

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Fish and Wildlife Service

Notice of Receipt of Applications for Permit

The following applicants have applied for a permit to conduct certain activities with endangered species. This notice is provided pursuant to Section 10(c) of the Endangered Species Act of 1973, *as amended* (16 U.S.C. 1531, *et seq.*):

PRT-677336

Applicant: Florida Museum of Natural History, Gainesville, FL

The applicant requests renewal of their permit to export and re-import non-living museum specimens of endangered and threatened species of plants and animals previously accessioned into the permittee's collection for scientific research. This notification covers activities conducted by the applicant for a five year period.

PRT-840644

Applicant: International Crane Foundation, Baraboo, WI

The applicant requests a permit to export 3 Siberian crane (*Grus leucogeranus*) eggs to VogelPark Zoo, Walsrode, Germany for the purpose of enhancement to the survival and propagation of the species through isolation-rearing and re-introduction of specimens to the wild.

Written data or comments should be submitted to the Director, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Office of Management Authority, 4401 North Fairfax Drive, Room 700, Arlington, Virginia 22203 and must be received by the Director within 30 days of the date of this publication.

Documents and other information submitted with these applications are available for review, *subject to the requirements of the Privacy Act and Freedom of Information Act*, by any party who submits a written request for a copy of such documents to the following office within 30 days of the date of publication of this notice: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Office of Management Authority, 4401 North Fairfax Drive, Room 700, Arlington, Virginia 22203. Phone: (703/358-2104); FAX: (703/358-2281).

Dated: March 23, 1998.

MaryEllen Amtower,

Acting Chief, Branch of Permits, Office of Management Authority.

[FR Doc. 98-8000 Filed 3-26-98; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4310-55-P

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Fish and Wildlife Service

Notice of Availability of Final Environmental Impact Statement for the Establishment of the Northern Tallgrass Prairie Habitat Preservation Area in Western Minnesota and Northwestern Iowa

ACTION: Notice of availability.

SUMMARY: The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) has prepared a Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) which is available for public review. The FEIS evaluates the establishment of a Northern Tallgrass Prairie Habitat Preservation Area as a means of working with individuals, groups, and governmental entities to permanently preserve remnant tracts of northern tallgrass prairie. Three alternatives, including a No Action alternative are being considered. The action alternatives are aimed at permanently protecting and enhancing prairie remnants.

The Service's preferred alternative (Alternative B) is to permanently protect and enhance prairie remnants through partnerships, incentives, education, and cooperative agreements. Any conservation easements, or acquisition of full title would be done by the Service and Service Partners. Service acquisition of easements and fee interest in lands would be on a voluntary basis from willing sellers.

DATES: A decision whether to implement the preferred alternative will be made after a 30-day waiting period from the date of this notice.

ADDRESSES: Individuals wishing copies of the FEIS for review should contact: Jane West, Project Manager, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, BHW Federal Building, 1 Federal Drive, Fort Snelling, MN 55111-4056.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Jane West at the address listed above or by telephone at 612/713-5314.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: America's native grasslands are a vanishing ecosystem, and mounting evidence indicates that many species are disappearing as fast as the prairie habitats on which they depend. Few other ecosystem types have experienced as great a degree of loss and alteration. In Minnesota and Iowa, the native northern tallgrass prairie has declined to less than 1 percent of its original 25 million acres (10.1 million hectares).

Through an integrated ecosystem approach, the Service, with its partners, proposes to protect and restore fish and wildlife habitats through holistic

management strategies using a wide variety of tools, and techniques. The Service proposes to participate in public and private partnerships at many levels, complimenting other prairie projects such as those of the Iowa County Conservation Boards, Iowa and Minnesota Departments of Natural Resources, the Nature Conservancy, and others.

Dated: March 17, 1998.

Robb M. Morin,

Acting Regional Director.

[FR Doc. 98-7410 Filed 3-26-98; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4310-55-M

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Fish and Wildlife Service

Proposals To Register An Operation Breeding Appendix-I Species in Captivity for Commercial Purposes According to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora

AGENCY: Fish and Wildlife Service, Interior.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service announces that it intends to submit to the Secretariat of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) proposals to register a breeding operation for Sky-Out Falcons, a breeding facility for gyrfalcons (*Falco rusticolus*) and peregrine falcons (*Falco peregrinus*), both specific and hybrid offspring, owned and operated by David H. Jamieson, Reno, Nevada (one of each species). The registration of this facility will allow specimens to be designated as bred in captivity for commercial purposes and deemed to be specimens of species included in Appendix II, as provided for in Article VII, paragraph 4 of CITES. Public comments are solicited.

DATES: Comments will be accepted until April 27, 1998.

ADDRESSES: Please send correspondence concerning this notice to the Office of Scientific Authority, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Mail stop ARLSQ 750, 4401 N. Fairfax Drive, Arlington, Virginia 22203. Fax number 703-358-2276. Copies of the full text of the registration proposals are available from the Office of Scientific Authority and will be mailed upon request. Comments and other information received are available for public inspection by appointment from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m., Monday through Friday, at the Arlington, Virginia, address.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Dr. Susan Lieberman, Chief, Office of Scientific Authority, at the address given above (telephone: 703-358-1708).

