

Permit number	Applicant	Receipt of application Federal Register notice	Permit issuance date
088299	Gregg K. Hobbs	69 FR 36096; June 28, 2004	July 27, 2004.
088780	Thomas J. Merkley	69 FR 36095; June 28, 2004	July 27, 2004.

Marine Mammals

Permit number	Applicant	Receipt of application Federal Register notice	Permit issuance date
085164	William B. Scott, Sr.	69 FR 21858; April 22, 2004	July 20, 2004.
086824	Leon A. Naccarato	69 FR 27948; May 17, 2004	July 26, 2004.
086954	Robert J. Merkle	69 FR 31834; June 7, 2004	July 21, 2004.
086969	Kelly R. McBride	69 FR 30714; May 28, 2004	July 26, 2004.
087507	Kevin M. Libby	69 FR 31834; June 7, 2004	July 26, 2004.
087541	Calvin A. Speckman	69 FR 33931; June 17, 2004	July 26, 2004.
087563	Richard R. Childress	69 FR 31834; June 7, 2004	July 19, 2004.
087684	Walter O. Kirby	69 FR 31834; June 7, 2004	July 26, 2004.
088193	Roger A. Martin	69 FR 33651; June 16, 2004	July 26, 2004.
088271	Glenn E. Peterson	69 FR 33651; June 16, 2004	July 26, 2004.

Dated: July 30, 2004.

Monica Farris,

Senior Permit Biologist, Branch of Permits,
Division of Management Authority.

[FR Doc. 04-19172 Filed 8-19-04; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4310-55-P

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR**Fish and Wildlife Service****Endangered and Threatened Species Permit Applications**

AGENCY: Fish and Wildlife Service, Interior.

ACTION: Notice of receipt of applications.

SUMMARY: The following applicants have applied for scientific research permits to conduct certain activities with endangered species pursuant to section 10(a)(1)(A) of the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended.

DATES: To ensure consideration, written comments must be received on or before September 20, 2004.

ADDRESSES: Written comments should be submitted to the Chief, Endangered Species Division, Ecological Services, P.O. Box 1306, Room 4102, Albuquerque, New Mexico 87103. Documents and other information submitted with these applications are available for review, subject to the requirements of the Privacy Act and Freedom of Information Act. Documents will be available for public inspection, by appointment only, during normal business hours at the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 500 Gold Ave. SW., Room 4102, Albuquerque, New Mexico. Please refer to the respective permit number for each application when submitting comments. All comments

received, including names and addresses, will become part of the official administrative record and may be made available to the public.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Chief, Endangered Species Division, (505) 248-6920.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:**Permit No. TE-837751**

Applicant: Bureau of Reclamation, Phoenix, Arizona.

Applicant requests an amendment to an existing permit to allow presence/absence surveys for the Yuma clapper rail (*Rallus longirostris yumanensis*) within Arizona.

Permit No. TE-829996

Applicant: Houston Zoo, Houston, Texas.

Applicant requests an amendment to an existing permit to allow educational display and captive propagation of the following species, at appropriate Houston Zoo facilities: Big Bend gambusia (*Gambusia gaigei*), Comanche Springs pupfish (*Cyprinodon elegans*), and Leon Springs pupfish (*Cyprinodon bovines*).

Permit No. TE-813088

Applicant: Bureau of Reclamation, Albuquerque, New Mexico.

Applicant requests an amendment to an existing permit to allow presence/absence surveys and nest monitoring for the interior least tern (*Sterna antillarum*) within New Mexico.

Permit No. TE-022190

Applicant: Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum, Tucson, Arizona.

Applicant requests an amendment to an existing permit to allow educational display and captive propagation of the

Mount Graham red squirrel (*Tamiasciurus hudsonicus grahamensis*) at appropriate Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum facilities.

Permit No. TE-091673

Applicant: Madeline Terry, Denver, Colorado.

Applicant requests a new permit for research and recovery purposes to conduct presence/absence surveys for the southwestern willow flycatcher (*Empidonax traillii extimus*) within Arizona, Colorado, New Mexico, and Utah.

Permit No. TE-091552

Applicant: Zane Homesley, Kyle, Texas.

Application requests a new permit for research and recovery purposes to conduct presence/absence surveys for the following species within Texas: black-capped vireo (*Vireo atricapillus*), golden-cheeked warbler (*Dendroica chrysoparia*), southwestern willow flycatcher (*Empidonax traillii extimus*), and Houston toad (*Bufo houstonensis*).

Permit No. TE-091844

Applicant: Jeff Howard, Braggs, Oklahoma.

Applicant requests a new permit for research and recovery purposes to conduct presence/absence surveys for the American burying beetle (*Nicrophorus americanus*) within Oklahoma.

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

Dated: August 11, 2004.

Stuart Leon,

Acting Assistant Regional Director, Ecological Services, Region 2, Albuquerque, New Mexico.

[FR Doc. 04-19109 Filed 8-19-04; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Fish and Wildlife Service

Notice of Availability of the Draft Comprehensive Conservation Plan and Environmental Assessment for Steigerwald Lake National Wildlife Refuge (NWR), Franz Lake NWR, and Pierce NWR for Review and Comment

AGENCY: Fish and Wildlife Service, Interior.

ACTION: Notice of availability.

