

Flooding source(s)	Location of referenced elevation **	* Elevation in feet (NGVD) + Elevation in feet (NAVD) # Depth in feet above ground		Communities affected
		Effective	Modified	
North Deep Creek Tributary 2A.	Approximately 1.2 miles upstream of Spencer Road (SR 1385).	None	+1,065	Unincorporated Areas of Yadkin County, Town of Yadkinville.
	At the confluence with North Deep Creek Tributary 2 ...	None	+860	
	Approximately 0.7 mile upstream of the confluence with North Deep Creek Tributary 2.	None	+877	

* National Geodetic Vertical Datum.

Depth in feet above ground.

+ North American Vertical Datum.

** BFEs to be changed include the listed downstream and upstream BFEs, and include BFEs located on the stream reach between the referenced locations above. Please refer to the revised Flood Insurance Rate Map located at the community map repository (see below) for exact locations of all BFEs to be changed.

Send comments to William R. Blanton, Jr., Chief, Engineering Management Branch, Mitigation Directorate, Federal Emergency Management Agency, 500 C Street, SW., Washington, DC 20472.

ADDRESSES

Town of Boonville

Maps are available for inspection at Boonville Town Hall, 110 North Carolina Avenue, Boonville, NC.

Town of East Bend

Maps are available for inspection at East Bend Town Hall, 108 West Main Street, East Bend, NC.

Town of Jonesville

Maps are available for inspection at Jonesville Town Hall, 136 West Main Street, Jonesville, NC.

Town of Yadkinville

Maps are available for inspection at Yadkinville Town Hall, 213 Van Buren Street, Yadkinville, NC.

Unincorporated Areas of Yadkin County

Maps are available for inspection at Yadkin County Manager's Office, 217 East Willow Street, Yadkinville, NC.

(Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance No. 97.022, "Flood Insurance.")

Dated: May 7, 2008.

David I. Maurstad,

*Federal Insurance Administrator of the National Flood Insurance Program,
Department of Homeland Security, Federal
Emergency Management Agency.*

[FR Doc. E8-10868 Filed 5-14-08; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 9110-12-P

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Fish and Wildlife Service

50 CFR Part 17

[FWS-R8-ES-2008-0049; 1111 FY08 MO-B2]

Endangered and Threatened Wildlife and Plants; 90-Day Finding on a Petition To List the Ashy Storm-Petrel (*Oceanodroma homochroa*) as Threatened or Endangered

AGENCY: Fish and Wildlife Service, Interior.

ACTION: Notice of 90-day petition finding and initiation of status review.

SUMMARY: We, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service), announce a 90-day finding on a petition to list the ashy storm-petrel (*Oceanodroma*

homochroa) as threatened or endangered under the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended (Act). We find that the petition presents substantial scientific or commercial information indicating that listing the ashy storm-petrel may be warranted. Therefore, with the publication of this notice, we are initiating a status review of the species to determine if listing the species is warranted. To ensure that the review is comprehensive, we are soliciting information and data regarding this species. We will make a determination on critical habitat for this species, which was also requested in the petition, if, and when, we initiate a listing action.

DATES: To allow us adequate time to conduct this review, we request that information be submitted on or before July 14, 2008.

ADDRESSES: You may submit information by one of the following methods:

- *Federal eRulemaking Portal:* <http://www.regulations.gov>. Follow the instructions for submitting comments.
- *U.S. mail or hand-delivery:* Public Comments Processing, Attn: FWS-R8-ES-2008-0049; Division of Policy and Directives Management; U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service; 4401 N. Fairfax Drive, Suite 222; Arlington, VA 22203.

We will not accept e-mail or faxes. We will post all information received at <http://www.regulations.gov>. This generally means that we will post any personal information you provide us (see the Information Solicited section below for more information).

