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In Reply Refer To
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AUG 30 1994

Director
The Office of the Federal Register
National Archives and Records Administration
Washington, D.C. 20208

Dear Sir or Madam:

The enclosed notice for the Sonoran pronghorn is for publication in the Federal Register; please publish the notice as soon as possible. A WordPerfect 5.1 disk is enclosed that I certify to be a true copy of the signed originals. If there are any questions or problems regarding the notice, contact George Divine at (505) 766-3972. Please call Laura A. Thompson-Olais at (602) 387-6483 prior to publication with the publication date as soon as it is scheduled. Thank you for your assistance.

Sincerely,

~~/s/ John G. Rogers~~
~~/s/ Lynn B. Starnes~~
Acting Regional Director

Enclosures

- cc: (w/copy of notice)
- Director, Fish and Wildlife Service, Washington, D.C. (AES/TE)
- Refuge Manager, Cabeza Prieta NWR
- Refuge Operations-AZ/NM (RF1)
- Recovery Coordinator, Region 2

8/23/94(Tue)1:09pm/yf/draft
8/25/95(THU)12:10am/yf/yellow
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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Fish and Wildlife Service

Notice of availability of a Draft Revised Recovery Plan for the Sonoran Pronghorn for Review and Comment

AGENCY: Fish and Wildlife Service, Interior

ACTION: Notice of document availability and public comment period

SUMMARY: The U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) announces the availability for public review of a draft revised recovery plan for the Sonoran pronghorn (Antilocapra americana sonoriensis) which the Service listed as an endangered species on March 11, 1967 (32 FR 4001). This animal's population is estimated to be less than 800 animals; less than 300 in the United States and no more than 500 in the State of Sonora, Mexico. Distribution is limited primarily to Sonoran desert habitats. Factors that limit population growth are not well understood. However, loss of habitat due to drying of extended reaches of the Gila and Sonoyta Rivers, competition from domestic livestock, and human encroachment are believed to be limiting factors. Illegal hunting and predation on fawns may also limit growth of some populations. 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 (60 days from publication in the Federal Register) to receive consideration by the Service.

ADDRESSES: Persons wishing to review the draft recovery plan may obtain a copy by contacting the Refuge Manager, Cabeza Prieta National Wildlife Refuge, 1611 North Second Avenue, Ajo, Arizona 85321. Written comments and materials regarding the plan should be addressed to the Refuge Manager. Comments and materials received are available on request for public inspection, by appointment, during normal business hours at the above address.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Laura A. Thompson-Olais, U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service Biologist, (602) 387-6483, or at the above address.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Background

Restoring an endangered or threatened plant or animal to the point that 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 site-specific management actions considered necessary for conservation and survival of the species, establish objective, measurable criteria for the recovery levels for downlisting or delisting species, 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. The Service will consider all information presented during a public comment 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 approved recovery plans.

Sonoran pronghorn habitat in the United States consists of broad alluvial valleys separated by blocked-faulted mountains. Creosote and white bursage are the dominate vegetation in these valleys. Sonoran pronghorn are found in the creosote-bursage plant association throughout the year, but utilize areas containing palo verde-mixed cacti plant associations during spring and summer months. The requirement of water for drinking has not been verified. In Mexico, Sonoran pronghorn are found in areas where permanent water is not available, and there is no evidence of them traveling long distances to obtain water. The Recovery Plan has been revised to include research results obtained since the original recovery plan was completed in 1982 and to reflect recovery objectives that reflect current information known about the species.

The Sonoran Pronghorn Recovery Plan has been reviewed by the appropriate Service staff in the Southwest Region. The plan will be finalized and approved following incorporation of comments and materials received during this comment period.

Public Comments Solicited

The Service solicits written comments on the recovery plan described. All comments received by the date specified above will be considered prior to the approval of the plan.

Authority

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

Dated: 8/30/44

Acting Lynn B. Starnes
Regional Director

/s/ Lynn B. Starnes