


January 6, 2012

Memorandum

To: Bryan Arroyo, Assistant Director, Fisheries and Habitat Conservation
From: Craig Martin, Chief, Branch of Aquatic Invasive Species 
Subject: Endangered Species Act, Section 7 Intra-Service Consultation: Injurious
Wildlife Listing of Four Large Constrictor Snakes under the Lacey Act

Description of Proposed Action

The purpose of the action is to list live specimens, gametes, viable eggs, or hybrids of the Indian or Burmese python (*Python molurus*, including Burmese python *Python molurus bivittatus*), Northern African python (*Python sebae*), Southern African python (*Python natalensis*), and yellow anaconda (*Eunectes notaeus*) as injurious species under the Lacey Act.

By this action, the importation into the United States and interstate transportation between States, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, or any territory or possession of the United States of any live animal, gamete, viable egg, or hybrid of these four constrictor snakes is prohibited, except by permit for zoological, education, medical, or scientific purposes (in accordance with permit regulation) or by Federal agencies without a permit solely for their own use. This action was considered to fulfill the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's (Service) obligations to protect our trust resources pursuant to the Lacey Act (18 U.S.C. 42, as amended). None of the four species is native to the United States. Attached is the Final Environmental Assessment that describes the alternatives considered in detail and the preferred alternative (subset of proposed action).

Decision

The Service has completed its determinations under 18 U.S.C. 42 of the Lacey Act and found that four of the evaluated species of constrictor snakes are injurious wildlife, including the Indian (also known as Burmese) python, Northern African python, Southern African python, and yellow anaconda. The boa constrictor, reticulated python, DeShauensee's anaconda, green anaconda, and Beni anaconda remain under consideration for listing as injurious.

The Service has decided to list the four species as injurious wildlife and thereby prohibit importation into the United States and interstate transport between States, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, or any territory or possession of the United States. Prohibiting the importation and interstate transportation of the four large constrictor snakes will protect wildlife and wildlife resources from negative impacts due

to large constrictor snake introductions. All are injurious. Listing the four species as injurious will reduce the risk of establishment of the four large constrictor snakes in the wild. It will minimize the likelihood that the species already present will spread beyond their current locations into other natural areas of the United States and insular territories. These four large constrictor snakes have been imported or could be imported into the United States. Three species (possibly four, but identification of one is unconfirmed) have escaped or been released into natural and developed areas, are likely to survive and become established, are likely to spread if introduced, and are likely to prey on native wildlife species and compete with native species for food. Therefore, it will be difficult to prevent, eradicate, manage, or control the spread of large constrictor snakes, and it will be difficult to rehabilitate or recover ecosystems disturbed by these species.

Furthermore, because of the predatory behavior of the four species, the negative effects to threatened and endangered species could be permanent. This listing action provides the greatest opportunity to prevent these large constrictor snakes from establishing new populations in the United States and its territories.

Effects on Threatened and Endangered Species

Prohibiting the importation and interstate transportation of nonnative large constrictor snakes will help protect native threatened and endangered wildlife populations in the United States and the insular territories from potential predation and competition with resources. The action may also potentially remove a source of exploitation of the Indian python (*Python molurus molurus*), which is federally listed as endangered in its native range, and which may be captured in the wild for the live animal trade.

Effects Determination

The listing action is not likely to adversely affect any federally listed species or to adversely modify critical habitat in the United States and insular territories. There is expected to be no effect to threatened and endangered species or critical habitat from the action of keeping these nonnative species from being imported or spreading to new areas of the United States.

We request your concurrence on this determination. If you have any questions regarding this action or determination, please contact Susan Jewell at 703-358-2416.



Concur (Assistant Director)



Date