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Mike Long, Field Supervisor, Arcata Fish and Wildlife Office, 1655 Heindon Road, Arcata, CA 95521; telephone 707-822-7201; facsimile 707-822-8411. If you use a telecommunications device for the deaf (TDD), call the Federal Information Relay Service (FIRS) at 800-877-8339.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Information Solicited

When we make a finding that substantial information is presented to indicate that listing a species may be warranted, we are required to promptly commence a review of the status of the species. To ensure that the status review is complete and based on the best available science and commercial information, we are soliciting additional information on the ashy storm-petrel. We request information from the public, other concerned governmental agencies, Native American Tribes, the scientific community, industry, or any other interested parties on the status of the

ashy storm-petrel throughout its range, including but not limited to:

(1) The historical and current status and distribution of ashy storm-petrel; the species' biology and ecology; ongoing conservation measures for the species and its habitat; and threats to the species and its habitat.

(2) The effects of potential threat factors that are the basis for a listing determination under section 4(a) of the Act, which are:

(a) Present or threatened destruction, modification, or curtailment of the species' habitat or range;

(b) Overutilization for commercial, recreational, scientific, or educational purposes;

(c) Disease or predation;

(d) The inadequacy of existing regulatory mechanisms; or

(e) Other natural or manmade factors affecting its continued existence.

(3) Timing within year, type, and amount of human activities (e.g., commercial and recreational fishing, tourism) at locations where ashy storm-petrels are known or suspected to breed, including but not limited to: Van Damme Rock (Mendocino County); Bird, Chimney, and Double Point Rocks (Marin County); the Farallon Islands (San Francisco County); Castle and Hurricane Point Rocks (Monterey County); San Miguel Island, Castle Rock, Prince Island, mainland locations and offshore islets at Vandenberg Air Force Base, Santa Cruz Island, Santa Barbara Island, Sutil Island, and Shag Rock (Santa Barbara County); Anacapa Island (Ventura County); Santa Catalina Island and San Clemente Island (Los Angeles County); and Islas Los Coronados and Islas Todos Santos, Mexico.

(4) Projected changes in sea level along the coast of California during the 21st century, specifically at the locations listed in (3) above.

(5) Elevations of known and suitable breeding habitat at the locations listed in (3) above.

(6) Projected acidification of oceanic waters of the California Current during the 21st century.

(7) Locations of oil tanker routes, and timing and frequency of oil tanker traffic along the coast of California and Northern Baja California, Mexico.

(8) Nighttime observations of ashy storm-petrels, other storm-petrels, other nocturnal seabirds (e.g., Xantus's murrelets (*Synthliboramphus hypoleucus*)), and other seabirds (e.g., gulls (*Larus* sp.)) on or near boats (commercial or recreational) off central and southern California and Baja California, Mexico.

(9) Measured and observed nighttime lighting, and timing within year of nighttime lighting by boats (commercial and recreational) at locations listed in (3) above.

(10) Daily and seasonal activity patterns of ashy storm-petrels and avian predators of ashy storm-petrels (e.g., western gull (*Larus occidentalis*), burrowing owl (*Athene cunicularia*)) at breeding locations in general and, specifically, in relation to light intensity at night.

(11) Abundance and distribution of predators of ashy storm-petrels at ashy storm-petrel breeding locations.

(12) Observations of ashy storm-petrels or other storm-petrels at night on offshore oil platforms, or additional evidence that ashy storm-petrels are attracted to or have collided with offshore oil platforms.

(13) Locations of proposed offshore liquefied natural gas (LNG) facilities along the coast of California and Northern Baja California, Mexico.

(14) Evidence of organochlorine contamination of ashy storm-petrel eggs and birds.

(15) Ingestion of plastics by ashy storm-petrels, and distribution and abundance of plastics in the California Current.

(16) Military activities at sea and on islands off the coast of California and northern Baja California, Mexico.

(17) Factors that pose a threat to ashy storm-petrels (those listed above, and otherwise) and the potential cumulative effects of these factors that may threaten or endanger ashy storm-petrels.

Please note that submissions merely stating support for or opposition to the action under consideration without providing supporting information, although noted, will not be considered in making a determination, as section 4(b)(1)(A) of the Act directs that determinations as to whether any species is a threatened or endangered species shall be made "solely on the basis of the best scientific and commercial data available." Based on the status review, we will issue the 12-month finding on the petition, as provided in section 4(b)(3)(B) of the Act.

