

**DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR****Fish and Wildlife Service****50 CFR Part 17****DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE****National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration****50 CFR Parts 223 and 224**

RIN 0648–XB089

[Docket No. 120425024–5503–03]

**Endangered and Threatened Species; Identification and Proposed Listing of Eleven Distinct Population Segments of Green Sea Turtles (*Chelonia mydas*) as Endangered or Threatened and Revision of Current Listings; Public Hearings; Extension of Comment Period**

**AGENCY:** National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Commerce; United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), Interior.

**ACTION:** Proposed rule; extension of comment period and public hearing schedule.

**SUMMARY:** On March 23, 2015, we (NMFS and USFWS, or the Services) published a proposed rule to revise the green sea turtle (*Chelonia mydas*; hereafter referred to as the green turtle) listings under the Endangered Species Act (ESA). We proposed to remove the current range-wide listing and, in its place, list eight distinct population segments (DPSs) as threatened and three as endangered. We opened a public comment period that lasted through June 22, 2015, announced a public hearing in Honolulu, Hawaii, and solicited requests for additional public hearings. With this document, we announce additional public hearings in Guam, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI), and American Samoa. To allow adequate time for comments after the last public hearing, we extend the public comment period through July 27, 2015.

**DATES:** Public hearings will be held from 6 to 8 p.m., with informational open houses starting at 5:30 p.m. as follows: in Pago Pago, American Samoa on July 6, 2015; in Saipan, CNMI on July 13, 2015; and in Mangilao, Guam on July 15, 2015. The comment period for the proposed rule published on March 23, 2015 (80 FR 15271), has been extended. Comments and information regarding this proposed rule must be received by close of business on July 27, 2015.

**ADDRESSES:** You may submit comments on the proposed rule, identified by NOAA–NMFS–2012–0154, by any of the following methods:

- **Electronic Submissions:** Submit all electronic public comments via the Federal e-Rulemaking Portal.

1. Go to [www.regulations.gov/#/docketDetail;D=NOAA-NMFS-2012-0154](http://www.regulations.gov/#/docketDetail;D=NOAA-NMFS-2012-0154),

2. Click the “Comment Now!” icon, complete the required fields, and

3. Enter or attach your comments.

OR

- **Mail:** Submit written comments to Green Turtle Proposed Listing Rule, Office of Protected Resources, National Marine Fisheries Service, 1315 East-West Highway, Room 13535, Silver Spring, MD 20910; or Green Turtle Proposed Listing Rule, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, North Florida Ecological Services Office, 7915 Baymeadows Way, Suite 200, Jacksonville, FL 32256.

OR

- **Public hearing:** Interested parties may provide oral or written comments at one of the public hearings detailed below, to be held at: the Lecture Hall of the American Samoa Community College, Pago Pago, American Samoa; the Multi-Purpose Center, Beach Road (Route 30), Susupe, Saipan, CNMI 96950; the Multi-Purpose Room at the School of Business and Public Administration, University of Guam, Mangilao, Guam 96923.

**Instructions:** Comments sent by any other method, to any other address or individual, or received after the end of the comment period, may not be considered by the Services. All comments received will be a part of the public record and will generally be posted for public viewing on [www.regulations.gov](http://www.regulations.gov) without change. All personal identifying information (e.g., name, address, etc.), confidential business information, or otherwise sensitive information submitted voluntarily by the sender will be publicly accessible. The Services will accept anonymous comments (enter “N/A” in the required fields if you wish to remain anonymous). The proposed rule is available electronically at <http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/species/turtles/green.htm> and <http://www.fws.gov/northflorida/seaturtles/turtle%20factsheets/green-sea-turtle.htm>.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Jennifer Schultz, NMFS (ph. 301–427–8443, email [jennifer.schultz@noaa.gov](mailto:jennifer.schultz@noaa.gov)), or Ann Marie Lauritsen, USFWS (ph. 904–731–3032, email [annmarie\\_](mailto:annmarie_)

[lauritsen@fws.gov](mailto:lauritsen@fws.gov)). Persons who use a Telecommunications Device for the Deaf (TDD) may call the Federal Information Relay Service (FIRS) at 1–800–877–8339, 24 hours a day, and 7 days a week.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:****Background**

The green turtle is currently listed under the ESA as a threatened species globally, with the exception of the Florida and Mexican Pacific coast breeding populations, which are listed as endangered. On March 23, 2015 (80 FR 15271), the Services published a proposed rule to revise these listings because we find that the green turtle is composed of 11 distinct population segments (DPSs) that qualify as “species” for listing under the ESA. We proposed to remove the current range-wide listing and, in its place, list eight DPSs as threatened and three as endangered. We proposed to list the Central West Pacific DPS (including green turtles originating from Guam and CNMI) and the Central South Pacific DPS (including green turtles originating from American Samoa) as endangered. We also proposed to apply existing protective regulations to the DPSs and to continue the existing critical habitat designation (i.e., waters surrounding Culebra Island, Puerto Rico) in effect for the North Atlantic DPS. We solicited comments on these proposed actions; we indicated that comments must be received by June 22, 2015.

We received several requests for additional public hearings. In response to the requests, by this notice we announce that we will host additional public hearings in Guam, CNMI, and American Samoa, and extend the public comment period through July 27, 2015. Previously submitted comments do not need to be resubmitted.

**Public Hearings**

The Services will hold a public hearing in Pago Pago, American Samoa. Interested parties may provide oral or written comments at this hearing, which will be held on July 6, 2015 from 6 to 8 p.m., with an informational open house starting at 5:30 p.m., at Lecture Hall of the American Samoa Community College.

