

the Director within 30 days of the date of this publication.

Documents and other information submitted with these applications are available for review, subject to the requirements of the Privacy Act and Freedom of Information Act, by any party who submits a written request for a copy of such documents to the following office within 30 days of the date of publication of this notice. U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Office of Management Authority, 4401 North Fairfax Drive, Room 700, Arlington, Virginia 22203. Phone: (703/358-2104); FAX: (703/358-2281).

Dated: September 22, 2000.

**Charlie Chandler,**

*Chief, Branch of Permits, Division of Management Authority.*

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## DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

### Fish and Wildlife Service

#### Issuance of Permit for Marine Mammals

On July 13, 2000, a notice was published in the **Federal Register**, Vol. 65, No. 135, Page 43380, that an application had been filed with the Fish and Wildlife Service by James L. Scull, Jr., for a permit (PRT-029977) to import one polar bear (*Ursus maritimus*) trophy taken from the Lancaster Sound population, Canada for personal use.

Notice is hereby given that on September 12, 2000, as authorized by the provisions of the Marine Mammal Protection Act of 1972, as amended (16 U.S.C. 1361 *et seq.*) the Fish and Wildlife Service authorized the requested permit subject to certain conditions set forth therein.

Dated: September 22, 2000.

**Charlie Chandler,**

*Chief, Branch of Permits, Division of Management Authority.*

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## DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

### Fish and Wildlife Service

#### Notice of Availability of a Draft Recovery Plan for the Bog Turtle, Northern Population, for Review and Comment

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

**ACTION:** Notice of document availability.

**SUMMARY:** The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service announces the availability for public review of a draft Recovery Plan for the allopatric northern population of the bog turtle (*Clemmys muhlenbergii*). The bog turtle's northern population was listed as a threatened species on November 4, 1997. Although this population is currently known to occur in a total of 360 sites in the states of Connecticut, Delaware, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Jersey, New York, and Pennsylvania, it has experienced at least a 50 percent reduction in range and numbers over the past 20 years. The greatest threats to the long-term survival of the northern bog turtle population include the loss, degradation, and fragmentation of its habitat, compounded by the increasing take of long-lived adult animals from wild populations for illegal wildlife trade. The overall objective of the bog turtle recovery program is to protect and maintain the northern allopatric population of this species and its habitat by securing protection for at least 185 populations distributed across the species' range, and ensuring that these populations are stable or increasing. The Service solicits review and comment from the public on this draft Plan.

**DATES:** Comments on the draft Recovery Plan must be received by November 27, 2000 to receive consideration by the Service.

**ADDRESSES:** Persons wishing to review the draft Recovery Plan can obtain a copy from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Pennsylvania Field Office, 315 South Allen Street, Suite 322, State College, Pennsylvania 16801. Comments should be sent to this address, to the attention of Carole Copeyon.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Carole Copeyon (see **ADDRESSES**), telephone 814-234-4090.

#### **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:**

##### **Background**

Restoring an endangered or threatened animal or plant to the point where it is again a secure, self-sustaining member of its ecosystem is a primary goal of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's endangered species program. To help guide the recovery effort, the Service is working to prepare Recovery Plans for most of the listed species native to the United States. Recovery Plans describe actions considered necessary for conservation of the species, establish criteria for the recovery levels for downlisting or delisting them, and estimate time and cost for implementing the recovery measures needed.

The Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended (16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.*), requires the development of Recovery Plans for listed species unless such a Plan would not promote the conservation of a particular species. Section 4(f) of the Act, as amended in 1988, requires that public notice and an opportunity for public review and comment be provided during Recovery Plan development. The Service will consider all information presented during a public comment period prior to approval of each new or revised Recovery Plan. The Service and other Federal agencies will also take these comments into account in the course of implementing Recovery Plans.

The document submitted for review is the Agency Draft Bog Turtle (*Clemmys muhlenbergii*), Northern Population, Recovery Plan. The northern population of the bog turtle was listed as a threatened species on November 4, 1997. This population is currently known to occur in Connecticut (5 sites), Delaware (4), Maryland (71), Massachusetts (3), New Jersey (165), New York (37), and Pennsylvania (75). Bog turtles usually occur in small, discrete populations, generally occupying open-canopy, herbaceous sedge meadows and fens bordered by wooded areas. These wetlands are a mosaic of micro-habitats that include dry pockets, saturated areas, and areas that are periodically flooded. Bog turtles depend upon this diversity of micro-habitats for foraging, nesting, basking, hibernation and shelter. Unfragmented riparian systems that are sufficiently dynamic to allow the natural creation of open habitat are needed to compensate for ecological succession. Beaver, deer, and cattle may be instrumental in maintaining the open-canopy wetlands essential for this species' survival.

The bog turtle has experienced at least a 50 percent reduction in range and numbers over the past 20 years. The greatest threats to its survival include the loss, degradation, and fragmentation of its habitat, compounded by the increasing take of long-lived adult animals from wild populations for illegal wildlife trade.

The overall objective of the bog turtle recovery program is to protect and maintain the northern allopatric population of this species and its habitat. This will be accomplished by (1) securing long-range protection for at least 185 populations distributed among five recovery units: 10 in the Prairie Peninsula/Lake Plain Recovery Unit, 5 in the Outer Coastal Plain Recovery Unit, 40 in the Hudson/Housatonic Recovery Unit, 50 in the Susquehanna/Potomac Recovery Unit, and 80 in the