



United States Department of the Interior

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
Washington, D.C. 20240



AUG 26 2010

In Reply Refer To:
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Memorandum

To: Regional Directors, Regions 1-8

From: *acting* Assistant Director – Endangered Species *Gloria Bell*

Subject: Adoption of Interim Recovery Planning Guidance and Request for Feedback

This memorandum confirms that the draft Endangered and Threatened Species Recovery Planning Guidance is the Service's interim guidance for recovery planning (Interim Guidance) and to encourage your use of this guidance in the development and revision of recovery plans for endangered and threatened species, with the exception of section 2.2.5 Integration of MMPA and ESA, while the Service and NMFS ESA Programs discuss details of the wording with our respective Marine Mammals Programs. Please note that, while the Interim guidance refers only to the NMFS in its text, it was drafted jointly and represents the guidance and recommendations of both agencies. The Interim guidance is now posted on the Service's Endangered Species Recovery Web page at <http://www.fws.gov/endangered/laws-policies/regulations-and-policies.html>, to facilitate such use. It is posted on the NMFS website as well.

One of the recommendations from the very successful Fish and Wildlife Service and National Marine Fisheries Service Endangered Species Consultation and Recovery workshop in Tucson, Arizona, in January was to finalize the draft Guidance. Another recommendation from the workshop was to revise the draft Guidance to address several needs identified during the workshop that were not covered in the draft guidance. Among the issues that workshop attendees requested further direction on are: how provide more meaningful assistance for those addressing section 7 issues for a species; how to make recovery planning revisions more flexible and dynamic while keeping their strategic focus; and standard considerations for defining recovery criteria for species. Another issue of concern is that, while the draft guidance did receive the benefit of regional review and comment from both agencies, it has never gone out for public review and comment.

Given the recognized need for additions and revisions to the draft Guidance, and the lack of public review and comment, we have determined that the best approach is to adopt the current version of the draft Guidance as interim guidance, for current use, while working with Service staff and NMFS to develop further guidance to address the additional areas of need. Once we have a complete document we will publish a notice in the Federal Register seeking public review and comment prior to adopting a final version of the guidance.



Given that many staff in the field offices have referred to the draft Guidance over the past several years, we are also seeking feedback from your experiences to make sure that we have the most effective and useful guidance for the future. Accordingly, we are requesting that you and your staff provide us with recommendations or suggestions you might have for improving on the current version of the guidance, including addressing the issues from the Recovery/Consultation workshop listed above. Comments may be formal or informal and should be submitted by email to ESARC@FWS.gov no later than September 27, 2010.

Thank you for your continuing assistance in helping us provide better guidance to help you develop the most effective recovery plans for our listed endangered and threatened species.