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Subject: Interim Guidance on Conducting Site Assessments and Field Surveys for Determining Presence or A Negative Finding of the California Tiger Salamander

Dear Interested Party:

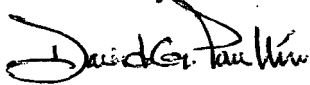
Enclosed is the Interim Guidance on Site Assessment and Field Surveys for Determining Presence or A Negative Finding of the California Tiger Salamander. This interim guidance was developed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's (Service) Sacramento and Ventura Fish and Wildlife Offices in coordination with the California Department of Fish and Game (Department), and included input by field biologists and scientists experienced in surveying for the California tiger salamander (*Ambystoma californiense*). If implemented as described, the Service and Department will accept the results of surveys for determining the presence or a negative finding of California tiger salamanders. Modifications of this interim guidance for specific projects or circumstances may be accepted, but we strongly advise that any modifications be reviewed and approved by the Service and Department prior to implementation.

This interim guidance is subject to change upon receipt of new information. We will host a workshop during the summer of 2004 to solicit comments on this guidance for possible revision at that time. Prior to any attempt to finalize this interim guidance, the Service will provide an opportunity for public review.

This interim guidance recommends that surveys be initiated on October 15 each year. However, in light of the timing of making this guidance available for implementation this season, November 7 is considered an appropriate date for initiating surveys in 2003.

If you have any questions, please contact Dan Buford or Harry McQuillen with the Service in Sacramento at (916) 414-6600, Bridget Fahey with the Service in Ventura at (805) 644-1766, or contact the appropriate Department regional office which can be found at <http://www.dfg.ca.gov/regions/regions.html>.

Sincerely,


STEVE THOMPSON
Manager
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Acting


ROBERT C. HIGHT
Director
California Department of Fish and Game

Enclosure