

Dated: August 1, 2003.

**Michael S. Moore,**

Senior Permit Biologist, Branch of Permits,  
Division of Management Authority.

[FR Doc. 03-20802 Filed 8-14-03; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4310-55-P

## DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

### Fish and Wildlife Service

#### Receipt of Applications for Permit

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

**ACTION:** Notice of receipt of applications for permit.

**SUMMARY:** The public is invited to comment on the following applications to conduct certain activities with endangered species and/or marine mammals.

**DATES:** Written data, comments or requests must be received by September 15, 2003.

**ADDRESSES:** 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 within 30 days of the date of publication of this notice to: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Division of Management Authority, 4401 North Fairfax Drive, Room 700, Arlington, Virginia 22203; fax 703/358-2281.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Division of Management Authority, telephone 703/358-2104.

#### SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

#### Endangered Species

The public is invited to comment on the following application(s) for a permit to conduct certain activities with endangered species. This notice is provided pursuant to Section 10(c) of the Endangered Species Act of 1973, *as amended* (16 U.S.C. 1531, *et seq.*). Written data, comments, or requests for copies of these complete applications should be submitted to the Director (address above).

#### PRT-075020

*Applicant:* David R. Curl, Carrollton, TX.

The applicant requests a permit to import the sport-hunted trophy of one male bontebok (*Damaliscus pygargus dorcas*) culled from a captive herd maintained under the management program of the Republic of South Africa, for the purpose of enhancement of the survival of the species.

#### PRT-075282

*Applicant:* James G. Kehler, III,  
Woodbury, NJ.

The applicant requests a permit to import the sport-hunted trophy of one male bontebok (*Damaliscus pygargus dorcas*) culled from a captive herd maintained under the management program of the Republic of South Africa, for the purpose of enhancement of the survival of the species.

#### Endangered Marine Mammals and Marine Mammals

The public is invited to comment on the following application for a permit to conduct certain activities with endangered marine mammals and/or marine mammals. The application was submitted to satisfy requirements of the Endangered Species Act of 1973, *as amended* (16 U.S.C. 1531, *et seq.*) and/or the Marine Mammal Protection Act of 1972, *as amended* (16 U.S.C. 1361 *et seq.*), and the regulations governing endangered species (50 CFR Part 17) and/or marine mammals (50 CFR Part 18). Written data, comments, or requests for copies of the complete applications or requests for a public hearing on these applications should be submitted to the Director (address above). Anyone requesting a hearing should give specific reasons why a hearing would be appropriate. The holding of such a hearing is at the discretion of the Director.

#### PRT-075190

*Applicant:* Byron H. Christie, San Angelo, TX.

The applicant requests a permit to import a polar bear (*Ursus maritimus*) sport hunted from the Viscount Melville Sound polar bear population in Canada for personal use.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has information collection approval from OMB through March 31, 2004, OMB Control Number 1018-0093. Federal agencies may not conduct or sponsor and a person is not required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a current valid OMB control number.

Dated: August 1, 2003.

**Michael S. Moore,**

Senior Permit Biologist, Branch of Permits,  
Division of Management Authority.

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## DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

### Fish and Wildlife Service

#### Endangered Species; Permit

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

**ACTION:** Notice of Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) and issuance of permit for Incidental Take of Endangered Species.

**SUMMARY:** On June 4, 2003, a FONSI determination was made for the action as described in the final Environmental Assessment. As authorized by the provisions of the Endangered Species Act (Act), as amended, the Service issued an Incidental Take Permit to the Long Point Homeowner's Association subject to certain conditions set forth therein.

**ADDRESSES:** Mr. Peter Fasbender, Regional Permits Coordinator, 1 Federal Drive, Fort Snelling, Minnesota 55111-4056.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Additional information on this permit may be requested by contacting Mr. Peter Fasbender, at (612) 713-5343, or [peter\\_fasbender@fws.gov](mailto:peter_fasbender@fws.gov). The final Environmental Assessment and final Habitat Conservation Plan can be viewed on the Service's Regional Web site at: <http://midwest.fws.gov/NEPA>.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** On March 17, 2003, a notice was published in the **Federal Register** (68 FR 12711) announcing that a draft Environmental Assessment and Habitat Conservation Plan and that a permit application had been filed with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service by the Long Point Homeowner's Association, Kellys Island, Erie County, Ohio. The permit was to incidentally take, pursuant to section 10(a)(1)(B) of the Act, Lake Erie water snake (*Nerodia sipedon insularum*) within the Long Point Subdivision pursuant to the terms of the Habitat Conservation Plan.

Notice is hereby given that on June 4, 2003, the Proposed Action (Alternative 3) was selected and a FONSI determination was made for the action as described in the final Environmental Assessment. As authorized by the provisions of the Act, the Service issued a permit (TE-072436) to the above-named party subject to certain conditions set forth therein. The permit was granted only after the Service determined it was applied for in good faith, that granting the permit would not be to the disadvantage of the endangered species, and that granting the permit was consistent with the purposes and policy set forth in the Act.

Dated: July 24, 2003.

