

Permit No. TE-008380-0

Applicant: Alfred M. Boyajian, Atlanta, Georgia.

Applicant requests authorization to purchase in interstate commerce one captive-bred ocelot (*Felis pardalis*) for recovery and educational display purposes.

Permit No. TE-008513-0

Applicant: Arizona Game & Fish Department, Flagstaff, Arizona.

Applicant requests authorization for scientific research and recovery purposes to collect humpback chub (*Gila cypha*) in the Lower Little Colorado River on the Navajo Nation and Grand Canyon National Park, Arizona and conduct activities with bonytail chub (*Gila elegans*) obtained from the Dexter National Fish Hatchery.

Permit No. TE-008365-0

Applicant: Bureau of Indian Affairs/Navajo Indian Irrigation Project, Farmington, New Mexico.

Applicant requests authorization for scientific research and recovery purposes to conduct presence/absence surveys for the southwestern willow flycatcher (*Empidonax traillii extimus*) on the Navajo Agriculture Products Industry Land in northwest New Mexico.

DATES: Written comments on these permit applications must be received on or before April 5, 1999.

ADDRESSES: Written data or comments should be submitted to the Legal Instruments Examiner, Division of Endangered Species/Permits, Ecological Services, P.O. Box 1306, Albuquerque, New Mexico 87103. Please refer to the respective permit number for each application when submitting comments. All comments received, including names and addresses, will become part of the official administrative record and may be made available to the public.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Ecological Services, Division of Endangered Species/Permits, P.O. Box 1306, Albuquerque, New Mexico 87103. Please refer to the respective permit number for each application when requesting copies of documents. 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 within 30

days of the date of publication of this notice, to the address above.

Bryan Arroyo,

ARD-Ecological Services, Region 2, Albuquerque, New Mexico.

[FR Doc. 99-5460 Filed 3-4-99; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4510-55-M

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Fish and Wildlife Service

Availability of Draft Revised Recovery Plan for Gila topminnow 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 Gila topminnow (*Poeciliopsis occidentalis occidentalis*). This endangered species now occurs in the Gila River basin of Arizona and Mexico. Only the U.S. portion of the range is protected under the Endangered Species Act. Historical records exist for the Gila River basin in New Mexico. The Service solicits comments from the public on the draft revised recovery plan.

In 1967 the Gila (Sonoran) topminnow was listed as endangered within the United States, under the Endangered Species Protection Act of 1966 (USDI 1967). Following passage of the Endangered Species Act of 1969, the Gila (Sonoran) topminnow was included on Appendix D, the list of species endangered within the United States (USDI 1970).

DATES: Written comments on the recovery plan should be received on or before April 19, 1999.

ADDRESSES: Persons wishing to review recovery plan may obtain a copy by contacting the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Arizona Ecological Services Field Office, 2321 West Royal Palm Road, Suite 103, Phoenix, Arizona 85021, (602-640-2720; Fax 602-640-2730), or the person named below. Written data or comments concerning the recovery plan should be submitted to the Field Supervisor, Ecological Services Field Office, Phoenix, Arizona (see address above). Comments and materials are available on request for public inspection, by appointment, during normal business hours at the above address.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Doug Duncan, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Tucson Sub-office, 300 West

Congress, Room 4D, Tucson, AZ 85701 (520-670-4860; Fax 520-670-4567).

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Restoring threatened and endangered animals or plants where they are again secure, self-sustaining members of their ecosystem is a primary goal of the Service's endangered species program. The purpose of a recovery plan is to guide the recovery of a listed species. The Plans describe actions considered necessary for conservation of the species, establish criteria for the recovery levels for downlisting or delisting them, and estimate the time and cost for implementing the recovery actions needed.

The Endangered Species Act (Act) requires development of recovery plans for listed species unless such a plan would not promote the conservation of that species. The Act also requires that public notice and an opportunity for public review be provided during recovery plan development. The Service will consider all information presented during a public comment period 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.

The Sonoran topminnow (*Poeciliopsis occidentalis*), includes two subspecies, the Gila topminnow (*P. o. occidentalis*) and the Yaqui topminnow (*P. o. occidentalis*). Recovery of the Yaqui topminnow is covered by the Yaqui Fishes Recovery Plan. The Gila topminnow is native to the Gila River Basin of the United States and Mexico, and the Ríos de la Concepción and Sonora of northern Mexico. It was considered one of the most common fishes in the southern part of the Colorado River basin prior to 1940. However, habitat loss and interaction with nonnative fishes, particularly western mosquitofish (*Gambusia affinis*) caused range-wide disappearances and decreases in abundance within the United States.

Gila topminnows were historically widespread in the Gila River drainage below about 4,000 feet elevation. The subspecies was found in the San Francisco River at Frisco Hot Springs, New Mexico, west to the mainstem Gila River near Yuma, Arizona, and possibly even into the lower Colorado River. The fish thrived in the Salt River as far upstream as the present site of Roosevelt Lake and was also common in Tonto Creek. Although there are no museum specimens from the Verde or San Simon rivers, Gila topminnows likely occurred there. Two collections are known from the San Pedro River. Records of Gila

topminnow are also known from the Santa Cruz River. Various tributary streams and springs, most notably Sonoita Creek, Cienega Creek, and Sabino Canyon, also historically supported Gila topminnows.

