

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).

Applicant: Russell Davis, Sherwood, OR, PRT-069654.

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.

Applicant: David W. Inouye, University of Maryland, College Park, Maryland, PRT-067661.

The applicant requests a permit to import hair samples from golden langur (*Trachypithecus geei*) and capped langur (*Trachypithecus pileatus*) collected in the wild in Bhutan, for scientific research. This notification covers activities conducted by the applicant over a five year period.

Marine Mammals

The public is invited to comment on the following application(s) for a permit to conduct certain activities with marine mammals. The application(s) was submitted to satisfy requirements of the Marine Mammal Protection Act of 1972, as amended (16 U.S.C. 1361 *et seq.*) and the regulations governing 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.

Applicant: Felix F. Gardina, Ghent, NY, PRT-069177.

The applicant requests a permit to import a polar bear (*Ursus maritimus*) sport hunted from the Southern Beaufort Sea 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: March 28, 2003.

Monica Farris,

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

[FR Doc. 03-9972 Filed 4-22-03; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4310-55-P

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Fish and Wildlife Service

Availability of the Recovery Plan for the Alaska-Breeding Population of the Steller's Eider (*Polysticta stelleri*)

AGENCY: Fish and Wildlife Service, Interior.

ACTION: Notice of document availability.

SUMMARY: The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) announces the availability of the final recovery plan for the threatened Alaska-breeding population of the Steller's eider (*Polysticta stelleri*). The threatened Alaska-breeding population of Steller's eiders occurs in disjunct coastal and marine areas in northern and western Alaska. Although formerly locally common in portions of western and northern Alaska, they have nearly disappeared from western Alaska, and only hundreds or low thousands exist in northern Alaska. Causes of the decline are poorly understood. Recovery tasks include reduction of exposure to lead shot and other forms of human-caused mortality, acquisition of information on population parameters and ecology, re-establishment of the western Alaska subpopulation, and development of partnerships for recovery efforts.

ADDRESSES: Copies of this recovery plan are available by request from the Fairbanks Fish and Wildlife Office, 101 12th Ave., Box 19, Rm 110, Fairbanks, AK 99701 (telephone 907/456-0203; facsimile 907/456-0208) or from Fish and Wildlife Service, 5430 Grosvenor Lane, Suite 110, Bethesda, Maryland 20814, (301/429-6403 or 1-800-582-3421). The fee for the plan varies depending on the number of pages of the plan. This recovery plan will be made available on the World Wide Web at <http://endangered.fws.gov/RECOVERY/RECPLANS/Index.htm>.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Ted Swem, Endangered Species Branch Chief, at the above Fairbanks address.

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 guide recovery, the Service is working to prepare recovery plans for most listed species native to the United States. Recovery plans describe actions considered necessary for conservation of species, establish criteria for downlisting or delisting, and estimate time and cost for implementing the recovery measures needed.

The Endangered Species Act of 1973 (Act), 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. Information presented during the public comment period has been considered in the preparation of this final recovery plan. We will forward substantive comments regarding recovery plan implementation to appropriate Federal or other entities so that they can take these comments into account during the course of implementing recovery actions.

Three breeding populations of Steller's eiders are recognized: two in Arctic Russia and one in Alaska. Neither Russian population is listed as threatened or endangered. The Alaska-breeding population is the only population listed as threatened or endangered, and this recovery plan pertains exclusively to the conservation of this population.

The Alaska-breeding population was listed as threatened under the Act on June 11, 1997 (62 FR 31748). The decision to list the Alaska-breeding population of Steller's eiders as threatened was based on a substantial decrease in the species' nesting range in Alaska and the resulting increased vulnerability of the remaining breeding population to extirpation. When the Alaska-breeding population of the Steller's eider was listed as threatened, the factor or factors causing the decline were unknown. Factors identified as potential causes of decline included predation, hunting, ingestion of spent lead shot in wetlands, and changes in the marine environment that could

affect Steller's eider food or other resources. Since listing, other potential threats have been identified, but the causes of decline and obstacles to recovery remain poorly understood. Accordingly, a significant number of early recovery tasks will involve research to identify threats and evaluate their impacts.

The objective of this plan is to establish a framework for the recovery of the Steller's eider so that protection by the Act is no longer necessary. Interim objectives are: (1) To prevent further declines of the Alaska-breeding population (including both the northern and western Alaska subpopulations); (2) to protect Alaska-breeding Steller's eiders and their habitats; (3) to identify and alleviate causes of decline and/or obstacles to recovery; and (4) to determine size, trends, and distribution of the northern and western Alaska-breeding subpopulations. The recovery plan provides criteria and threshold population levels for delisting and reclassification (*i.e.*, from threatened to endangered).

Authority: The authority for this action is Section 4(f) of the Endangered Species Act, 16 U.S.C. 1533(f).