You may submit your information concerning this finding by one of the methods listed in the **ADDRESSES** section. We will not consider submissions sent by e-mail or fax or to an address not listed in the **ADDRESSES** section.

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 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 submissions on <http://www.regulations.gov>.

Information and materials we receive, as well as supporting documentation we used in preparing this proposed rule, will be available for public inspection on <http://www.regulations.gov>, or by appointment, during normal business hours, at the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Arcata Fish and Wildlife Office (see **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT**).

Background

Section 4(b)(3)(A) of the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended (Act) (16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.*) requires that we make a finding on whether a petition to list, delist, or reclassify a species presents substantial scientific or commercial information to indicate that the petitioned action may be warranted. We are to base this finding on information provided in the petition, supporting information submitted with the petition, and information otherwise available in our files at the time we make the determination. To the maximum extent practicable, we are to make this finding within 90 days of our receipt of the petition and publish our notice of the finding promptly in the **Federal Register**.

Our standard for substantial scientific or commercial information within the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) with regard to a 90-day petition finding is "that amount of information that would lead a reasonable person to believe that the measure proposed in the petition may be warranted" (50 CFR 424.14(b)). If we find that substantial scientific or commercial information was presented, we are required to promptly commence a status review of the species.

On October 16, 2007, we received a formal petition, dated October 15, 2007, from the Center for Biological Diversity, requesting that we list the ashy storm-petrel. The petition also requested that critical habitat be designated concurrently with the listing. The petition clearly identified itself as a petition and included the requisite identification information as required in 50 CFR 424.14(a). Included in the petition was supporting information regarding the species' taxonomy and ecology, historical and current distribution, present status, and potential causes of decline and active imminent threats. In response to the petition, we sent a letter to the petitioner dated January 11, 2008, stating that we had secured funding and

that we anticipated making an initial finding as to whether the petition contained substantial information indicating listing the ashy storm-petrel may be warranted in Fiscal Year 2008. We also concluded in our January 11, 2008, letter that emergency listing of the ashy storm-petrel was not warranted.

Species Information

The ashy storm-petrel is a seabird species belonging to the order Procellariiformes, family Hydrobatidae. The ashy storm-petrel is one of five storm-petrel species (including fork-tailed (*O. furcata*), Leach's (*O. leucorhoa*), black (*O. melania*), and least (*O. microsoma*) storm-petrels) that nest on islands along the west coast of North America (Harrison 1983, pp. 272–278). The ashy storm-petrel is a smoke-gray, medium-sized bird with long slender wings, a long forked tail, and webbed feet (Ainley 1995, p. 2).

Ashy storm-petrels have been confirmed to breed at 26 locations on islands and offshore rocks from Marin County, California, south to Todos Santos Islands, west of Ensenada, Baja California, Mexico (Carter *et al.* 1992, pp. 77–81; Ainley 1995, p. 2; Carter *et al.* 2006, p. 6; Carter *et al.* 2008, p. 118). In addition, ashy storm-petrels possibly breed at five locations from Mendocino County south to San Clemente Island (Carter *et al.* 2008, pp. 118–119). The species breeds primarily in two population centers at the Farallon Islands and in the California Channel Islands (Sowls *et al.* 1980, p. 24; Ainley *et al.* 1990, p. 135; Carter *et al.* 1992, p. 86). Ashy storm-petrels do not excavate burrows; rather, they nest in crevices of talus slopes, rock walls, sea caves, cliffs, and driftwood (James-Veitch 1970, pp. 87–88; Ainley *et al.* 1990, p. 147; McIver 2002, p. 1).

