

*Questions and Answers  
Regarding the Proposal to  
Withdraw the Southern Rocky Mountain population of the Boreal Toad  
as a Candidate Species*

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**What action is the Service taking?**

The Service is proposing to withdraw the Southern Rocky Mountain population (SRMP) of the boreal toad from the list of candidate species being considered for protection under the Endangered Species Act (ESA).

**What are candidate species?**

Candidate species are plants and animals for which the Service has sufficient information on their biological status and posed threats to propose them as endangered or threatened under the ESA, but for which development of a listing regulation is precluded by other higher priority listing activities.

**Why is the Service withdrawing the SRMP of the boreal toad from the list of candidate species?**

The Service has determined that listing the SRMP of the boreal toad at this time is not warranted because it does not constitute a distinct population segment as defined by specific standards set by the Service's regulations. Although no further action will result from this finding, the Service will continue to seek new information on the taxonomy, biology, and ecology of these toads, as well as potential threats to their continued existence.

**What is a distinct population segment?**

A distinct population segment (DPS) is a subdivision of a vertebrate species that is treated as a species for purposes of listing. To be so recognized, the potential DPS must satisfy specific standards set by the Service's regulations. The standards require it to be discrete from the remainder of the population and significant to the species to which it belongs. The SRMP meets the standard for discreteness because it is geographically separated from other populations of the boreal toad. However, the SRMP does not meet the standard for significance because 1) the SRMP does not persist in an ecological setting unusual or unique for the subspecies (it occurs in a wide variety of habitats across the western United States); 2) the gap resulting from loss of the SRMP would be a relatively small proportion of the overall subspecies range; and 3) the best available scientific information does not permit the Service to conclude that this particular population differs markedly from other populations in genetic characteristics.

**What is the range of the boreal toad and the SRMP?**

The boreal toad subspecies of the western toad is found from coastal Alaska south through British Columbia, western Alberta, Washington, Oregon, and northern California, and east

through Idaho, western Montana, western and south central Wyoming, western and central Nevada, the mountains of Utah and Colorado, and extreme northern New Mexico.

The range of the SRMP of the boreal toad is south central Wyoming throughout the mountainous portions of Colorado and into extreme northern New Mexico.

**What currently is being done to conserve the SRMP?**

In 1994, a Boreal Toad Recovery Team (Team) for the SRMP was formed of State and Federal agency representatives and technical advisors from universities and other interested parties. The Team produced a recovery plan for the boreal toad in Colorado and a Boreal Toad Conservation Plan, which was revised in 2001. Management activities in the SRMP guided by the Team include annual monitoring of breeding populations, research of factors limiting toad survival, captive breeding techniques, experimental reintroductions to vacant historic habitat, coordination with land management agencies and developers to protect the boreal toad and its habitats, and public education.