

the grouping together of some of the populations.

The giant garter snake has specific habitat needs that include summer aquatic habitat for foraging, bankside basking areas with nearby emergent vegetation for cover and thermal regulation, and upland refugia for extended periods of inactivity. Perennial wetlands provide the highest quality habitat for the giant garter snake, and rice lands, with interconnected water conveyance structures, serve as an alternative habitat in the absence of higher quality wetlands.

The loss and subsequent fragmentation of habitat is the primary threat to the giant garter snake throughout the Central Valley of California. Habitat loss has occurred from urban expansion, agricultural conversion, and flood control. Habitat fragmentation restricts dispersal and isolates populations of the giant garter snake, increasing the likelihood of inbreeding, decreasing fitness, and reducing genetic diversity, and ultimately has resulted in the loss of the snake from the southern one-third of its range in former wetlands associated with the historical Buena Vista, Tulare, and Kern Lake beds. In addition to habitat loss, the remaining Central Valley populations of the giant garter snake are subject to the cumulative effects of a number of other existing and potential threats, including: roads and vehicular traffic, climate change, and predation by non-native species.

Recovery Plan Goals

The purpose of a recovery plan is to provide a framework for the recovery of species so that protection under the Act is no longer necessary. A recovery plan includes scientific information about the species and provides criteria that enable us to gauge whether downlisting or delisting the species is warranted. Furthermore, recovery plans help guide our recovery efforts by describing actions we consider necessary for each species' conservation and by estimating time and costs for implementing needed recovery measures.

The goal of this revised draft recovery plan is to improve the status of giant garter snake so that it can be delisted. To meet the recovery goal of delisting, the following objectives have been identified:

1. Establish and protect self-sustaining populations of the giant garter snake throughout the full ecological, geographical, and genetic range of the species.
2. Restore and conserve healthy Central Valley wetland ecosystems that

function to support the giant garter snake and its community members.

3. Ameliorate or eliminate, to the extent possible, the threats that caused the species to be listed or are otherwise of concern, and any foreseeable future threats.

The strategy used to recover the giant garter snake is focused on protecting existing occupied habitat and identifying and protecting areas for habitat restoration, enhancement, or creation, including areas that are needed to provide connectivity between populations. Appropriate management is needed for all giant garter snake conservation lands to ensure that stable and viable populations can be maintained in occupied areas, and that colonization will be promoted in restored and enhanced unoccupied habitat. As the giant garter snake meets delisting criteria, we will review its status and consider it for delisting on the Federal Lists of Endangered and Threatened Wildlife and Plants.

Public Comments Solicited

We solicit written comments on this revised draft recovery plan described in this notice. All comments received by the date specified in the **DATES** section will be considered in development of a final recovery plan for giant garter snake. You may submit written comments and information by mail or in person to the Sacramento Fish and Wildlife Office at the above address (see **ADDRESSES**).

Public Availability of Comments

Before including your address, phone number, email address, or other personal identifying information in your comment, you should be aware that your entire comment—including your personal identifying information—may be made publicly available at any time. While you can ask us in your comment to withhold your personal identifying information from public review, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so.

Authority

We developed this revised draft recovery plan under the authority of section 4(f) of the Act, 16 U.S.C. 1533(f). We publish this notice under section 4(f) of the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended (16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.*).

Alexandra Pitts,

Regional Director, Pacific Southwest Region, Sacramento, California.

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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Fish and Wildlife Service

[Docket No. FWS-HQ-IA-2015-0179; FXIA1671090000-156-FF09A30000]

Endangered Species; Wild Bird Conservation; Receipt of Applications for Permit

AGENCY: Fish and Wildlife Service, Interior.

ACTION: Notice of receipt of applications for permit.

SUMMARY: We, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, invite the public to comment on the following applications to conduct certain activities with endangered species. With some exceptions, the Endangered Species Act (ESA) prohibits activities with listed species unless Federal authorization is acquired that allows such activities.

DATES: We must receive comments or requests for documents on or before January 21, 2016.

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

- *Federal eRulemaking Portal:* <http://www.regulations.gov>. Follow the instructions for submitting comments on Docket No. FWS-HQ-IA-2015-0179.

- *U.S. mail or hand-delivery:* Public Comments Processing, Attn: Docket No. FWS-HQ-IA-2015-0179; U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Headquarters, MS: BPHC; 5275 Leesburg Pike, Falls Church, VA 22041-3803.

When submitting comments, please indicate the name of the applicant and the PRT# you are commenting on. We will post all comments on <http://www.regulations.gov>. This generally means that we will post any personal information you provide us (see the Public Comments section below for more information). *Viewing Comments:* Comments and materials we receive will be available for public inspection on <http://www.regulations.gov>, or by appointment, between 8 a.m. and 4 p.m., Monday through Friday, except Federal holidays, at the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Division of Management Authority, 5275 Leesburg Pike, Falls Church, VA 22041-3803; telephone 703-358-2095.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Endangered Species Applications: Brenda Tapia, Program Analyst/Data Administrator, Division of Management Authority, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Headquarters, MS: IA; 5275 Leesburg Pike, Falls Church, VA 22041-3803; telephone 703-358-2104; facsimile 703-358-2280.