The breeding season is protracted, and activities at nesting locations occur from March through January (James-Veitch 1970, p. 71). Clutch size is one egg per year (Ainley 1995, p. 6). The egg-laying period extends from late March to October, peaking in June and July (James-Veitch 1970, p. 243; Ainley *et al.* 1990, p. 148; McIver 2002, pp. 34–36). The average period of incubation is 44 days (James-Veitch 1970, p. 244). Hatchlings are “semi-precocial” (James-Veitch 1970, p. 128). The term semi-precocial describes young that have characteristics of precocial young at hatch (open eyes, down, capacity to leave the nest), but that remain at the nest and are cared for by parents until close to adult size (Sibley 2001, p. 573). Chicks are brooded and attended by adults for approximately the first week of life, after which time they are left

unattended in the nest during the day (James-Veitch 1970, p. 141). Chicks are fed irregularly, once every 1 to 3 nights on average (James-Veitch 1970, pp. 180–208). At Southeast Farallon Island, James-Veitch (1970, p. 212) reported a mean of 76 days from hatching to fledging; Ainley *et al.* (1990, p. 152) reported a mean of 84 days from hatching to fledging. Fledging occurs at night, from late August to January, and once they leave the nest, fledglings are independent of their parents (Ainley *et al.* 1974, p. 303; McIver 2002, p. 36). Nonbreeding ashy storm-petrels also visit breeding locations during the breeding season (James-Veitch 1970, pp. 242–243). Although visitations are reduced during the months of January and February, ashy storm-petrels visit nesting locations throughout the year, and most intensely from February into October (Ainley *et al.* 1974, p. 301).

The nocturnal activity (return to and departure from nest) and crevice nesting of this species are adaptations to avoid predation by diurnal predators such as western gulls, burrowing owls, peregrine falcons (*Falco peregrinus*), and common ravens (*Corvus corax*) (Ainley 1995, p. 5; McIver and Carter 2006, p. 3). Ashy storm-petrels are susceptible to predation at night by barn owls (*Tyto alba*) (McIver 2002, p. 30). Nesting in crevices and burrows on remote headlands, offshore rocks, and islands generally reduces predation of storm-petrels by mammalian predators (Warham 1990, p. 13). Known mammalian predators of ashy storm-petrels and their eggs include house mice (*Mus musculus*), deer mice (*Peromyscus maniculatus*), and island spotted skunks (*Spilogale gracilis amphiata*) (Ainley *et al.* 1990, p. 146; McIver 2002, pp. 40–41; McIver and Carter 2006, p. 3).

Ashy storm-petrels are nonmigratory and forage primarily in the California Current from northern California to central Baja California, Mexico; birds forage in areas of upwelling, seaward of the continental shelf, near islands and the coast (Ainley *et al.* 1974, p. 300; Briggs *et al.* 1987, p. 23; Mason *et al.* 2007, p. 60). Four thousand to six thousand ashy storm-petrels are usually observed in the fall in Monterey Bay, approximately 3 to 10 miles (5 to 16 kilometers) off the town of Moss Landing, California, and as many as 10,000 ashy storm-petrels were estimated to be present in Monterey Bay in October 1977 (Roberson 1985, p. 42). Storm-petrels feed on small invertebrates and fish picked from the ocean surface (Warham 1990, p. 186). The diet of ashy storm-petrels has not been extensively studied, but includes

euphausiids (spp. *Euphausia*, *Thysanoessa*), other crustaceans, unidentified fish and squid (G. McChesney, personal communication, 1999).

Obtaining direct population counts of ashy storm-petrels is difficult, because the species nests in often deep, inaccessible crevices (Carter *et al.* 1992, p. 77; Sydeman *et al.* 1998b, p. 438). The world population of ashy storm-petrels has been estimated to be on the order of 10,000 birds (Sowls *et al.* 1980, p. 24; Ainley 1995, p. 1); estimates of breeding birds for California have ranged from 5,187 (Sowls *et al.* 1980, p. 25) to 7,209 (Carter *et al.* 1992, p. 87). Results from Sydeman *et al.* (1998b, p. 445) indicate a reduction in ashy storm-petrel population size at Southeast Farallon Island from 1972 to 1992, ranging from 28 to 44 percent. Sydeman *et al.* (1998b, p. 445) report that this decline occurred in prime nesting habitat and was apparently greater for breeding birds. Sydeman *et al.* (1998b, pp. 445–446) suggest that this decline in population size at Southeast Farallon Island may be due, in part, to an increase in the predation rate on ashy storm-petrel adults and sub-adults by western gulls, which expanded into prime ashy storm-petrel nesting habitat over the course of their study.

