

ADDRESSES: Written comments and materials concerning this proposal should be sent directly to the Field Supervisor, Ventura Field Office, 2493 Portola Road, Suite B, Ventura, California 93003. Comments and materials received will be available for public inspection, by appointment, during normal business hours at the above address.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Diane Steeck (see **ADDRESSES** section) at 805/644-1766.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Background

The seven taxa included within the proposed rule occur in Inyo, Mono, Riverside, San Bernardino, and Imperial Counties within California; Mineral and Nye Counties in Nevada; and northeastern Baja California, Mexico. Like many taxa in the genus *Astragalus*, these seven taxa are endemic to habitats with specific substrate or hydrologic conditions and are, therefore, naturally limited in distribution by the availability of habitat. Five of the seven taxa occur primarily on public lands.

The seven plant taxa may be threatened by one or more of the following: off-road vehicle (ORV) use, grazing and trampling by livestock and feral burros, competition from alien plants, urban development, alteration of soil hydrology, and construction related to fisheries development. Several of the plants may also be threatened with random naturally occurring events by virtue of their small numbers and population sizes.

On May 8, 1992, the Service published a rule proposing endangered status for *Astragalus jaegerianus*, *A. lentiginosus* var. *coachellae*, *A. lentiginosus* var. *piscinensis*, *A. magdalenae* var. *peirsonii*, and *A. lentiginosus* var. *micans*; and threatened status for *A. tricarinatus* and *A. lentiginosus* var. *sesquimetalis* (57 FR 19844). The original comment period closed on July 7, 1992.

The Service was unable to make a final listing determination on these species because of a limited budget, other endangered species assignments driven by court orders, and higher listing priorities. In addition, a moratorium on listing actions (Public Law 104-6), which took effect on April 10, 1995, stipulated that no funds could be used to make final listing or critical habitat determinations. Now that limited funding has been restored and

the President has waived the moratorium on the use of appropriated funds for final listing and critical habitat determinations, the Service is proceeding with a final determination for these seven plants. This final decision, however, must address and consider any changes in the administration of desert lands since 1992, like the lands transferred from the Bureau of Land Management to the National Park Service, and any conservation efforts, like the West Mohave Conservation Plan, that may have influenced management of desert areas.

Due to the length of time that has elapsed since the close of the initial comment period, changing procedural and biological circumstances and the need to review the best scientific and commercial information available during the decision-making process, the comment period is being reopened. The Service particularly seeks information that has become available in the last four years, concerning:

- (1) Biological, commercial, or other relevant data on any threat (or lack thereof) to these species;
- (2) Additional information on the size, number, or distribution of populations; and
- (3) Whether one or more of these plant species are subject to conservation agreements or other protection instruments, and their possible impacts to such species.

Written comments may now be submitted until October 18, 1996 to the Service office in the **ADDRESSES** section.

Author

The primary author of this notice is Diane Steeck (see **ADDRESSES** section).

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

Dated: August 26, 1996.

Thomas Dwyer,

Acting Regional Director, Region 1.

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50 CFR Part 21

Availability of a Draft Environmental Assessment on Permits for Control of Injurious Canada Geese and Request for Comments on Potential Regulations

AGENCY: Fish and Wildlife Service, Interior.

ACTION: Notice of availability.

SUMMARY: This notice advises the public that a Draft Environmental Assessment on Permits for Control of Injurious Canada Geese is available for public review and announces the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's (hereinafter Service) intent to consider regulatory changes to the process for issuing these permits. Comments and suggestions are requested.

DATES: Written comments are requested by October 18, 1996.

ADDRESSES: Copies of the Draft Environmental Assessment can be obtained by writing to the Chief, Office of Migratory Bird Management, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, room 634—Arlington Square, Washington, DC 20240. Written comments can be sent to the same address.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Mr. Paul R. Schmidt, Chief, Office of Migratory Bird Management, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, (703) 358-1714.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The Draft Environmental Assessment reviews the existing regulations governing issuance of permits to control injurious Canada geese. The Assessment was prompted by requests from States and the U. S. Department of Agriculture to improve the permit issuance process. The Assessment deals only with how permits are issued and does not address specific control measures used to control injury problems in the field. The Service's proposed action is to issue a blanket permit to State Conservation Agencies and/or the U. S. Department of Agriculture on a State-specific basis. This permit will be limited to the period March 11 through August 31 to avoid conflicts with existing hunting seasons. This approach is intended to provide a quicker response time to problem situations, allow for greater local oversight in control actions, and reduce government administrative costs and overhead related to issuance of these permits. Three alternatives, including the proposed action, are considered.

Dated: August 23, 1996

George T. Frampton, Jr.

Assistant Secretary for Fish and Wildlife and Parks

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