Habitat destruction and introduction of nonnative species have caused severe reductions of Gila topminnow populations, and are the main causes for its listing as an endangered species. Past and current threats to the Gila topminnow and its habitat include dams, water diversion, watershed deterioration, channelization, livestock overgrazing, and introduction of nonnative competitive and predatory aquatic species. The western mosquitofish has proved to be especially detrimental to Gila topminnow populations.

Since being federally listed in 1967, the Gila topminnow has been reestablished into more locations than any native fish in the Southwest. However, both naturally occurring and reestablished populations continue to decline. The recovery plan details the Gila topminnow recovery effort, acquaints the reader with the subspecies and its status, the threats it faces, and provides a revised plan for its survival and recovery in the United States.

The draft revised recovery plan has been extensively reviewed the last five years by agencies, species experts, and the Desert Fishes Recovery Team. The plan will be published as final following incorporation of comments and material received during this comment period.

Public Comments Solicited: The Service solicits comments on the draft revised recovery plan described. All comments received by the date specified above will be considered prior to approval of the plans.

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

Dated: February 26, 1999.

Thomas Bauer,

Regional Director, Fish and Wildlife Service.
[FR Doc. 99-5427 Filed 3-4-99; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Fish and Wildlife Service

Availability of an Environmental Assessment on the Proposed Issuance of an Incidental Take Permit for Boise Cascade Timber Company, Clatsop County, Oregon

AGENCY: Fish and Wildlife Service, DOI.

ACTION: Notice of availability, Request for comments, and reopening of comment period.

SUMMARY: This notice advises the public that the Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) has prepared a draft Environmental Assessment on the proposed issuance of an incidental take permit to the Boise Cascade Corporation (Boise Cascade) pursuant to section 10(a)(1)(B) of the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended (Act). The proposed permit would authorize the incidental take, resulting from habitat modification, of the northern spotted owl (*Strix occidentalis caurina*), which is listed under the Act as a threatened species. The Service announced the receipt of Boise Cascade's incidental take permit application and the availability of the Boise Cascade Walker Creek Unit Habitat Conservation Plan (Plan) and draft Implementation Agreement, which accompany the incidental take permit application, for public comment on December 23, 1998 (63 FR 71148). Because the draft Environmental Assessment provides additional information on the effects of the proposed permit issuance, the Service will accept additional comments on the permit application, Plan, and draft Implementation Agreement during the comment period for the draft Environmental Assessment.

DATES: Written comments on the draft Environmental Assessment, permit application, Plan, and draft Implementation Agreement should be received on or before April 5, 1999.

ADDRESSES: Individuals wishing copies of the draft Environmental Assessment, permit application, full text of the Plan, or the draft Implementation Agreement should immediately contact the office and personnel listed below. These documents also will be available for public inspection, by appointment, during normal business hours at the address below. Comments regarding the draft Environmental Assessment, permit application, draft Implementation Agreement or the Plan should be addressed to State Supervisor, Fish and Wildlife Service, Oregon State Office, 2600 S.E. 98th Avenue, Suite 100, Portland, Oregon 97266. Please refer to permit number TE005227-0 when submitting comments.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Mr. Rich Szlemp, Fish and Wildlife Service, Oregon State Office, telephone (503) 231-6179.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Boise Cascade is proposing to harvest approximately 50 acres of mature and old growth forest from a 65-acre parcel

of land. The surrounding ownership consists of Oregon Department of Forestry land and lands owned by the Agency Creek Management Company. The Boise Cascade property contains two nest trees that were occupied by a pair of northern spotted owls between 1990 and 1996. Other listed species may also be affected by the proposed Plan. Coho salmon (*Oncorhynchus kisutch*) are found in Walker Creek in the Plan area. No surveys have been conducted for marbled murrelets (*Brachyramphus marmoratus*) or bald eagles (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*), but the Plan area does contain potentially suitable nesting platforms for marbled murrelets and contains suitable bald eagle habitat. The Plan area contains some of the best northern spotted owl nesting habitat in the northern portion of the Oregon Coast Range. Most of the surrounding land has been logged or contains younger stands of timber that do not provide as high quality of owl nesting habitat as the Plan area.

Alternatives Analyzed in the Draft Environmental Assessment

Alternative 1. No Action

Under this alternative the Service would not issue a permit or the applicant would decide to not harvest the unit. For this analysis, it is assumed that this alternative would maintain the existing old growth forest within the unit.

Alternative 2. The Incidental Take Permit Application and Plan Submitted by Boise Cascade

This alternative would provide for the maximum timber harvest allowable under the Oregon Forest Practices Act. Boise Cascade would harvest about 50 acres of a 70-acre spotted owl core area originally designated by the Oregon Department of Forestry. Boise Cascade removed 6 acres of forest associated with the construction of a logging road in 1989. The remaining 14 acres of the core is on adjacent state forest lands or private lands. Logging of the unit was prohibited by the State of Oregon until 1997 because the unit was within the core area of an active spotted owl site. Due to the lack of use of this site as an activity center for spotted owls in 1997, the Oregon Department of Forestry formally considered this site abandoned. However, the 50 acres are all considered suitable spotted owl habitat and include two trees that were known to be used by spotted owls as nest trees. A pair of spotted owls were active in the vicinity of this core area between 1990 and 1996, and were known to have nested in 1990, 1992 and