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Background

The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora, TIAS 8249, hereinafter referred to as CITES, is an international treaty designed to regulate international trade in animal and plant species that are or may become threatened with extinction. Authority for implementing CITES has been delegated to the Secretary of Interior through the Endangered Species Act of 1973 as amended (16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.*). Species are listed in Appendix I, II, or III of CITES, depending on the degree of threat and level of control needed. Species listed in Appendix I receive the highest level of protection and require both an import permit from the country of import and an export permit from the country of export, and imports may not be for primarily commercial purposes. However, Article VII, paragraph 4 of CITES provides that specimens of animal species included in Appendix I bred in captivity for commercial purposes shall be deemed to be specimens of species included in Appendix II. Appendix-II species require an export permit only (no import permit) and may be imported for commercial or non-commercial purposes.

Through resolutions adopted at meetings of the Conference of the Parties to CITES, the Parties have defined criteria for registering breeding operations with the CITES Secretariat, whereby specimens of Appendix-I species from those operations would qualify as bred in captivity for commercial purposes. Resolution Conf. 10.16 adopted at the Tenth Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to CITES (which replaces Conf. 2.12 (rev.)) requires that parental breeding stock at such operations must: (a) be established in accordance with the provisions of CITES and relevant national laws and in a manner not detrimental to the survival of the species in the wild; (b) be maintained without introduction of specimens from the wild, except for occasional augmentation to prevent or alleviate deleterious inbreeding, and for other limited purposes; and (c) have produced offspring of second (F2) or subsequent generations (F3, F4, etc.) in a controlled environment, belong to a species included in a list, established by the CITES Standing Committee, of species commonly bred to second or

subsequent generations, or be managed in a manner that has been demonstrated to be capable of reliably producing second-generation offspring in a controlled environment. Resolution Conf. 8.15 provides guidelines for registering and monitoring operations breeding Appendix-I animal species for commercial purposes, and specifies the documentation required to establish that the operation meets the criteria of Resolution Conf. 10.16.

To register a captive-breeding operation, the Management Authority of the country in which the operation is located must approve the operation, in consultation with that country's Scientific Authority. The sponsoring Management Authority must then submit a proposal to register the operation to the CITES Secretariat, which will follow the process presented in Resolution Conf. 8.15.

After a review of relevant information, including breeding records and other documentation, the Fish and Wildlife Service has prepared for submission to the CITES Secretariat the following proposals: (1) the registration of Sky-Out Falcons owned and operated by David H. Jamieson, Reno, Nevada, as a commercial captive-breeding operation for gyrfalcons (*Falco rusticolus*), an Appendix I species, and hybrids; and (2) the registration of Sky-Out Falcons for peregrine falcons (*Falco peregrinus*), an Appendix-I species, and hybrids.

Although this is the first commercial captive-breeding operation proposed for registration within the United States for any species, it is not the first operation registered with the CITES Secretariat for these two species (15 operations have been registered for peregrine falcons and 10 operations for gyrfalcons). The Sky-Out Falcons operation has been breeding falcons since 1974, with a combined production of 45 gyrfalcons and 46 peregrine falcons in 1995 and 1996. All of these offspring have been second-generation captive-hatched offspring. The Service is satisfied that all breeding stock has been legally acquired and maintained under appropriate permits, as determined by the Division of Law Enforcement in Region 1 of the Fish and Wildlife Service. Mr. Jamieson has provided detailed information on current holdings, husbandry practices, enclosures, production at his operation, and breeding strategies for genetic management of his flocks so as to minimize deleterious inbreeding. (Mr. Jamieson currently holds a pair of *F. p. anatum*, a species listed as endangered under the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended. This pair of birds is not included in this registration process

and any offspring of either member of the pair would not be considered registered under Resolution Conf. 8.15.)

Required Determination

The Service prepared an Environmental Assessment (EA) in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), for this notice and concluded in a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) based on a review and evaluation of the information contained within the EA that there would be no significant impact on the human environment as a result of this action and that the preparation of an environmental impact statement on this action is not required by Section 102(2) of NEPA or its implementing regulations. The EA and FONSI for this action are on file at the Service's Office of Scientific Authority in Arlington, Virginia, and a copy may be obtained by any interested person for review and provide comments by contacting the individual identified under the section entitled, **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION**.

Author

This notice was prepared by Mr. Timothy J. Van Norman, Wildlife Biologist, Office of Scientific Authority, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (703/358-1708).

Dated: March 20, 1998.

Margaret Tieger,

Acting Chief, Office of Management Authority.

[FR Doc. 98-8048 Filed 3-26-98; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Fish and Wildlife Service

Issuance of Permit for Marine Mammals

On December 19, 1997, a notice was published in the **Federal Register**, Vol. 62, No. 244, Page 66660, that an application had been filed with the Fish and Wildlife Service by Eugene Giscombe for a permit (PRT-837603) to import a sport-hunted polar bear trophy, taken from the McClintock Channel population, Northwest Territories, Canada for personal use.

Notice is hereby given that on February 10, 1998, as authorized by the provisions of the Marine Mammal Protection Act of 1972, *as amended* (16 U.S.C. 1361 *et seq.*) the Fish and Wildlife Service authorized the requested permit subject to certain conditions set forth therein.