SUMMARY: The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) announces that a Draft Comprehensive Conservation Plan and Environmental Assessment (Draft CCP/EA) for Steigerwald Lake National Wildlife Refuge, Franz Lake National Wildlife Refuge, and Pierce National Wildlife Refuge, hereafter collectively called the Gorge Refuges, is available for review and comment. The Gorge Refuges are located on the Washington side of the Columbia River Gorge area. This Draft CCP/EA, prepared pursuant to the National Wildlife Refuge System Administration Act, as amended, and the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA), describes the Service's proposal for management of the Gorge Refuges over the next 15 years.

Also available for review with the Draft CCP/EA are draft compatibility determinations for several Refuge uses and a draft Fire Management Plan.

DATES: Written comments must be received at the address below by September 20, 2004.

ADDRESSES: Comments on the Draft CCP/EA should be addressed to: Project Leader, Ridgefield National Wildlife Refuge Complex, P.O. Box 457, Ridgefield, Washington 98642.

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT: Project Leader, Ridgefield National Wildlife Refuge Complex, P.O. Box 457, Ridgefield, Washington, 98642, phone (360) 887-4106.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Copies of the Draft CCP/EA may be obtained by writing to U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Attn: Glenn Frederick, Pacific Northwest Planning Team, 16507 Roy Rogers Road, Sherwood, Oregon, 97140.

Copies of the Draft CCP/EA may be viewed at this address or at Ridgefield National Wildlife Refuge Complex, 301

North Third Avenue, Ridgefield, Washington.

Printed documents will also be available for review at the following libraries: Washougal Community Library, 1661 C Street, Washougal, WA 98671; Stevenson Community Library, 120 NW., Vancouver Ave., Stevenson, WA 98648; and Fort Vancouver Regional Library, 1007 East Mill Plain Blvd., Vancouver, WA 98663.

Background

The Gorge Refuges are located in Skamania and Clark Counties, Washington, in the Columbia River Gorge downstream of Bonneville Dam. The administrative center for the Gorge Refuges is the Ridgefield National Wildlife Refuge Complex, located in Ridgefield, Washington, approximately 25 miles northwest of Steigerwald Lake Refuge. Planning for the three Gorge Refuges occurred simultaneously for the purposes of this CCP because: The Refuges are located close to one another in the Columbia River floodplain; many of the same issues and management opportunities occur at all three Refuges, and they are part of the same lower Columbia River ecosystem.

The Gorge Refuges are part of the National Wildlife Refuge System administered by the Service. Wildlife conservation is the priority of National Wildlife Refuge System lands. The Gorge Refuges contribute to the conservation of fish, wildlife, plants, and native habitats of the lower Columbia River. Franz Lake Refuge contains the largest, most intact freshwater marsh remaining downstream of the Bonneville Dam. Steigerwald Lake Refuge provides habitat for migratory birds and other wildlife as mitigation for impacts resulting from the construction and generation of Federally funded and operated hydroelectric projects on the Columbia River and its tributaries. All three of the Refuges provide important spawning and rearing habitat for anadromous fish, including several species that are listed under or are candidates for listing under the Endangered Species Act.

Proposed Action

The Proposed Action is to adopt and implement a Comprehensive Conservation Plan that will provide the Refuge Manager with a 15-year management plan for the conservation of fish, wildlife, and plant resources and their related habitats, while providing opportunities for compatible wildlife-dependent recreational uses. While the Gorge Refuges are not currently open to the public, they have the potential to

provide high-quality, compatible public uses in support of Refuge purposes and goals.

Alternatives

The Draft CCP/EA identifies and evaluates three alternatives for managing the Gorge Refuges over the next 15 years. Each alternative describes a combination of habitat and public use management prescriptions designed to achieve the Refuge purposes, goals, and vision. The Service prefers Alternative B because it best achieves Refuge purposes, vision, and goals; contributes to the Refuge System mission; addresses the substantive issues and relevant mandates; and is consistent with principles of sound fish and wildlife management. The alternatives are briefly described below, followed by a description of actions common to all of the alternatives.

Under Alternative A, the no action alternative, the Service would continue to protect, maintain, and, where feasible, restore habitat for priority species, including Canada geese, waterfowl, and Federal and State listed species. However, at current levels of funding and staff, these efforts would be inadequate to fulfill Refuge purposes and achieve Refuge goals. Under this alternative, as in Alternatives B and C, subject to the availability of appropriated funds, within the next 15 years the Gateway Center and interpretive trail at Steigerwald Lake Refuge, approved by the Service in 1999 but currently unfunded, would be constructed and opened to the public. In addition, the Service would implement its earlier decision to prohibit horseback riding, dog-walking, jogging and bicycling on the 0.6-mile section of the Columbia Dike Trail at Steigerwald Lake Refuge. Opportunities for the public to attend special events and staff-led tours of the Refuges would continue. Pierce Refuge would continue to be available to local school groups for environmental education.

Alternative B, the preferred alternative, would focus refuge management on restoring and maintaining biological diversity with particular emphasis on the conservation targets identified in the CCP. Inventory, monitoring, and research would increase. Working with partners, the Service would seek to remove blockages to fish passage within the Gibbons Creek, Indian Mary Creek and Hardy Creek watersheds. The Service would participate in ongoing efforts to clean up Gibbons Creek and to eliminate the threat of contaminated groundwater and stormwater runoff from entering Steigerwald Lake Refuge. Substantially