

PRT-119904

Applicant: The Alaska Zoo, Anchorage, AK.

The applicant requests a permit to import one male captive-born polar bear (*Ursus maritimus*) from Sea World of Australia, Gold Coast, Australia for the purpose of public display.

Concurrent with the publication of this notice in the **Federal Register**, the Division of Management Authority is forwarding copies of the above applications to the Marine Mammal Commission and the Committee of Scientific Advisors for their review.

Dated: February 24, 2006.

Michael S. Moore,

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

[FR Doc. E6-3322 Filed 3-8-06; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4310-55-P

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR**Fish and Wildlife Service**

Notice of Availability of an Environmental Assessment and Receipt of an Application for an Incidental Take Permit for the East Valley Centre, City of Highland, San Bernardino County, CA

AGENCY: Fish and Wildlife Service, Interior.

ACTION: Notice of availability and receipt of application.

SUMMARY: National Equity Engineering (Applicant) has applied to the Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) for an incidental take permit pursuant to section 10(a)(1)(B) of the Endangered Species Act (Act) of 1973, as amended. The Service is considering issuing a 3-year permit to the Applicant that would authorize take of the federally endangered San Bernardino kangaroo rat (*Dipodomys merriami parvus*; "SBKR"). The proposed permit would authorize the take of individual members of SBKR. The permit is needed by the Applicant because take of SBKR could occur during the proposed construction of a commercial development on a 15.6-acre site in the City of Highland, San Bernardino County, California.

The permit application includes the proposed Habitat Conservation Plan (Plan), which describes the proposed action and the measures that the Applicant will undertake to minimize and mitigate take of the SBKR.

DATES: Written comments on or before May 8, 2006.

ADDRESSES: Send written comments to Mr. Jim Bartel, Field Supervisor, Fish and Wildlife Service, 6010 Hidden Valley Road, Carlsbad, California 92011. You also may send comments by facsimile to (760) 918-0638.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Ms. Karen Goebel, Assistant Field Supervisor [See **ADDRESSES**] or call (760) 431-9440.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:**Availability of Documents**

You may obtain copies of these documents for review by contacting the above office. Documents also will be available for public inspection, by appointment, during normal business hours at the above address and at the San Bernardino County Libraries. Addresses for the San Bernardino County Libraries are: (1) 27167 Base Line, Highland, CA 92346; (2) 25581 Barton Road, Loma Linda, CA 92354; (3) 251 West 1st Street, Rialto, CA 92376; and, (4) 104 West Fourth Street, San Bernardino, CA 92415.

Background

Section 9 of the Act and Federal regulations prohibit the "take" of fish and wildlife species listed as endangered or threatened. Take of federally listed fish and wildlife is defined under the Act to include "harass, harm, pursue, hunt, shoot, wound, kill, trap, capture, or collect, or to attempt to engage in any such conduct." The Service may, under limited circumstances, issue permits to authorize incidental take (i.e., take that is incidental to, and not the purpose of, the carrying out of an otherwise lawful activity). Regulations governing incidental take permits for threatened and endangered species are found in 50 CFR 17.32 and 17.22.

The Applicant is proposing development of commercial facilities on 15.6 acres of land in the City of Highland, San Bernardino County, California. The project site is bordered on the west by the northbound off-ramp of the I-210 Freeway for Fifth Street and on the north by Fifth Street. A vacant lot and public storage facility border the project site to the east, and a berm separates the project site from the Plunge Creek flood control basins, aggregate operations and the Santa Ana Wash to the south. The site is currently disked on an annual basis for weed control.

Approximately one acre of SBKR habitat on site is considered occupied as live-in habitat along the southern and eastern periphery and a dirt road in the middle of the project site. The Service

has determined that the proposed development would result in incidental take of the SBKR. No other federally listed species are known to utilize the site.

To mitigate take of SBKR on the project site, the Applicant proposes to purchase credits towards conservation in-perpetuity of three acres of Riversidean alluvial fan sage scrub from the Cajon Creek Conservation Bank in eastern San Bernardino Valley. The conservation bank collects fees that fund a management endowment to ensure the permanent management and monitoring of sensitive species and habitats, including the SBKR.

The Service's Environmental Assessment considers the environmental consequences of four alternatives, including: (1) The Proposed Project Alternative, which consists of issuance of the incidental take permit and implementation of the Plan; (2) the Alternative Site Layout, which would avoid direct effects resulting in take of SBKR during project construction and provide no offsite conservation; and (3) the No Action Alternative, which would result in no impacts to SBKR and no conservation.

National Environmental Policy Act

Proposed permit issuance triggers the need for compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). Accordingly, a draft NEPA document has been prepared. The Service is the Lead Agency responsible for compliance under NEPA. As NEPA lead agency, the Service is providing notice of the availability and is making available for public review the Environmental Assessment.

Public Review

The Service invites the public to review the Plan and Environmental Assessment during a 60-day public comment period [see **DATES**]. Any comments received, including names and addresses, will become part of the official administrative record and may be made available to the public.

This notice is provided pursuant to section 10(a) of the Act and the regulations for implementing NEPA, as amended (40 CFR 1506.6). We will evaluate the application, associated documents, and comments submitted thereon to determine whether the application meets the requirements of NEPA regulations and section 10(a) of the Act. If we determine that those requirements are met, we will issue a permit to the Applicant for the incidental take of the SBKR. We will make our final permit decision no

sooner than 60 days from the date of this notice.

