

# Peer Review of Scientific Information

## Proposed Listing Rule and Proposed Designation of Critical Habitat for Black Pinesnake

**Species:** Black pinesnake (*Pituophis melanoleucus lodingi*)

### About the Document

**Title:** Proposed Listing Rule and Proposed Designation of Critical Habitat for Black Pinesnake

**Summary:** The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) is proposing to list and designate critical habitat for the black pinesnake (*Pituophis melanoleucus lodingi*) as threatened pursuant to the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended (Act). We are proposing nine separate habitat units that encompass approximately 338,100 acres for designation as critical habitat in Forrest, George, Greene, Harrison, Jones, Marion, Perry, Stone, and Wayne counties in Mississippi, and Clarke County, Alabama.

**Type of Review:** Influential

### Timeline of the Peer Review:

**Draft document disseminated:** March 2015

**Peer review initiated:** Spring 2015

**Peer review completed by:** Summer 2015

**Date Document will be finalized:** Fall 2015

**About the Peer Review Process:** The Service solicited written comments from seven independent scientific reviewers. Formal request for peer review were made to experts within the current range of the species and included individuals from academia, The Nature Conservancy, and U.S. Forest Service. These reviewers were selected by the Service for their recognized expertise with longleaf pine habitats and their knowledge of the biology and distribution of the black pinesnake, or other species of pinesnakes. This review will occur during the public comment period for the proposed action. The comment period will close on May 11, 2015. We have provided each peer reviewer with information necessary to complete the review, and request that reviewers use the Southeast Region's guidance to ensure that reviews comply with the 1994 policy statement for listing and critical habitat designation under the Act. Peer reviewers are expected to: review all material provided; identify, review, and provide other relevant data; and, provide written comments on relevance and soundness of data, analysis or

assumptions of data, and whether we have used the best available science in making the proposed determination. Peer review comments will be public documents.

The Service will use the information received from the peer review, as appropriate, to develop the final listing and critical habitat rule for the black pinesnake.

**About Public Participation:** Public comments on both the proposed listing and proposed critical habitat rules were sought with a **Federal Register** announcement on March 11, 2015. This comment period ends on May 11, 2015. We previously requested public comment on the proposed listing rule between October 7, 2014 and December 8, 2014. This peer review plan is made available on this website to allow the public to monitor our compliance with the Office of Management and Budget's "Final Information Quality Bulletin for Peer Review."