Research on reproductive success of the ashy storm-petrel has been conducted at Southeast Farallon Island (James-Veitch 1970; Ainley *et al.* 1990; Sydeman *et al.* 1998a; Sydeman *et al.*, unpublished data) and Santa Cruz Island (McIver 2002; McIver *et al.*, in preparation). Reported productivity values have been variable. For example, on Southeast Farallon Island, reported productivity values are: 0.40 chicks per pair during 1964 to 1965 (James-Veitch 1970, p. 235); 0.69 chicks per pair during 1972 to 1983 (Ainley *et al.* 1990, p. 155); 0.73 chicks per pair during 1971 to 1995 (Sydeman *et al.* 1998a, p. 20) and 0.52 chicks per pair during 1995 to 1998 (Sydeman *et al.*, unpublished data). On Santa Cruz Island, reported productivity values are: 0.51 chicks per pair during 1995 to 1998 (McIver 2002, p. 44); and 0.63 chicks per pair during 2005 to 2007 (McIver *et al.*, in preparation, p. 25).

No data are currently available regarding adult life span, survivorship, and age at first breeding of ashy storm-petrels (Ainley 1995, p. 8). However, like other procellariids, storm-petrels are long-lived (Warham 1996, p. 20). Some ashy storm-petrels reach 25 years old (Sydeman *et al.* 1998a, p. 7), and breeding adults over 20 years in age have been reported in the closely-related Leach's storm-petrel (Morse and

Buchheister 1977, p. 344). Mean age of first breeding in the Leach's storm-petrel has been reported at 5.9 years \pm 1.3 standard deviation (Huntington *et al.* 1996, p. 19). Sydeman *et al.* (1998a, p. 7) conducted population viability analyses based upon observations by C. Huntington, and assumed that 90 percent of adult ashy storm-petrels were capable of breeding at 6 years of age.

Factors Affecting the Species

Section 4 of the Act (16 U.S.C. 1533), and implementing regulations at 50 CFR part 424, set forth the procedures for adding species to the Federal Lists of Endangered and Threatened Wildlife and Plants. A species may be determined to be an endangered or threatened species due to one or more of the five factors described in section 4(a)(1) of the Act: (A) Present or threatened destruction, modification, or curtailment of habitat or range; (B) overutilization for commercial, recreational, scientific, or educational purposes; (C) disease or predation; (D) inadequacy of existing regulatory mechanisms; or (E) other natural or manmade factors affecting its continued existence. In making this 90-day finding, we evaluated whether information on threats to the ashy storm-petrel in our files and presented with the October 2007 petition constitute substantial scientific or commercial information such that listing under the Act may be warranted. Our evaluation of this information is presented below.

A. The Present or Threatened Destruction, Modification, or Curtailment of Habitat or Range

The petitioner asserts that the ashy storm-petrel's island breeding habitat is being modified and degraded by artificial light pollution, introduced species, and current and future climate change; they further assert that its at-sea foraging habitat is being modified and degraded by artificial light pollution, chemical and plastics pollution, and current and future ocean climate change (Petition, p. 15).

The market squid (*Loligo opalescens*) fishery is a source of artificial light at night near breeding locations in the California Channel Islands, and could result in increased mortality of storm-petrels due to predation by diurnal predators and direct collision with lights (McIver 2002, pp. 51–2; Maxwell *et al.* 2004, pp. 666–69). Ashy storm-petrels have been recovered dead on an offshore oil platform off the coast of southern California, and from mainland locations in southern California, presumably due to attraction to and

collision with bright lights (Carter *et al.* 2000, p. 443).

In addition, oil pollution may pose a threat to ashy storm-petrels. A major oil spill off Monterey Bay during the fall could affect thousands of ashy storm-petrels that concentrate in that area (Roberson 1985, p. 42; Sydeman *et al.* 1998, p. 439). Hampton *et al.* (2003, p. 32) analyzed dumping of tank washings of oil tankers at sea and suggested that the greatest threat of oiling existed for seabird species occurring (while at sea) greater than 80 kilometers (50 miles) offshore, including ashy storm-petrels.

