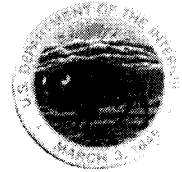


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News Release



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Fish and Wildlife Service Withdraws Proposal to Delist Valley Elderberry Longhorn Beetle from the ESA Following Scientific Review

Decision Reflects Service's Commitment to Use the Best Available Information in its Endangered Species Decisions

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BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

Sacramento –The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service today announced it is withdrawing its proposal to remove the valley elderberry longhorn beetle from the Federal List of Threatened and Endangered Species. This medium-sized beetle, found only in California’s Central Valley, remains protected as a threatened species under the Endangered Species Act (ESA).

After careful review and additional information received from both the public and peer review scientists, the Service has concluded that the scientific information and analysis relied upon in its October 2012 proposal was not strong enough to support a decision to delist the species.

“Today’s decision reflects the value of a robust public comment and scientific peer review process in ensuring we base our actions on the best available scientific information,” said Service Director Dan Ashe. “It shows our commitment to fully consider critical review and comment before making a final decision.”

The scientific review process following publication of the proposed rule did reveal, however, that the species’ range is smaller than that described in the proposed delisting rule. As a result, the regulatory protections of the ESA will now be applied to a smaller area. Kings, Kern and Tulare counties will no longer be considered within the range of the species.

The Service is also working on new guidance for consultation within the range of the species for projects (such as those associated with flood control), and guidance on site-specific approaches for areas that overlap with the California elderberry longhorn beetle or where occurrences may be rare or sparsely distributed.

To increase understanding of the valley elderberry longhorn beetle, including its current population and distribution, the Service continues to support additional studies on the beetle and its habitat. Should new information indicate that the beetle does not warrant protection under the ESA, the Service will again propose delisting.

The decision to withdraw the proposal to remove the species from the Federal List of Threatened and Endangered Species will publish in the *Federal Register* on September 17, 2014. The decision to withdraw, as well as the proposal to delist and associated peer reviews and public comments, can be found online at www.regulations.gov. Additional information about the species can be found at www.fws.gov/sacramento.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service works with others to conserve, protect, and enhance fish, wildlife, plants, and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. For more information on our work and the people who make it happen, visit www.fws.gov/cno. Connect with our Facebook page at <http://www.facebook.com/usfwspacificsouthwest>, follow our tweets at <http://twitter.com/USFWSPacSWest>, watch our YouTube Channel at <http://www.youtube.com/usfws> and download photos from our Flickr page at http://www.flickr.com/photos/usfws_pacificsw/

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