

owl (*Strix occidentalis caurina*). We are conducting the reviews for these two species in connection with the January 13 and 14, 2003, settlement agreements for two lawsuits, *Western Council of Industrial Workers v. Secretary of the Interior*, Civil No. 02-6100-AA (D. Or.) and *American Forest Resources Council v. Secretary of the Interior*, Civil No. 02-6087-AA (D. Or.). The public comment period for the April 21, 2003, notice ended June 20, 2003. However, to allow additional time for the public to submit information, amendments to the settlement agreements were filed on June 30, 2003, with the District Court in Oregon extending the deadlines for completing the reviews. In accordance with the amended settlement agreements, we are reopening the public comment periods on these reviews until August 20, 2003.

The 5-year reviews for these two species will assess: (a) Whether new information suggests that the species' populations are increasing, declining, or stable; (b) whether existing threats are increasing, the same, reduced, or eliminated; (c) if there are any new threats; and (d) if new information or analysis calls into question any of the conclusions in the original listing determinations as to the species' status. The reviews will also apply this new information to consideration of the appropriate application of the Policy Regarding the Recognition of Distinct Vertebrate Population Segments (61 FR 4722) to the listed entity, if applicable.

If there is no new information concerning the marbled murrelet or northern spotted owl, no changes will be made to their classifications. However, if we find that there is new information concerning the marbled murrelet or northern spotted owl indicating a change in classification is warranted, we may propose new rules that could either: (a) Reclassify the species from threatened to endangered; or (b) remove the species from the List.

Public Solicitation of New Information

We are publishing this second request for any new information relating to the current status of the northern spotted owl and marbled murrelet that has become available since their original listing. In particular, we are seeking information such as:

A. Species biology including, but not limited to, population trends, distribution, abundance, demographics, and genetics;

B. Habitat conditions including, but not limited to, amount, distribution, and suitability;

C. Conservation measures that have been implemented that benefit the species;

D. Threat status and trends; and

E. Other new information, data, or corrections including, but not limited to, taxonomic or nomenclatural changes, or improved analytical methods.

Specifically for the spotted owl and murrelet we are interested in new information, analyses, and/or reports for these species that summarize and interpret their population status and related threats. The reviews will consider information such as: Population and demographic trend data; studies of dispersal and habitat use; genetics and species competition investigations; surveys of habitat amount, quality, and distribution; adequacy of existing regulatory mechanisms; and management and conservation planning information. We request this information for all applicable land ownerships within the range of both species.

Information submitted should be supported by documentation such as maps, bibliographic references, methods used to gather and analyze the data, and/or copies of any pertinent publications, reports, or letters by knowledgeable sources.

Authority: This document is published under the authority of the Endangered Species Act (16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.*).

Dated: July 16, 2003.

Marshall P. Jones,

Acting Director, Fish and Wildlife Service.

[FR Doc. 03-19039 Filed 7-22-03; 4:48 pm]

BILLING CODE 4310-55-P

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Fish and Wildlife Service

Availability of an Environmental Assessment and Receipt of an Application for an Incidental Take Permit for the Hyundai Motor America Automotive Test Track Project in Kern County, CA

AGENCY: Fish and Wildlife Service, Interior.

ACTION: Notice of availability and receipt of application.

SUMMARY: Hyundai Motor America (HMA) and the City of California City (collectively Applicants) have 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 of 1973, as amended (Act). The Service is considering issuing a 30-year permit to the Applicants that would authorize

take of the threatened desert tortoise (*Gopherus agassizii*) incidental to otherwise lawful activities associated with the construction and operation of a proposed automotive test track project on 4,340 acres in Kern County, California. With the access road from the south and access road/waterline from the east, the project would result in the permanent removal of approximately 4,368.5 acres of occupied desert tortoise habitat, relocation of desert tortoises currently occupying the site, and acquisition of 3,228.5 acres of higher quality desert tortoise habitat. Desert tortoise impacts to 1,140 acres on the project site previously were compensated under a federal land exchange, the West Mojave Land Tenure Adjustment Act.

We request comments from the public on the proposed Habitat Conservation Plan (Plan), Environmental Assessment, and Implementing Agreement, which are available for review. The Plan describes the proposed action and the measures that the Applicant will undertake to minimize and mitigate take of the desert tortoise. To review the permit application or Environmental Assessment, see "Availability of Documents" in the **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION** section.

DATES: We must receive your written comments on or before September 23, 2003.

ADDRESSES: Please address written comments to Field Supervisor, Ventura Fish and Wildlife Office, Fish and Wildlife Service, 2493 Portola Road, Suite B, Ventura, California 93003. You also may send comments by facsimile to (805) 644-3958.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Tim Thomas, Botanist, Ventura Fish and Wildlife Office, Barstow Sub-office; (760) 255-8890.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Availability of Documents

You may obtain copies of these documents for review by contacting the above office, or by making an appointment to view the documents at the above address during normal business hours (**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT**). Documents also will be available for public inspection, on our Web site at <http://ventura.fws.gov>, and during regular business hours at the California City Library, 9507 California City Boulevard, California City, California.

Background

Section 9 of the Act and federal regulations prohibit the "take" of fish and wildlife species listed as