

necessary to best administer the Refuge to protect these values and to fulfill Refuge purposes. The Comprehensive Conservation Plan and associated Environmental Impact Statement will describe and evaluate a range of reasonable alternatives and the anticipated impacts of each. Public input into the planning process is essential.

The Plan will provide other agencies and the public with information to facilitate understanding of the desired conditions for the Refuge and how the Service will implement management strategies.

The Service will prepare an Environmental Impact Statement in accordance with procedures for implementing the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4321–4370d).

The Kenai National Wildlife Refuge covers approximately two million acres, roughly equivalent to the states of Delaware and Rhode Island combined. It occupies much of the Kenai Peninsula and is readily accessible from the city of Anchorage, which contains 41.5 percent of the state's population. The Kenai Refuge consists of the western slopes of the Kenai Mountains and forested lowlands bordering Cook Inlet. The Kenai Mountains, with their glaciers, rise to more than 6,500 feet. Treeless alpine and subalpine habitats are the home of mountain goats, Dall sheep, caribou, wolverine, marmots, and ptarmigan. Boreal forests extend to 1,800 feet above sea level and are composed of spruce and birch forests intermingled with hundreds of lakes. Boreal forests are home to moose, wolves, black and brown bears, lynx, snowshoe hares, and numerous species of neotropical birds such as olive-sided flycatchers, myrtle warblers, and ruby-crowned kinglets. At sea level, the Refuge encompasses the last remaining pristine major salt water estuary on the Kenai Peninsula: the Chickaloon River Flats. The flats provide a major migratory staging area and nesting habitat for thousands of shorebirds and waterfowl throughout the spring, summer, and fall. The flats are also used as a haul-out area by harbor seals, and thousands of salmon migrate up the Chickaloon River system each year to spawn.

The Alaska National Interests Land Conservation Act of 1980 (Section 303[4]) sets forth the following major purposes for which the Kenai Refuge was established and is to be managed:

(i) To conserve fish and wildlife populations and habitats in their natural diversity including, but not limited to,

moose, bear, mountain goats, Dall sheep, wolves and other furbearers, salmonoids and other fish, waterfowl and other migratory and nonmigratory birds;

(ii) To fulfill the international treaty obligations of the United States with respect to fish and wildlife and their habitats;

(iii) To ensure, to the maximum extent practicable and in a manner consistent with the purposes set forth in paragraph (i), water quality and necessary water quantity within the Refuge;

(iv) To provide in a manner consistent with subparagraphs (i) and (ii), opportunities for scientific research, interpretation, environmental education, and land management training; and

(v) To provide, in a manner compatible with these purposes, opportunities for fish and wildlife-oriented recreation.

The Comprehensive Conservation Plan for Kenai National Wildlife Refuge was completed in 1985. It is being revised consistent with Section 304(g) of the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act, the National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act of 1997, and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service planning policy.

Dated: November 7, 2003.

Rowan Gould,

Regional Director, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Anchorage, Alaska.

[FR Doc. 03–29303 Filed 11–25–03; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4310–55–P

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Fish and Wildlife Service

Notice of Availability of a Final Supplement and Amendment to the 1998 Final Revised Sonoran Pronghorn Recovery Plan—Recovery Criteria and Estimates of Time for Recovery Actions for the Sonoran Pronghorn

AGENCY: Fish and Wildlife Service, Interior.

ACTION: Notice of document availability.

SUMMARY: The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) announces the availability of a Final Supplement and Amendment to the 1998 Final Revised Sonoran Pronghorn (*Antilocapra americana sonoriensis*) Recovery Plan (Recovery Plan). In the U.S., the species is currently known to occur on Federal lands in Maricopa, Pima, and Yuma counties in southwestern Arizona. The Final Supplement and Amendment reassesses recovery criteria from the

Recovery Plan, relates recovery actions to the five listing factors of the Endangered Species Act of 1973, and assigns a timeline to recovery actions.

ADDRESSES: Persons wishing to obtain a copy of the Final Supplement and Amendment may do so by accessing the Service's Arizona Ecological Service Field Office internet web page at Arizonaes.fws.gov or contacting John Morgart, Cabeza Prieta National Wildlife Refuge, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 1611 North Second Avenue, Ajo, Arizona 85321 (520/387–4989 Direct; 520/387–6483 Refuge Office; 520/387–5359 Fax; john_morgart@fws.gov e-mail).

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: John Morgart (see ADDRESSES).

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Background

Restoring an endangered or threatened animal or plant species 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 prepares recovery plans for most of the listed species native to the United States. Recovery plans describe actions considered necessary for conservation of species, including criteria for downlisting or delisting, and time and cost estimates for implementing the recommended recovery measures.

In a recent court decision (Civil Action No. 99–927 (ESH)), the judge ruled that the 1998 Final Revised Sonoran Pronghorn Recovery Plan “* * * fails to establish (1) objective measurable criteria which, when met, would result in a determination that the pronghorn may be removed from the list of endangered species or, if such criteria are not practicable, an explanation of that conclusion and (2) estimates of the time required to carry out those measures needed to achieve the plan's goal and to achieve intermediate steps toward that goal where practicable, or, if such estimates are not practicable, an explanation of that conclusion.” The Court ordered the Service to reconsider these portions of the Recovery Plan. The deadline for completion of this task was extended three times, with a final deadline of January 15, 2002.

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