We found substantial evidence presented in the petition indicating that artificial light pollution near breeding colonies and at sea, and at-sea oil pollution may threaten ashy storm-petrels.

B. Overutilization for Commercial, Recreational, Scientific, or Educational Purposes

The petitioner asserts that research activities may impact ashy storm-petrels, but also states that there is no evidence that this impact has had significant negative consequences on studied populations (Petition, p. 30). Therefore, we do not consider this a significant factor affecting the species.

C. Disease or Predation

The petitioner asserts that predation by native predators, including western gulls, burrowing owls, barn owls, and peregrine falcons, and nonnative predators, including house mice (*Mus musculus*), black rats (*Rattus rattus*), and feral cats (*Felis domesticus*), impact ashy storm-petrel populations (Petition, pp. 30–32).

Sydeman *et al.* (1998, pp. 438–447) reported an increase in the western gull population at Southeast Farallon Island, and an expansion of nesting by western gulls into prime nesting habitat of ashy storm-petrels on the island. They suggested that the decline in population size of ashy storm-petrels at Southeast Farallon Island between the early 1970s and the early 1990s may be due (in part) to an increase in the predation rate on ashy storm-petrels by western gulls.

We find substantial information presented in the petition indicating that predation at nesting colonies may threaten ashy storm-petrels.

D. Inadequacy of Existing Regulatory Mechanisms

The petitioner asserts that existing regulatory mechanisms have been ineffective at preventing the decline of the ashy storm-petrel and in mitigating many of the threats to the species (Petition, p. 32). The petitioner claims

that the ineffectiveness of regulatory mechanisms is demonstrated by the failure to eradicate nonnative predators, the inadequate regulation of artificial light pollution, the failure to restrict human disturbance at breeding sites, the lack of regulations on greenhouse gases, and the failure of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act to protect the species from identified threats (Petition, pp. 32–35).

As discussed above, we do find threats to the species from artificial light pollution and predation, and thus find that the petition presents substantial evidence that the inadequacy of existing regulatory mechanisms may threaten ashy storm-petrels.

E. Other Natural or Manmade Factors Affecting Continued Existence

The petitioner cites human disturbance through tourism and military activities as the primary threats under this category (Petition, p. 35). We do not find that the petition presents substantial information supporting the petitioner's claimed threats under this category. However, information in the petition indicates that the ashy storm-petrel may be threatened by the contamination of eggs and birds by organochlorine chemicals.

Eggshell thinning and organochlorine contamination of ashy storm-petrel eggs have been documented during the 1970s and 1990s (Coulter and Risebrough, pp. 254–255; Fry 1994, pp. 1–29; Kiff 1994, pp. 1–24; D. Welsh and H. Carter, unpublished notes).

We find that the petition presents substantial information that the contamination of eggs and birds by organochlorine chemicals may threaten ashy storm-petrels.

Finding

We reviewed the petition, supporting information provided by the petitioner, and information in our files, and we evaluated that information to determine whether the sources cited support the claims made in the petition. Based on this review, we find that the petition presents substantial information indicating that the ashy storm-petrel may be threatened by Factor A, due to artificial light pollution near breeding colonies and at sea, and by at-sea oil pollution; by Factor C, due to predation at nesting colonies; by Factor D, due to the inadequacy of existing regulatory mechanisms; and by Factor E, due to contamination of eggs and birds by organochlorine chemicals.

On the basis of our review, we find that the petition presents substantial information indicating that listing the ashy storm-petrel as threatened or endangered may be warranted.

Therefore, we are initiating a status review to determine if listing the species under the Act is warranted.

The petitioner also requested that critical habitat be designated for the ash storm-petrel. We always consider the need for critical habitat designation when listing species. If we determine in our 12-month finding following the status review of the species that listing the ash storm-petrel is warranted, we will address the designation of critical habitat at the time of the proposed rulemaking.

References Cited

A complete list of all references cited in this document is available, upon request, from our Arcata Fish and Wildlife Office (see **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT**).

Author

The primary author of this notice is the staff of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Arcata Fish and Wildlife Office (see **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT**).

Authority

The authority for this action is the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended (16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.*).

Dated: May 6, 2008.

