

**ADDRESSES:** Federal Communications Commission, 1919 M Street, N.W., Washington, DC 20554.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Elizabeth Nightingale, (202) 418-2352, of the Common Carrier Bureau, Network Services Division.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:**

Comments Due October 10, 1996

In a letter dated August 26, 1996, the United States Department of Justice's Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (DJ) asked that an N11 code, specifically 311, be reserved on a national basis for use by communities for non-emergency police telephone calls. DJ suggested that the N11 code could be used to give access to other government services, at the discretion of each jurisdiction.

We invite comment on DJ's request. Comments should be filed by October 10, 1996, with the Secretary, FCC, 1919 M Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20554. A copy should also be sent the Commission's contractor for public records duplication, ITS, Inc., 2100 M Street, N.W., Suite 140, Washington, D.C. 20037. Comments should refer to CC Docket No. 92-105. The text of the DJ letter and the comments will be available for inspection and copying during regular business hours in the FCC Reference Center, Federal Communications Commission, 1919 M Street, N.W., Room 239, Washington, D.C. 20554. Copies can also be obtained from ITS by calling (202) 857-3800.

For further information contact Elizabeth Nightingale, Network Services Division, Common Carrier Bureau, at (202) 418-2320.

Federal Communications Commission.

Geraldine A. Matisse,  
Chief, Network Services Division, Common  
Carrier Bureau.

[FR Doc. 96-23802 Filed 9-16-96; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 6712-01-P

## DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

### Fish and Wildlife Service

#### 50 CFR Part 17

#### Endangered and Threatened Wildlife and Plants; Notice of Closure of Public Comment Period

**AGENCY:** Fish and Wildlife Service, Interior.

**ACTION:** Notice of review; closing of public comment period.

**SUMMARY:** The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) announces that it is

closing the public comment period for comments on the process whereby the Service identifies candidates for addition to the lists of endangered or threatened wildlife and plants. The proposed changes were contained in the Candidate Notice of Review (candidate notice) published in the Federal Register on February 28, 1996. The Service continues to evaluate its current practice of using information provided by states and private and public interests to evaluate species for potential listing under the Endangered Species Act. Based on public comments, the Service may make policy changes to the candidate species and notice of review process. The Service continues to accept information on the biological status and threats facing any individual species until further notice.

**DATES:** Comments of a general nature, including comments that are related to the process whereby species are identified as candidates for protection under the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (Act), as amended, will be accepted and considered until October 17, 1996.

**ADDRESSES:** Comments on the Service's candidate notice process should be directed to the Chief, Division of Endangered Species, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 1849 C Street, N.W., Mailstop ARLSQ-452, Washington, D.C. 20240.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** E. LaVerne Smith, Chief, Division of Endangered Species, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 703-358-2171 (see ADDRESSES section).

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:**

**Background**

On February 28, 1996, the Service published a revised candidate notice of review in the Federal Register (61 FR 7596) that announced changes to the way the Service identifies species that are candidates for listing under the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended (16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.*). For reasons outlined in the candidate notice, the Service noted its intention to discontinue maintaining a list of species that were previously identified as "category-2 candidates." Category-2 candidates were species for which the Service had information indicating that protection under the Act may be warranted but for which it lacked sufficient information on status and threats to justify preparation of a proposed listing.

In addition to soliciting biological information on taxa that are candidates for listing under the Act, the Service also solicited public comments of a

general nature (61 FR 7596; February 28, 1996) when it announced the revisions to the candidate identification process. The candidate notice specified no closing date for comments of either a general, or a species-specific nature. The Service now announces that it will consider all public comments on the matter of discontinuing the practice of identifying category-2 candidate species that are received on or before October 17, 1996. By December 1, 1996, the Service will publish a subsequent notice in the Federal Register addressing all comments received and indicating a final decision on this issue and how the Service intends to identify species that are under consideration for possible addition to the list of endangered or threatened species.

As solicited in the Service's February 28, 1996 candidate notice (61 FR 7596), comments and information relating to the biological status and threats of particular taxa that are, or should be, regarded as candidates for protection under the Act may be submitted at any time to the Regional Director of the Region identified as having lead responsibility. Biological status and threat information for species that do not have a designated lead Region should be submitted to the Division of Endangered Species, Washington, D.C. National Environmental Policy Act

The Service does not consider any decision to discontinue the maintenance of a list of category-2 candidate species in notices of review to be a major Federal action significantly affecting the human environment for purposes of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4321 *et seq.*). Further, the Department of the Interior's Departmental Manual (DM) categorically excludes, "Activities which are educational, informational, advisory or consultative to other agencies, public or private entities, visitors, individuals, or the general public" (516 DM 2, Appendix 1, item 1.11). Notices of review serve the purpose of informing Federal agencies, state agencies, and the general public of taxa that are candidates for possible addition to the lists of endangered or threatened wildlife and plants. They also serve as data-gathering tools to assist the Service in developing the best available scientific and commercial data on such taxa. There is no statutory or regulatory mandate on how to structure or when to publish these notices. Thus, even if the Service's decision to discontinue maintenance of a list of species of concern as category-2 candidates in notices of review were considered an "action" for purposes of

NEPA, such would fall within this categorical exclusion. The Service also believes that the exceptions to categorical exclusions (516 DM 2, Appendix 2) would not be applicable to such a decision, especially in light of the absence of environmental effects for such action.

