

NEWS RELEASE

U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE Mountain-Prairie Region 134 Union Boulevard Lakewood, Colorado 80228

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Fish and Wildlife Service to Conduct Status Review of the New Mexico Population of Canada Lynx

The U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service will initiate a status review to determine if including the mountains of north-central New Mexico as part of the current range of the Canada lynx is warranted.

The Canada lynx was listed as a threatened species under the Endangered Species Act (ESA) in March of 2000. Within the contiguous United States, lynx are listed in different regions that are separated from each other by ecological barriers consisting of unsuitable lynx habitat. These regions are the Northeast (Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, New York); the Great Lakes (Minnesota, Wisconsin, Michigan); the Northern Rocky Mountains/Cascades (Washington, Oregon, Idaho, Montana, northwestern Wyoming, Utah); and the Southern Rocky Mountains (Colorado, southeastern Wyoming). New Mexico was not included in this list of states because no lynx occurred there, and no lynx had ever been documented there, even sporadically, and it was therefore not considered part of the current or historical range of the Canada lynx.

Following an initial review of a petition from Forest Guardians seeking to revise the listing for Canada lynx, the Service will undertake a more thorough review to determine whether the Canada lynx population in northern New Mexico, believed to be dispersers from the State of Colorado reintroduction efforts searching for suitable habitat, should be protected under the ESA.

The petition finding does not mean that the Service has decided it is appropriate to give the New Mexico population of Canada lynx federal protection under the ESA. Rather, this finding is the first step in a long process that triggers a more thorough review of all the biological information available.

To ensure this review is comprehensive, the Service is soliciting information from state and federal natural resource agencies and all interested parties regarding the species historical and current status and distribution, its biology and ecology, and threats to the species and its habitat.

Comments and information will be accepted until Feb. 17, 2009 and can be submitted electronically via the Federal eRulemaking Portal at: <http://www.regulations.gov>, or can be mailed or hand delivered to Public Comments Processing, Attn: FWS-R6-ES-2008-0088; 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 Canada lynx, including the impacts or potential impacts to the species resulting from either human activities or natural causes.

For more information regarding the Canada lynx, please visit our web site at <http://www.fws.gov/mountain-prairie/species/mammals/lynx/>

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.

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