Kenneth Stansell,

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

[FR Doc. E8-10790 Filed 5-14-08; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4310-55-P

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Fish and Wildlife Service

50 CFR Part 17

[FWS-R4-ES-2008-0041; 92210-1117-0000-B4]

RIN 1018-AU48

Endangered and Threatened Wildlife and Plants; Revised Designation of Critical Habitat for the Wintering Population of the Piping Plover in North Carolina

AGENCY: Fish and Wildlife Service, Interior.

ACTION: Revised proposed rule; reopening of comment period, revisions to proposed critical habitat boundaries, notice of availability of revised draft economic analysis and environmental assessment, and amended required determinations.

SUMMARY: We, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service), announce the reopening of the comment period on the

proposed revised designation of critical habitat for the wintering population of the piping plover (*Charadrius melodus*) in Dare and Hyde Counties, North Carolina (71 FR 33703, June 12, 2006). In this document, we are proposing to add 87 hectares (ha) (215 acres (ac)) of critical habitat to two previously proposed units. As a result, our proposed revised critical habitat designation for the species now includes 4 revised critical habitat units totaling approximately 827 ha (2,043 ac). We also announce the availability of the revised draft economic analysis (DEA) and environmental assessment of the proposed revised designation of critical habitat. We are reopening the comment period on the June 12, 2006, proposed rule to allow all interested parties an opportunity to comment simultaneously on that proposal, the proposed revised critical habitat units described in this document, our amended required determinations, and the associated revised DEA and environmental assessment. Please do not resend comments you have already submitted. We will incorporate comments previously submitted into the public record as part of this comment period, and we will fully consider them when preparing our final determination.

DATES: We will consider comments received or postmarked on or before June 16, 2008.

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

- *Federal eRulemaking Portal:* <http://www.regulations.gov>. Follow the instructions for submitting comments.
- *U.S. mail or hand-delivery:* Public Comments Processing, Attn: 1018-AU48; Division of Policy and Directives Management; U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service; 4401 N. Fairfax Drive, Suite 222; Arlington, VA 22203.

We will not accept e-mail or faxes. 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).

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Field Supervisor, Raleigh Fish and Wildlife Office, P.O. Box 33726, Raleigh, NC 27636-3726, (telephone 919-856-4520; facsimile 919-856-4556). If you use a telecommunications device for the deaf (TDD), call the Federal Information Relay Service (FIRS) at 800-877-8339.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Public Comments

We will accept written comments and information during this reopened

comment period on our June 12, 2006, proposed rule to revise critical habitat for the wintering population of the piping plover in North Carolina (71 FR 33703), the additional areas of critical habitat proposed in this document, the amended required determinations provided in this document, and our revised DEA and environmental assessment of the proposed revised designation. We will consider information and recommendations from all interested parties. We are particularly interested in comments concerning:

(1) The reasons why we should or should not designate habitat as critical habitat under section 4 of the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended (16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.*), including whether the benefit of designation would outweigh any threats to the species due to designation, such that the designation of critical habitat is prudent.

(2) Specific information on:

- The amount and distribution of wintering piping plover habitat in North Carolina,
- What areas occupied at the time of listing that contain features essential for the conservation of the species we should include in the designation and why, and
- What areas not occupied at the time of listing are essential to the conservation of the species and why.

(3) Land use designations and current or planned activities in the subject areas and their possible impacts on proposed revised critical habitat.

(4) Any foreseeable economic, national security, or other relevant impacts resulting from the proposed revised designation and, in particular, any such impacts on small entities, and the benefits of including or excluding areas from the proposed revised designation.

(5) Any foreseeable environmental impacts directly or indirectly resulting from the proposed revised designation of critical habitat.

(6) Information regarding our identification, in our June 12, 2006, proposed rule, of specific areas as not being in need of special management.

(7) Information to assist the Secretary of the Interior in evaluating habitat with physical and biological features essential to the conservation of the piping plover on Cape Hatteras National Seashore, administered by the National Park Service, based on any benefit provided by the Interim Protected Species Management Strategy/Environmental Assessment (Interim Strategy; NPS 2006) to the conservation of the wintering piping plover.