Wild Bird Conservation Act Applications: Craig Hoover, Chief, Division of Management Authority, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Headquarters, MS: IA; 5275 Leesburg Pike, Falls Church, VA 22041-3803; telephone 703-358-2095; facsimile 703-358-2298. If you use a telecommunications device for the deaf (TDD), call the Federal Information Relay Service (FIRS) at 800-877-8339.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

I. Public Comment Procedures

A. How do I request copies of applications or comment on submitted applications?

Send your request for copies of applications or comments and materials concerning any of the applications to the contact listed under **ADDRESSES**. Please include the **Federal Register** notice publication date, the PRT-number, and the name of the applicant in your request or submission. We will not consider requests or comments sent to an email or address not listed under **ADDRESSES**. If you provide an email address in your request for copies of applications, we will attempt to respond to your request electronically.

Please make your requests or comments as specific as possible. Please confine your comments to issues for which we seek comments in this notice, and explain the basis for your comments. Include sufficient information with your comments to allow us to authenticate any scientific or commercial data you include.

The comments and recommendations that will be most useful and likely to influence agency decisions are: (1) Those supported by quantitative information or studies; and (2) Those that include citations to, and analyses of, the applicable laws and regulations. We will not consider or include in our administrative record comments we receive after the close of the comment period (see **DATES**) or comments delivered to an address other than those listed above (see **ADDRESSES**).

B. May I review comments submitted by others?

Comments, including names and street addresses of respondents, will be available for public review at the street address listed under **ADDRESSES**. The public may review documents and other information applicants have sent in support of the application unless our allowing viewing would violate the Privacy Act or Freedom of Information Act. Before including your address, phone number, email address, or other personal identifying information in your

comment, you should be aware that your entire comment—including your personal identifying information—may be made publicly available at any time. While you can ask us in your comment to withhold your personal identifying information from public review, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so.

II. Background

To help us carry out our conservation responsibilities for affected species, and in consideration of section 10(a)(1)(A) of the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended (16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.*), along with Executive Order 13576, “Delivering an Efficient, Effective, and Accountable Government,” and the President’s Memorandum for the Heads of Executive Departments and Agencies of January 21, 2009—Transparency and Open Government (74 FR 4685; January 26, 2009), which call on all Federal agencies to promote openness and transparency in Government by disclosing information to the public, we invite public comment on these permit applications before final action is taken.

III. Permit Applications

A. Endangered Species

Applicant: Memphis Zoo, Memphis, TN; PRT-61689B

The applicant requests a permit to import one male captive-born mandrill (*Mandrillus sphinx*) from Calgary Zoo, Calgary, Alberta, Canada, for the purpose of enhancement of the survival of the species.

Applicant: Smithsonian’s National Zoological Park, Washington, DC; PRT-700309

The applicant requests renewal of their permit to take, import, export or re-export, and purchase in interstate or foreign commerce, blood, hair and other tissue samples, as well as salvaged material from any endangered or threatened wildlife exotic to the United States, for the purpose of scientific research. Samples are to be obtained from wild, captive-held and/or captive-born animals. Samples collected in the wild are to be taken opportunistically during immobilization of animals by local wildlife management officials or trained veterinarians, and animals may not be harmed for the purpose of collecting such samples. This notification covers activities to be conducted by the applicant over a 5-year period.

B. Wild Bird Conservation Act

The public is invited to comment on the following applications for approval

to conduct certain activities with bird species covered under the Wild Bird Conservation Act of 1992 (16 U.S.C. 4901-4916). This notice is provided pursuant to section 112(4) of the Wild Bird Conservation Act of 1992, 50 CFR 15.26(c).

Applicant: John Aynes, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

The applicant wishes to establish a cooperative breeding program for red-fan parrot, also known as hawk-headed parrot (*Derophtus accipitrinus*). The applicant wishes to be an active participant in this program along with Susan Clubb, DVM, Loxahatchee, Florida.

If approved, the program will be overseen by the Zoological Association of America, Punta Gorda, Florida.

III. Public Comments

You may submit your comments and materials concerning this notice by one of the methods listed in **ADDRESSES**. We will not consider comments sent by email or fax or to an address not listed in **ADDRESSES**.

If you submit a comment via <http://www.regulations.gov>, your entire comment, including any personal identifying information, will be posted on the Web site. If you submit a hardcopy comment that includes personal identifying information, you may request at the top of your document that we withhold this information from public review. However, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so.

We will post all hardcopy comments on <http://www.regulations.gov>.

IV. Authority

Wild Bird Conservation Act of 1992 (16 U.S.C. 4901-4916).

Endangered Species Act of 1973 (16 U.S.C. 1531).

Brenda Tapia,

Program Analyst/Data Administrator, Branch of Permits, Division of Management Authority.

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