management plan; request for comments.

SUMMARY: The North Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council) has submitted Amendment 72 to the Fishery Management Plan for Groundfish of the Gulf of Alaska (FMP) to NMFS for review. If approved, Amendment 72 would revise the FMP to state that the Council will annually review information on the discard of shallow-water flatfish in Gulf of Alaska (GOA) groundfish fisheries. After review of this annual information, the Council may recommend revisions to retention and utilization requirements if the discard rate for shallow-water flatfish falls above or below a specified threshold. This action is necessary to support the Council's initiatives to monitor and reduce bycatch in the GOA groundfish fisheries. The intended effect of this action is to conserve and manage the groundfish resource in the GOA in accordance with the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act.

DATES: Comments on Amendment 72 must be received on or before July 28, 2008.

ADDRESSES: Send comments to Sue Salvesson, Assistant Regional Administrator, Sustainable Fisheries Division, Alaska Region, NMFS, Attn: Ellen Sebastian. You may submit comments, identified by "RIN 0648-AR72", by any one of the following methods:

- Electronic Submissions: Submit all electronic public comments via the

Federal eRulemaking Portal website at <http://www.regulations.gov>.

- Mail: P. O. Box 21668, Juneau, AK 99802.

- Fax: (907) 586-7557.

- Hand delivery to the Federal Building: 709 West 9th Street, Room 420A, Juneau, AK.

Instructions: All comments received are a part of the public record and will generally be posted to <http://www.regulations.gov> without change. All personal identifying information (e.g., name, address) voluntarily submitted by the commenter may be publicly accessible. Do not submit confidential business information or otherwise sensitive or protected information.

NMFS will accept anonymous comments. Attachments to electronic comments will be accepted in Microsoft Word, Excel, WordPerfect, or Adobe portable document file (pdf) formats only.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Jeff Hartman, 907-586-7442.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (Magnuson-Stevens Act) requires that each regional fishery management council submit any fishery management plan or fishery management plan amendment that it prepares to NMFS for review and approval, disapproval, or partial approval by the Secretary of Commerce. The Council has submitted Amendment 72 to NMFS for review. If approved, Amendment 72 would revise the FMP to state that the Council will annually review the discards of shallow-water flatfish in GOA groundfish fisheries. The Magnuson-Stevens Act also requires that NMFS, upon receiving an FMP amendment, publish a notice in the **Federal Register** to notify the public that the FMP amendment is available for review and comment. This notice of availability for Amendment 72 satisfies this requirement.

The Secretary of Commerce approved Amendment 49 to the FMP in 1997 (62 FR 65379) to improve the retention and utilization (IR/IU) of shallow-water flatfish. The Council recommended IR/IU measures for this species group after determining that the percentage of shallow-water flatfish catch that was discarded was greater than the percentage of most other GOA groundfish species catch that was discarded. However, implementation of IR/IU measures for shallow-water flatfish in the GOA was delayed by Amendment 49 until January 1, 2003, to provide vessels additional time to make

vessel or plant modifications to meet IR/IU requirements.

Groundfish species included in the GOA shallow-water flatfish group primarily include flathead sole, rock sole, yellowfin sole, butter sole, starry flounder, English sole, sand sole, and Alaska plaice. Regulations at 50 CFR 679.27(c)(2) establish the IR/IU requirements for shallow-water flatfish implemented under Amendment 49. When shallow-water flatfish are open to directed fishing, a catcher vessel must retain all fish of that species brought onboard the vessel, and a catcher/processor must make and retain a primary product from all fish of that species brought onboard the vessel. When shallow-water flatfish are closed to directed fishing, a catcher vessel must retain all shallow-water flatfish up to the maximum retainable amount (MRA), and a catcher/processor must make and retain a primary product from all fish of that species brought onboard the vessel up to the point that the round-weight equivalent of primary products onboard equals the MRA for that species. These shallow-water flatfish IR/IU requirements currently apply to all vessels with Federal fishing permits participating in any GOA groundfish fishery, regardless of the gear type used.

In 2003, after implementation of Amendment 49 provisions for shallow-water flatfish IR/IU, the Council again reviewed discard data on shallow-water flatfish in each GOA target fishery. This review revealed that discards of shallow-water flatfish between 1995 and 2001 were less than 5 percent in all GOA groundfish target fisheries with the exception of the Western GOA flathead sole, Western GOA offshore Pacific cod, and Central GOA shallow-water flatfish fisheries. Because three target fisheries exceeded shallow-water flatfish discards of 5 percent in some years but did not exceed average shallow-water flatfish discards of 20 percent, the Council expressed interest in tracking fisheries that exceeded a 5 percent discard threshold for shallow-water flatfish. Since implementation of shallow-water flatfish IR/IU in 2003, shallow-water flatfish discards have not exceeded 5 percent of the total groundfish catch in any GOA groundfish fishery. The highest shallow-water flatfish discard rates in these years have been in the trawl fisheries for Pacific cod in the Western GOA (2.9 percent in 2003 and 2.1 percent in 2006) and shallow-water flatfish fisheries in the Central GOA (2.4 percent in 2004 and 2.9 percent in 2005).

While many groundfish vessels are able to meet a long-term goal of reducing shallow-water flatfish discards