#### Authority

The authority for this action is the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended (16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.*).

Dated: September 6, 1996

John G. Rogers

Acting Director, Fish and Wildlife Service.

[FR Doc. 96-23718 Filed 9-16-96; 8:45 am]

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## 50 CFR Part 17

### RIN 1018-AB75

#### Endangered and Threatened Wildlife and Plants; Extension of Comment Period on Threatened Status for Copperbelly Water Snake

**AGENCY:** Fish and Wildlife Service, Interior.

**ACTION:** Proposed rule; notice of extension of comment period.

**SUMMARY:** The Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) provides notice that the comment period on the proposed threatened status for the copperbelly water snake (*Nerodia erythrogaster neglecta*) is extended. This snake occupies portions of southern Michigan, northwestern Ohio and adjacent northeastern Indiana, southern Indiana, southeastern Illinois, and western Kentucky.

**DATES:** Comments from all interested parties must be received by November 15, 1996.

**ADDRESSES:** Comments and materials concerning this proposal should be sent to U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 620 South Walker Street, Bloomington, Indiana 47403-2121.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** David Hudak, Field Supervisor, (see **ADDRESSES** section), 812/334-4261 extension 200.

#### SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

##### Background

A proposed rule to list the copperbelly water snake (sometimes referred to as the northern copperbelly water snake) as threatened was published on August 18, 1993 (58 FR 43860). A public hearing on the proposal was held in Indianapolis on April 4, 1994. The current comment

period began on July 16, 1996, and closes on September 16, 1996.

On April 10, 1995, Public Law 104-06 imposed a moratorium which prevented the addition of any species to the Threatened and Endangered Species List. Thus, the Service was prevented from making a final decision on the proposed threatened classification of the copperbelly water snake. The moratorium remained in effect until April 26, 1996, at which time Public Law 104-134 was enacted, providing for the termination of the listing moratorium by the President.

The Service is required to use the best available scientific and commercial data in making listing determinations under the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended. The Service's Final Listing Priority Guidance, published May 16, 1996, (61 FR 24722) notes that the inaction forced upon the Service by the moratorium and related funding limitations may result in a need to reopen comment periods due to unresolved questions or the potential for the existence of new information. Pursuant to this Guidance, the Service reopened the comment period on July 16, 1996, (61 FR 37034) for 60 days to ensure that the best scientific and commercial information currently available would be used in making a final listing determination for the copperbelly water snake.

The Service has contracted for a report on the current biological status of the northern population (southern Michigan and the adjacent portions of Indiana and Ohio) of the copperbelly water snake. This report has not yet been completed. Due to the expected importance of this updated information in evaluating the status of the northern populations, the Service is extending the current comment period so that the report will be available and reviewed by the Service prior to making a final listing decision. Parties wishing to receive a copy of the northern population report were asked, in the July 16, 1996, Federal Register notice, to furnish their address to the Service; copies of the report will be sent to those parties when the report is received by the Service.

During this comment period the Service has been working with representatives of the coal industry, the Farm Bureau Federation, State fish and wildlife resource agencies, and State surface mining regulatory agencies to develop conservation plans for the copperbelly water snake and its habitat in Illinois, Kentucky, and southern Indiana. These efforts have been productive and will be continued during the extended comment period.

The scope and success of these and other conservation actions will be taken into consideration when the Service makes its final listing decision.

#### Author

The primary author of this notice is Ronald L. Refsnider, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Division of Endangered Species, Bishop Henry Whipple Federal Building, 1 Federal Drive, Ft. Snelling, Minnesota 55111-4056 (612-725-3536).

#### Authority

Authority for this action is the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.*).

Dated: September 12, 1996.

John A. Blankenship,

Acting Regional Director, Region 3, Ft. Snelling, MN.

[FR Doc. 96-23865 Filed 9-16-96; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4310-55-M

## DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

### National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

## 50 CFR Part 285

[Docket No. 960416112-6256-03; I.D. 091296B]

RIN 0648-AI29

#### Options for 1997 Rulemaking for Atlantic Tunas

**AGENCY:** National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Commerce.

**ACTION:** Advanced notice of proposed rulemaking (ANPR); request for comments.

**SUMMARY:** NMFS is considering rulemaking on a number of issues that affect the Atlantic tuna fishery: (1) Changes in Atlantic tuna permit regulations to require annual permits, establish mutually exclusive recreational and commercial fishing categories, recover administrative costs through a permit fee; (2) modifications to the Atlantic bluefin tuna (ABT) Angling category quotas to address geographic distribution of fishing opportunities, and establishing mandatory self-reporting systems for ABT recreational quota monitoring; (3) modifications to the target catch requirements for the Incidental longline ABT fishery; (4) measures necessary to implement quota modifications and/or any other management recommendations for Atlantic tunas