



DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

RIN 0648-XD756

Endangered and Threatened Species; Initiation of 5-Year Reviews for 32 Listed Species of Pacific Salmon and Steelhead, Puget Sound Rockfishes, and Eulachon

AGENCY: National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Commerce.

ACTION: Notice of initiation of 5-year reviews; request for information.

SUMMARY: We, NMFS, announce 5-year reviews of 32 species listed under the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended (ESA): 17 evolutionarily significant units (ESUs) of Pacific salmon (*Oncorhynchus* spp.); 11 distinct population segments (DPSs) of steelhead (*Oncorhynchus mykiss*); the Puget Sound/Georgia Basin DPSs of yelloweye rockfish (*Sebastes ruberrimus*), canary rockfish (*S. pinniger*), and bocaccio rockfish (*S. paucispinis*); and the southern DPS of eulachon (*Thaleichthys pacificus*). The purpose of these reviews is to ensure the accuracy of the listing classifications of these threatened and endangered species. The 5-year reviews will be based on the best scientific and commercial data available at the time of the reviews; therefore, we request submission of any such information on these ESUs and DPSs that has become available since the original listing determinations, or since the species' status was last updated. Based on the results of these 5-year reviews, we will make the requisite determinations under the ESA.

DATES: To allow us adequate time to conduct these reviews, we must receive your information no later than INSERT DATE 90 DAYS AFTER DATE OF PUBLICATION IN THE

FEDERAL REGISTER]. However, we will continue to accept new information about any listed species at any time.

ADDRESSES: You may submit information on this document, identified by NOAA-NMFS-2015-0021, by any of the following methods:

- Electronic Submissions: Submit all electronic public comments via the Federal e-Rulemaking Portal www.regulations.gov. To submit comments via the e-Rulemaking Portal, first click the “submit a comment” icon, then enter NOAA-NMFS-2015-0021 in the keyword search. Locate the document you wish to comment on from the resulting list and click on the “Submit a Comment” icon on the right of that line.
- Mail or hand-delivery: Dr. Scott Rumsey, NMFS, West Coast Region, 1201 NE Lloyd Blvd, Suite 1100, Portland, OR 97232.

Instructions: Comments must be submitted by one of the above methods to ensure that the comments are received, documented, and considered by NMFS. 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. All comments received are a part of the public record and will generally be posted for public viewing on www.regulations.gov without change. All personal identifying information (e.g., name, address, etc.) submitted voluntarily by the sender will be publicly accessible. Do not submit confidential business information, or otherwise sensitive or protected information. NMFS will accept anonymous comments (enter “N/A” in the required fields if you wish to remain anonymous).

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Dr. Scott Rumsey at the above address, by phone at (503) 872-2791, or by e-mail at scott.rumsey@noaa.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Section 4(c)(2)(A) of the ESA requires that we conduct a review of listed species at least once every five years. On the basis of such reviews, we determine under section 4(c)(2)(B) whether a species should be delisted, or reclassified from endangered to threatened or from threatened to endangered.

We will undertake reviews for the following 17 Pacific salmon ESUs: (1) Sacramento River winter-run Chinook salmon, (2) Upper Columbia River spring-run Chinook salmon, (3) Snake River spring/summer-run Chinook salmon; (4) Central Valley spring-run Chinook salmon; (5) California Coastal Chinook salmon; (6) Puget Sound Chinook salmon; (7) Lower Columbia River Chinook salmon; (8) Upper Willamette River Chinook salmon; (9) Snake River fall-run Chinook salmon; (10) Hood Canal summer-run chum salmon; (11) Columbia River chum salmon; (12) Central California Coast coho salmon; (13) Southern Oregon/Northern California Coast coho salmon; (14) Lower Columbia River coho salmon; (15) Oregon Coast coho salmon; (16) Snake River sockeye salmon; and (17) Ozette Lake sockeye salmon. We will undertake reviews for the following 11 steelhead DPSs: (1) Southern California; (2) Upper Columbia River; (3) Middle Columbia River; (4) Snake River Basin; (5) Lower Columbia River; (6) Upper Willamette; (7) South-Central California Coast; (8) Central California Coast; (9) Northern California; (10) California Central Valley; and (11) Puget Sound. We will also conduct reviews for 4 non-salmonid DPSs: the three Puget Sound/Georgia Basin rockfish DPSs of yelloweye rockfish, canary rockfish, and bocaccio rockfish; and the southern DPS of eulachon. Information about these 32 ESUs and DPSs can be found at our West Coast regional website:

<http://www.westcoast.fisheries.noaa.gov>.

Our regulations for periodic reviews at 50 CFR 424.21 require that we publish a notice in the Federal Register announcing those species currently under active review. This notice announces our active reviews of the ESUs and DPSs listed above. Any change in listing classification would require a separate rulemaking process.

Determining if a Species is Threatened or Endangered

Section 4(a)(1) of the ESA requires that we determine whether a species is endangered or threatened based on one or more of the five following factors: (1) The present or threatened destruction, modification, or curtailment of its habitat or range; (2) overutilization for commercial, recreational, scientific, or educational purposes; (3) disease or predation; (4) the inadequacy of existing regulatory mechanisms; or (5) other natural or manmade factors affecting its continued existence. Section 4(b) also requires that our determination be made on the basis of the best scientific and commercial data available after taking into account those efforts, if any, being made to protect such species.