Dated: March 3, 2006.

Ken McDermond,

Deputy Manager, California/Nevada Operations Office, Sacramento, California.
[FR Doc. E6-3351 Filed 3-8-06; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Fish and Wildlife Service

Migratory Bird Hunting; Notice of Intent To Prepare a Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement on the Sport Hunting of Migratory Birds

AGENCY: Fish and Wildlife Service, Interior.

ACTION: Notice of meetings.

SUMMARY: The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service or we) is issuing this notice to invite public participation in the scoping process for preparing a Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Sport Hunting of Migratory Birds under the authority of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act. The SEIS will consider a range of management alternatives for addressing sport hunting of migratory birds under the authority of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act. The Service seeks suggestions and comments on the scope and substance of this supplemental EIS, options or alternatives to be considered, and important management issues. Federal and State agencies and the public are invited to present their views on the subject to the Service. This notice invites further public participation in the scoping process, identifies the location, date, and time of public scoping meetings, and identifies to whom you may direct questions and comments.

DATES: You must submit written comments regarding EIS scoping by May 30, 2006, to the address below. All comments received from the initiation of this process on September 8, 2005, until May 30, 2006, will be considered. Dates for twelve public scoping meetings are identified in the **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION** section.

ADDRESSES: You should send written comments to the Chief, Division of Migratory Bird Management, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Department of the Interior, MS MBSP-4107-ARLSQ, 1849 C Street, NW., Washington, DC 20240. Alternately, you may fax comments to (703) 358-2217 or e-mail comments to huntingseis@fws.gov. You may inspect comments during normal business

hours in room 4107, 4501 North Fairfax Drive, Arlington, Virginia.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Brian Millsap, Chief, or Ron W. Kokel, Division of Migratory Bird Management, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, (703) 358-1714.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: On September 8, 2005, we published a Notice of Intent to prepare a supplemental EIS on the sport hunting of migratory birds (70 FR 53376). For more detailed background information, we refer the reader to this document.

Background and Overview

Migratory game birds are those bird species so designated in bilateral conventions between the United States and Canada, Mexico, Japan, and Russia for the protection and management of these birds. Under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (16 U.S.C. 703-712) and the Fish and Wildlife Improvement Act of 1978 (16 U.S.C. 7421), the Secretary of the Interior is authorized to determine when "hunting, taking, capture, killing, possession, sale, purchase, shipment, transportation, carriage, or export of any * * * bird, or any part, nest or egg" of migratory game birds can take place, and to adopt regulations for this purpose. These regulations are issued with due regard to "the zones of temperature and the distribution, abundance, economic value, breeding habits, and times and lines of migratory flight of such birds" and compatibility with the conventions between the United States and Canada, Mexico, Japan, and Russia for the protection and management of migratory birds. This responsibility has been delegated to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service of the Department of the Interior as the lead Federal agency for managing and conserving migratory birds in the United States.

The Service currently promulgates regulations allowing and governing the hunting of migratory game birds in the families Anatidae (waterfowl), Gruidae (cranes), Rallidae (rails), Scolopacidae (snipe and woodcock), and Columbidae (doves and pigeons). Regulations governing seasons and limits are promulgated annually, in part due to considerations such as the abundance of birds, which can change from year to year, and are developed by establishing the frameworks, or outside limits, for earliest opening and latest closing dates, season lengths, limits (daily bag and possession), and areas for migratory game bird hunting. These "annual" regulations have been promulgated by the Service each year since 1918. Other regulations, termed "basic" regulations

(for example, those governing hunting methods), are promulgated once and changed only when a need to do so arises. All hunting regulations are contained in 50 CFR Parts 20 and 92.

In the September 8, 2005, **Federal Register**, we provided information on the current process for establishing sport hunting regulations, the tribal regulations process, the Alaska subsistence process, and past NEPA considerations (a 1975 EIS and a 1988 supplemental EIS).

Issue Resolution and Environmental Review

We intend to develop a supplemental EIS on the "Issuance of Annual Regulations Permitting the Sport Hunting of Migratory Birds," beginning the process with our September 8, 2005, announcement. Federal and State agencies, private conservation organizations, and all other interested parties and individuals are invited to participate in the process by presenting their views on the subject. We seek suggestions and comments regarding the scope and substance of this supplemental EIS, particular issues to be addressed and why, and options or alternatives to be considered. In particular, in regard to the scope and substance of this supplemental EIS, we seek comments on the following:

- (1) Harvest management alternatives for migratory game birds to be considered,
- (2) Limiting the scope of the assessment to sport hunting (i.e., exclusion of the Alaska migratory bird subsistence process), and
- (3) Inclusion of basic regulations (methods and means).

We will conduct the development of this supplemental EIS in accordance with the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 as amended (42 U.S.C. 4371 *et seq.*), other appropriate Federal regulations, and Service procedures for compliance with those regulations. We are furnishing this Notice in accordance with 40 CFR 1501.7, to obtain suggestions and information from other agencies, tribes, and the public on the scope of issues to be addressed in the supplemental EIS.

Public Scoping Meetings

Twelve public scoping meetings will be held on the following dates at the indicated locations and times:

1. March 24, 2006: Columbus, Ohio, at the Hyatt Regency Columbus, 350 North High Street; 1 p.m.
2. March 28, 2006: Memphis, Tennessee, at the Holiday Inn Select Downtown, 160 Union Avenue; 7 p.m.