

2. Section 17.12(h) is amended by adding the following, in alphabetical order under the families indicated, to

the List of Endangered and Threatened Plants:

§ 17.12 Endangered and threatened plants.
* * * * *
(h) * * *

Species		Historic range	Status	When listed	Critical habitat	Special rules
Scientific name	Common name					
Asteraceae—Aster family:						
<i>Lessingia germanorum</i> (= <i>Lessingia germanorum</i> var. <i>germanorum</i>).	San Francisco lessingia	U.S.A. (CA)	E		NA	NA
Ericaceae—Heath family:						
<i>Arctostaphylos imbricata</i> (= <i>Arctostaphylos imbricata</i> ssp. <i>imbricata</i>).	San Bruno Mountain manzanita	U.S.A. (CA)	T		NA	NA

Dated: September 23, 1994.
Mollie M. Beattie,
Director, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.
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50 CFR Part 17 **218-94**
Endangered and Threatened Wildlife and Plants; Finding on Petition and Initiation of Status Review for Koala

AGENCY: Fish and Wildlife Service, Interior.
ACTION: Notice of petition finding and status review.

SUMMARY: The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service announces the 90-day finding that a petition to add the Australian koala to the List of Endangered and Threatened Wildlife has presented substantial information indicating that the action may be warranted. A status review of this species is initiated.
DATES: The finding announced herein was made on September 26, 1994. Comments and information may be submitted until February 1, 1995.
ADDRESSES: Comments, information, and questions should be submitted to the Chief, Office of Scientific Authority; Mail Stop: room 725, Arlington Square; U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service; Washington, D.C. 20240 (Fax number 703-358-2276). Express and messenger-delivered mail should be addressed to the Office of Scientific Authority; room 750, 4401 North Fairfax Drive;

Arlington, Virginia 22203. The petition finding, supporting data, and comments will be available for public inspection, by appointment, from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m., Monday through Friday, at the Arlington, Virginia address.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Dr. Charles W. Dane, Chief, Office of Scientific Authority, at the above address (phone 703-358-1708).

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Section 4(b)(3) of the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended, requires that within 90 days of receipt of a petition to list, delist, or reclassify a species, or to revise a critical habitat designation, a finding be made on whether the petition has presented substantial information indicating that the requested action may be warranted, and that such finding be published promptly in the Federal Register

If the finding is positive, Section 4(b)(3) also requires commencement of a review of the status of the involved species. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) now announces a 90-day finding on a recently received petition.

The petition was submitted by Australians for Animals (in Australia) and the Fund for Animals (in the United States); about 40 additional organizations in the United States and Australia were named as supporting the petition. It was dated May 3, 1994, and was received by the Service on May 5, 1994. It requests that the koala (*Phascolarctos cinereus*), a bearlike

Australian marsupial, be classified as endangered in New South Wales and Victoria, and as threatened in Queensland.

The koala once occurred over much of the three indicated states, as well as in part of South Australia, and numbered in the millions. The petition presents an extensive compilation of data, including recent direct testimony from authorities on the species, suggesting that the koala has declined greatly in distribution and numbers, and that its status is likely to continue to deteriorate. Reportedly, there are practically none left in South Australia and only a few thousand in New South Wales and Victoria; the Queensland population may be less than 10 percent of what it was in the 1920s.

The species was drastically reduced by excessive killing for its fur up through the 1920s. It subsequently was provided legal protection from such killing, but, according to the petition, remnant populations are relatively small and badly fragmented. Logging, agriculture, and other problems have eliminated at least two-thirds of the original forest and woodland habitat, further declines are occurring, and little of the remaining habitat is well protected. The species is totally dependent for food and shelter on certain types of trees within forests and woodlands. The destruction or degradation of this habitat will reduce the viability of populations, even if the animals are otherwise protected, and

many local populations are said to have disappeared in recent years. Other reported problems include fires, diseases, droughts, harassment by dogs, interference with normal gene flow, and killing along the roads now penetrating habitat. The largest population remaining in Queensland is now said to be immediately threatened by a major highway project that would bisect its habitat.

The Service is aware that the koala is generally protected by federal and provincial laws in Australia, and that there have been intensive government efforts to conserve and reintroduce some

populations. However, the information presented by the petition gives cause for concern about the over-all prospects for the species and its natural ecosystems, and suggests that further review of the situation is advisable. The Service therefore has found that the petition presents substantial information indicating that the requested action may be warranted. Also, pursuant to Section 4(b)(3), the Service hereby commences a review of the status of the involved species. Submission of appropriate data, opinions, and publications regarding this petition is encouraged. In accordance with Section 4(b)(3), within

12 months of receipt of the petition, the Service will make another finding as to whether the requested action is warranted, not warranted, or warranted but precluded by other listing measures.

Authority

The authority for this action is the Endangered Species Act (16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.*).

Dated: September 26, 1994.

Bruce Blanchard,

Acting Director, Fish and Wildlife Service.

[FR Doc. 94-24512 Filed 10-3-94; 8:45 am]

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