

Department of the Interior

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**Fish and Wildlife Service to Conduct Status Review of the  
Sacramento Mountains checkerspot butterfly**

The status of the Sacramento Mountains checkerspot butterfly will be reviewed to see if the insect warrants federal protection as a threatened or endangered species, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service announced today. The announcement follows an initial review of a petition seeking to protect the Sacramento Mountains checkerspot butterfly under the Endangered Species Act.

The Service will undertake a more thorough review of the Sacramento Mountains checkerspot butterfly to determine if it should be added to the federal lists of endangered and threatened wildlife and plants.

Today's decision, referred to a 90-day finding by the agency, is based on scientific information about the Sacramento Mountains checkerspot butterfly provided in the petition requesting listing the species under the Act. The petition finding does not mean that the Service has decided it is appropriate to give the Sacramento Mountains checkerspot butterfly federal protection under the

ESA. Rather, this finding is the first step in a process that triggers a more thorough review of all the biological information available. The finding is available on the internet at [www.fws.gov/southwest/es/NewMexico/](http://www.fws.gov/southwest/es/NewMexico/).

To ensure this review is comprehensive, the Service is soliciting information from state and federal natural resource agencies and all interested parties regarding the Sacramento Mountains checkerspot butterfly and its habitat.

Comments and information will be accepted until Feb. 3, 2009, and can be submitted electronically via the Federal eRulemaking Portal at [www.regulations.gov](http://www.regulations.gov), or can be mailed or hand delivered to Public Comments Processing, Attn: FWS-R2-ES-2008-0110; Division of Policy and Directives Management; U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 4401 N. Fairfax Drive, Suite 222; Arlington, VA 22203.

The Service will evaluate all information regarding the status and distribution of the Sacramento Mountains checkerspot butterfly, including the impacts or potential impacts to the species resulting from either human activities or natural causes.

Sacramento Mountains checkerspot butterflies are found only in higher elevations in Otero County.

The petition was filed by the Center for Biological Diversity and Forest Guardians, now WildEarth Guardians. In a settlement, the Service agreed to submit today's finding and to conduct the more thorough analysis by August, 2009.

The mission of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is working with others to conserve, protect and enhance fish, wildlife, plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. We are both a leader and trusted partner in fish and wildlife conservation, known for our scientific excellence, stewardship of lands and natural resources, dedicated professionals and commitment to public service. For more information on our work and the people who make it happen, visit [www.fws.gov](http://www.fws.gov).

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