Dated: March 31, 2003.

David B. Allen,

Regional Director.

[FR Doc. 03-9893 Filed 4-22-03; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4310-55-P

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Fish and Wildlife Service

Availability of Proposed Safe Harbor Agreement for the Pueblo of Santa Ana, Sandoval County, New Mexico

AGENCY: Fish and Wildlife Service, Interior.

ACTION: Notice of availability, receipt of application.

SUMMARY: The Pueblo of Santa Ana (Applicant), Sandoval County, New Mexico, has applied to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) for an enhancement for survival permit pursuant to section 10(a)(1)(A) of the Endangered Species Act (Act). The Applicant has been assigned permit number TE-049290-0. The permit request is for a period of 25 years. The permit application includes a proposed Safe Harbor Agreement (SHA) for the endangered Rio Grande silvery minnow (*Hybognathus amarus*), the endangered southwestern willow flycatcher (*Empidonax traillii extimus*), and the threatened bald eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*).

Based upon guidance in the Service's June 17, 1999, Final Safe Harbor Policy, if a SHA and associated permit are not expected to individually or cumulatively have a significant impact on the quality of the human environment or other natural resources, the Agreement/permit may be categorically excluded from undergoing National Environmental Policy Act review. The Service has made a preliminary determination that this proposed action is eligible for categorical exclusion and this notice is provided pursuant to Section 10(c) of the Act and National Environmental Policy Act regulations (40 CFR 1506.6). The Service explains the basis for this preliminary determination in an Environmental Action Statement, which is also available for public review.

We, the Service, announce the opening of a 30-day comment period and request comments from the public on the Applicant's enhancement of survival permit application, the accompanying proposed SHA, and the environmental action statement. All comments received will become part of the administrative record and may be released to the public.

DATES: Written comments on the application, proposed SHA, or environmental action statement should be received on or before 30 days from date of publication in the **Federal Register**.

ADDRESSES: Comments should be addressed to Field Supervisor, New Mexico Ecological Services Field Office, 2105 Osuna Road, Albuquerque, New Mexico 87113 (505/346-2525). Please refer to permit number TE-049290-0. You may obtain copies of the documents from the field office address above or by calling 505-346-2525.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Field Supervisor, New Mexico Ecological Services Field Office, 2105 Osuna Road, Albuquerque, New Mexico 87113; telephone: (505) 346-2525, facsimile (505) 346-2542.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION

Background

Under a Safe Harbor Agreement, participating property owners voluntarily undertake management activities on their property to enhance, restore, or maintain habitat benefitting species listed under the Act. Safe Harbor Agreements encourage private and other non-Federal property owners to implement conservation efforts for listed species by assuring property owners they will not be subjected to increased property use restrictions if their efforts attract listed species to their

property or increase the numbers or distribution of listed species already on their property. Application requirements and issuance criteria for enhancement of survival permits through Safe Harbor Agreements are found in 50 CFR 17.22 and 17.32.

The proposed SHA would cover the natural resource programs of Santa Ana Pueblo, Sandoval County, New Mexico, including: ecosystem restoration, range/wildlife, and water resources. The Applicant's ecosystem restoration program proposes to restore riparian, wetland, and riverine habitat along the Rio Grande and the Rio Jemez within the boundaries of the Pueblo.

Restoration activities include replacing non-native plant species and restoring native wildlife habitat. The range/wildlife program proposes to improve the health of rangeland on Santa Ana Pueblo by continuing to exclude livestock from some riparian areas, conducting fish and wildlife surveys, and developing fire management plans. Activities conducted under the water resources program propose to develop water quality standards, water rights establishment, municipal wellhead protection, and planning and implementing projects through the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's section 319 program.

The Applicant is proposing to conduct ecological restoration projects along the Rio Grande and Rio Jemez corridors. We anticipate this proposed SHA will result in the following benefits: (1) Construction of two additional gradient restoration facilities, which are sloping rock structures that provide river channel stabilization while maintaining fish passage; (2) prevention of further channel degradation within Santa Ana Pueblo by creating river reaches with low velocity flow; (3) replacement non-native vegetation with native willow (*Salix* sp.) and cottonwood (*Populus* spp.); (4) re-engineering of the river channel and lower adjacent river bars to widen the channel and encourage overbank flooding; (5) creation of backwater habitat, including a healthy riparian zone; (6) continuation of livestock exclusions from various riparian areas; and (7) encouragement of recruitment of native riparian habitat, including the regeneration of mature cottonwood stands. The conservation provided by this proposed 25-year SHA is intended to improve habitat conditions by maintaining and enhancing habitat, reducing the likelihood that the river channel will become narrower and deeper, increasing the opportunities for overbank flooding and a higher water table.