The Services will hold a public hearing in Saipan, CNMI. Interested parties may provide oral or written comments at this hearing, which will be held on July 13, 2015 from 6 to 8 p.m., with an informational open house starting at 5:30 p.m., at the Multipurpose Center, Beach Road, Call Box 1007, Saipan, CNMI 96950.

The Services will hold a public hearing in Mangilao, Guam. Interested parties may provide oral or written comments at this hearing, which will be held on July 15, 2015 from 6 to 8 p.m., with an informational open house starting at 5:30 p.m., at the Multi-Purpose Room of the School of Business and Public Administration, University of Guam, Mangilao, Guam 96923.

### Special Accommodations

These hearings will be physically accessible to people with disabilities. Requests for sign language interpretation or other accommodations should be directed to Jennifer Schultz (see **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT**) as soon as possible, but no later than 7 business days prior to the hearing date.

**Authority:** 16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.*

Dated: June 5, 2015.

**Samuel D. Rauch III,**

*Deputy Assistant Administrator for Regulatory Programs, National Marine Fisheries Service.*

Dated: June 10, 2015.

**Gary Frazer,**

*Acting Director, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.*

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## DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

### Fish and Wildlife Service

#### 50 CFR Part 17

[Docket No. FWS-R5-ES-2015-0001; 50120-1113-000]

RIN 1018-AY05

### Endangered and Threatened Wildlife and Plants; Removing Eastern Puma (=Cougar) From the Federal List of Endangered and Threatened Wildlife

**AGENCY:** Fish and Wildlife Service, Interior.

**ACTION:** Proposed rule.

**SUMMARY:** The best available scientific and commercial data indicate that the eastern puma (=cougar) (*Puma (=Felis) concolor cougar*) is extinct. Therefore, under the authority of the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended, we, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service), propose to remove this subspecies from the Federal List of Endangered and Threatened Wildlife. This proposed action is based on a thorough review of all available information, which indicates that there is no evidence of the existence of either an extant population or individuals of the eastern puma and that, for various

reasons, it is highly unlikely that an eastern puma population could remain undetected over the time span since the last confirmed sighting was documented in 1938.

**DATES:** We will accept comments received or postmarked on or before August 17, 2015. Comments submitted electronically using the Federal eRulemaking Portal (see **ADDRESSES** below) must be received by 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time on the closing date. We must receive requests for public hearings, in writing, at the address shown in **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT** by August 3, 2015. Informational webinars will be scheduled upon request.

**ADDRESSES:** *Written comments:* You may submit comments by one of the following methods:

*Electronically:* Go to the Federal eRulemaking Portal: <http://www.regulations.gov>. In the search box, type FWS-R5-ES-2015-001 which is the docket number for this proposed rule. Then, click on the search button. In the Search panel on the left side of the screen, under the Document Type heading, click on the box next to "Proposed Rule" to locate this document. When you have located the correct document, you may submit a comment by clicking on "Comment Now!"

*By hard copy:* Submit by U.S. mail or hand-delivery to: Public Comments Processing, Attn: FWS-R5-ES-2015-0001, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, MS: BPHC, 5275 Leesburg Pike, Falls Church, VA 22041-3803.

We will post all comments at: <http://www.regulations.gov>. This generally means that we will post any personal information you provide us (see Information Requested below, for more information).

*Copies of documents:* This proposed rule and primary supporting documents are available at: <http://www.regulations.gov>. In addition, the supporting files for this proposed rule will be available for public inspection, by appointment and during normal business hours, at the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Maine Field Office, 17 Godfrey Drive, Suite #2, Orono, ME 04473, and on the Eastern Cougar Web site at: <http://www.fws.gov/northeast/ECougar>.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Questions and requests for additional information may be directed to Martin Miller, Northeast Regional Office, telephone 413-253-8615, or to Mark McCollough, Maine Field Office, telephone 207-866-3344, extension 115. Individuals who are hearing- or

speech-impaired may call the Federal Relay Service at 1-800-877-8337 for TTY assistance. General information regarding the eastern puma and the delisting process may also be accessed at: <http://www.fws.gov/northeast/ECougar>.

### SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

#### Information Requested

We intend that any final action resulting from this proposed rule will be based on the best scientific and commercial data available and be as accurate and effective as possible. Therefore, we invite tribal and governmental agencies, the scientific community, and other interested parties to submit comments and new data regarding this proposed rule. In particular, we are seeking targeted information and comments concerning the following:

- (1) The persistence or extinction of a breeding population of the eastern puma subspecies within its historical range;
- (2) Verifiable reports or evidence of wild-origin pumas within the historical range of the eastern puma subspecies;
- (3) Our analysis of the status of the eastern puma; and
- (4) The taxonomy of North American pumas.

Please include sufficient information with your submission (such as scientific journal articles or other publications) to allow us to verify any scientific or commercial information you include. Bear in mind that comments simply advocating or opposing the proposed action without providing supporting information will be noted but not considered in making a determination, as section 4(b)(1)(A) of the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended (16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.*) (Act), directs that determinations as to whether any species is an endangered species or threatened species shall be made "solely on the basis of the best scientific and commercial data available."

You may submit your comments and materials concerning the proposed rule by one of the methods listed in **ADDRESSES**. We request that you send comments only to an address listed in **ADDRESSES**. All comments must be submitted to <http://www.regulations.gov>, hand delivered, or postmarked by the deadline specified in **DATES**. If you submit information via <http://www.regulations.gov>, your entire submission—including any personal identifying information—will be posted on the Web site. If your submission is made via a hardcopy that includes personal identifying information, you may request at the top of your document