**TJ Miller,**

*Acting Assistant Regional Director, Ecological Services, Region 3, Fort Snelling, Minnesota.*

[FR Doc. 03-20828 Filed 8-14-03; 8:45 am]

**BILLING CODE 4310-55-P**

## DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

### Fish and Wildlife Service

#### **Notice of Availability of the Higgins' Eye Pearlymussel (*Lampsilis higginsii*) Draft Revised Recovery Plan for Review and Comment**

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

**ACTION:** Notice of document availability.

**SUMMARY:** The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) announces availability for public review of the draft revised recovery plan for the Higgins' eye pearlymussel (*Lampsilis higginsii*), a species that is federally listed as endangered under the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (Act). The purpose of this plan is to recover this species so that it can be removed from the list of Threatened and Endangered Species. This species occurs in the Mississippi River and tributaries to the Mississippi River in Illinois, Iowa, Minnesota, Missouri, and Wisconsin. The Service solicits review and comment from the public on this draft plan.

**DATES:** Comments on the draft recovery plan must be received on or before October 14, 2003.

**ADDRESSES:** Persons wishing to review the draft recovery plan may obtain a copy by contacting the Field Supervisor, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Ecological Services Field Office, 4101 E. 80th St., Bloomington, MN 55425 (telephone (612) 725-3548) or by accessing the following Web site: <http://midwest.fws.gov/Endangered>.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Mr. Phil Delphey at the above address, or telephone at (612) 725-3548 ext. 206. TTY users may contact Mr. Delphey through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339.

#### **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 Service's endangered species program. To help guide the recovery effort, the Service is working to prepare recovery plans for most of the federally listed threatened and endangered species native to the United States.

Recovery plans describe actions considered necessary for conservation of the species, establish criteria for reclassification and delisting, and provide estimates of the time and costs for implementing the recovery measures needed.

The Act 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 public notice and opportunity for public review and comment be provided during recovery plan development. The Service will consider all information presented during a public comment period before approval of each new or revised recovery plan. The Service and other Federal agencies will also take these comments into consideration in the course of implementing approved recovery plans.

Higgins' eye pearlymussel is currently listed as endangered. Studies before 1993 indicated healthy populations of Higgins' eye in the Upper Mississippi River drainage, with no apparent significant declines in its distribution or abundance. In fact, new information since completion of the first recovery plan in 1983 extended its known range by 180 river-miles. There was concern, however, that a major flood in 1993 and the infestation of the Mississippi River by the non-native zebra mussel (*Dreissena polymorpha*) may have posed serious threats to the continued existence of Higgins' eye. In response to these threats and information, the Service convened a recovery team to review the status of the species and to revise the initial recovery plan, if necessary. The team commissioned a review of all research conducted on the species since 1980 and a survey of all sites designated as Essential Habitat Areas in the 1983 recovery plan. During the development of this revised recovery plan, new information came forward that suggested a significant impact of zebra mussels on Higgins' eye, and the team believes there is now a significant risk that the distribution and abundance of this species will be severely compromised.

The initial Higgins' Eye Pearlymussel Recovery Plan listed seven locations as primary habitats (called Essential Habitat Areas in this document) and nine locations as potential secondary habitats. This revised plan includes 10 Essential Habitat Areas—6 in the Mississippi River between river-miles 489 and 656, 1 in the Wisconsin River, and 3 in the St. Croix River, which empties into the Mississippi River at river-mile 811. Higgins' eye also occurs

elsewhere in the Mississippi River. This revised plan recommends that surveys be conducted in several specific areas to better describe other potentially important habitats and also outlines specific criteria for evaluating additional areas as essential habitat. The plan recommends the development of a uniform protocol for collecting information on populations of Higgins' eye. Use of this protocol will allow for ongoing evaluation of the list of Essential Habitat Areas and progress towards recovery.

The removal of zebra mussels in a manner and scale necessary to benefit Higgins' eye is not currently feasible. Therefore, the plan focuses on developing methods to prevent new infestations, monitoring zebra mussels at Essential Habitat Areas, and developing and implementing contingency plans to alleviate impacts to infested populations. Based on recent activities, the latter may consist largely of removing Higgins' eye from areas where zebra mussels pose an imminent threat and releasing them into suitable habitats within their historical range where zebra mussels are not an imminent threat. Cleaning fouled adults in situ and artificial propagation and release are also currently being implemented in an attempt to alleviate the effects of zebra mussels on the conservation of Higgins' eye.

Although zebra mussels are currently the most important threat to Higgins' eye, construction activities and environmental contaminants may also pose significant threats. Therefore, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and other agencies must continue to assess and limit the potential impacts of their actions on Higgins' eye. The plan also outlines tasks needed to improve our understanding of the potential importance that contaminants play in the conservation of Higgins' eye and calls on the U.S. Coast Guard, Environmental Protection Agency, and other agencies to take actions to minimize the potential impacts of toxic spills.

The goal of this plan is to provide a framework for the recovery of the Higgins' eye pearlymussel so that protection by the Act is no longer necessary and the species can be considered for removal from the list of Endangered and Threatened Wildlife and Plants (50 CFR part 17). Higgins' eye may be considered for reclassification from endangered to threatened when at least five identified Essential Habitat Areas contain reproducing, self-sustaining populations of Higgins' eye that are not threatened by zebra mussels. Delisting Higgins' eye