Application of the ESU and DPS Policies

NMFS is responsible for determining whether species, subspecies, or DPSs of marine and anadromous species are threatened or endangered under the ESA. For Pacific salmon, we use our Policy on Applying the Definition of Species under the ESA to Pacific Salmon (ESU Policy) (56 FR 58612) in determining the appropriate taxonomic unit for listing consideration. Under this policy, populations of salmon that are substantially reproductively isolated from other conspecific populations and that represent an important component in the evolutionary legacy of the biological species are considered to be an ESU. In our listing determinations for Pacific salmon under the ESA, we have treated an ESU as constituting a DPS, and hence a “species,” under the ESA.

For non-salmon species, including steelhead, NMFS applies the joint US Fish and Wildlife Service-NMFS DPS policy (61 FR 4722) in identifying the appropriate taxonomic unit for listing consideration. Under this policy, a DPS must be discrete from other conspecific populations, and it must be significant to its taxon. A group of organisms is discrete if it is “markedly separated from other populations of the same taxon as a consequence of physical, physiological, ecological, and behavioral factors.” Under the DPS Policy, if a population group is determined to be discrete, the agency must then consider whether it is significant to the taxon to which it belongs. Considerations in evaluating the significance of a discrete population include: (1) persistence of the discrete population in an unusual or unique ecological setting for the taxon; (2) evidence that the loss of the discrete population segment would cause a significant gap in the taxon’s range; (3) evidence that the discrete population segment represents the only surviving natural occurrence of a taxon that may be more abundant elsewhere outside its historical geographic range; or (4) evidence that the discrete population has marked genetic differences from other populations of the species.

On June 28, 2005, we announced a final policy addressing the role of artificially propagated (hatchery produced) Pacific salmon and steelhead in listing determinations under the ESA (70 FR 37204). Specifically, this policy: (1) establishes criteria for including hatchery stocks in ESUs and DPSs; (2) provides direction for considering hatchery fish in extinction risk assessments of ESUs and DPSs; (3) requires that hatchery fish determined to be part of an ESU will be included in any listing of the ESU; (4) affirms NMFS’ commitment to conserving natural salmon and steelhead populations and the ecosystems upon which they depend; and (5) affirms NMFS’ commitment to fulfilling trust and treaty obligations with regard to the harvest of some

Pacific salmon and steelhead populations, consistent with the conservation and recovery of listed salmon and steelhead ESUs.

Public Solicitation of New Information

The 5-year reviews will consider the best scientific and commercial data available, particularly new information that has become available since the species' previous status review. Our Northwest and Southwest Fisheries Science Centers will assist the West Coast Region in gathering and analyzing this information. To ensure that the 5-year reviews are complete and based on the best available information, we are soliciting new information from the public, concerned governmental agencies, tribes, the scientific community, industry, environmental entities, and any other interested parties concerning the status of the salmon ESUs as well as the steelhead, rockfish, and eulachon DPSs listed above.

Specifically, we request new information that has become available since the respective species' previous status review on: (1) population abundance; (2) population productivity; (3) changes in species distribution or population spatial structure; (4) genetics or other indicators of diversity; (5) changes in habitat conditions and associated limiting factors and threats; (6) conservation measures that have been implemented that benefit the species, including monitoring data demonstrating the effectiveness of such measures in addressing identified limiting factors or threats; (7) data concerning the status and trends of identified limiting factors or threats; (8) information that may affect determinations regarding the composition of an ESU or DPS; (9) for Pacific salmon and steelhead, information on changes to hatchery programs that may affect determinations regarding their ESU or DPS membership; (10) information on targeted harvest (commercial, tribal, and recreational) and bycatch of the species; and (11) other new information, data, or corrections including, but not limited to, taxonomic or nomenclatural changes,

identification of erroneous information in the previous listing determination, and improved analytical methods for evaluating extinction risk. Previous status reviews and supporting information are available on the internet at:

http://www.westcoast.fisheries.noaa.gov/publications/status_reviews/salmon_steelhead/2011_status_reviews_of_listed_salmon_steelhead.html.

With respect to Puget Sound/Strait of Georgia DPSs of yelloweye, canary, and bocaccio rockfish we also request any new information concerning: species' spatial distribution and habitat associations of larval, young of the year, and adult fish in the nearshore and deep waters; the effectiveness of regulations to protect and restore rockfish habitats; genetics; effects of contaminants on species productivity, growth, or survival; effects of climate change and ocean acidification on these rockfish species; catch or bycatch of these species in specific fisheries, including information on the ability of anglers to properly identify rockfish by species; the effectiveness of fisheries management in reducing impacts on these rockfish species; efforts to remove and prevent derelict fishing gear; enumeration of bycatch by derelict fishing gear; and the use and effectiveness of devices designed to reduce the effects of barotrauma in rockfish bycatch.

With respect to the southern DPS of eulachon, we also request any new information concerning: species' spatial distribution and abundance in freshwater and marine environments; genetics; the effects of natural climate variability and anthropogenically forced climate change on eulachon and their freshwater and marine habitat; the effects of ocean acidification on eulachon; eulachon bycatch in the ocean shrimp fisheries; predation on eulachon; and the effects of dams and large-scale water control structures on estuary-plume environments and eulachon.

If you wish to provide information for these 5-year reviews, see ADDRESSES for instructions. We request that all information be accompanied by: (1) supporting documentation such as maps, bibliographic references, or reprints of pertinent publications. We also would appreciate the submitter's name, address, and any association, institution, or business that the person represents; however, anonymous submissions will also be accepted.

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

Dated: February 2, 2015.

Angela Somma, Chief, Endangered Species Division, Office of Protected Resources,
National Marine Fisheries Service.

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