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**Fish and Wildlife Service****50 CFR Part 17****Endangered and Threatened Wildlife and Plants; Initiation of Status Review and Request for Information on the Northern Goshawk**

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

**ACTION:** Notice of initiation of status review on the northern goshawk.

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**SUMMARY:** The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) is reviewing the status of the northern goshawk (*Accipiter gentilis*) in the United States. The northern goshawk is currently being elevated to Category 2 status throughout its range in the United States in response to information indicating possible population declines and loss and modification of habitat. The Service requests data on taxonomy, distribution, population trends, habitat use, and loss or modification of habitat.

**DATES:** Comments and materials may be submitted to the Field Supervisor at the address listed below until further notice.

**ADDRESSES:** Information, comments, or questions concerning the northern goshawk status review may be submitted to the Field Supervisor, Phoenix Field Office, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 3618 West Thomas Road, suite 6, Phoenix, Arizona 85019. The information, data and comments are available for public inspection, by appointment, during normal business hours at the above address.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Timothy Tibbitts at the above Phoenix,

Arizona. Field Office address (telephone +02/379-4720 or FTS 261-4720).

#### SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

##### Background

The northern goshawk (*Accipiter gentilis*) occurs in forested regions throughout the higher latitudes of the northern hemisphere. Approximately 11 subspecies are variously recognized, with 7 occurring across northern Eurasia (Palmer 1988). Three subspecies are variously recognized in North America: *A. g. atricapillus* occurs throughout northern North America, and south through the western states to southern Arizona and New Mexico; *A. g. langi* in coastal British Columbia and southeastern Alaska; and *A. g. apache* in the mountains of southern Arizona and New Mexico, and south through the Sierra Madre of Mexico (Johnsgard 1990, Monson and Phillips 1981, Palmer 1988, Wattel 1973, Webster 1988). The Queen Charlotte Islands goshawk (*A. g. langi*) is more widely recognized than the Apache goshawk (*A. g. apache*) (Palmer 1988), and both are likely sympatric to some degree with *A. g. atricapillus*. Neither the Queen Charlotte nor Apache goshawks were included in the 1983 American Ornithologists' Union Checklist of North American Birds (AOU 1983).

##### Summary of Status

The northern goshawk is known to experience fluctuations in population size, density, and nesting success, presumably in response to natural factors such as prey availability (Kenward 1982, McGowan 1975, Wikman and Linden 1981). A number of studies have found population declines and loss and modification of habitat are also occurring, especially in western North America (Crocker-Bedford 1986, Crocker-Bedford 1990a and 1990b, Kennedy 1989, Patla 1991, Zinn and Tibbitts 1990). Also, reestablishment of the goshawk is suspected in northeastern North America, where forest habitat is recovering from extensive clearing following European settlement.

In recent decades, the northern goshawk has been the subject of numerous studies, particularly on habitat and food requirements, as well as habitat partitioning among the *Accipiter* hawks (e.g. Anderson 1979, Bartelt 1974, Reynolds 1983, Reynolds 1988, Saunders 1982). Many studies have attempted to investigate the implications of forest management on goshawk populations. The concern has been that various human activities (timber extraction, conversion to agriculture,

suppression of fire) may significantly alter forest structure and ecology.

The goshawk is a high trophic level predator dependent upon a variety of avian and mammalian species. The goshawk has been considered a valuable "indicator species," reflecting changes in overall forest ecology. More recently, however, concern has been expressed for the goshawk (USFS 1991), including a petition filed with the Service to list goshawks in the southwestern United States under the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended (ESA) (Silver et al. 1991).

In evaluating the petition, the Service concluded that goshawks in the southwestern United States did not comprise a distinct population and therefore do not constitute a listable entity. However, the Service also determined substantial information exists which indicates northern goshawk population declines, and loss and/or modification of its habitat may be occurring, not only in the Southwest but elsewhere in the United States.

A number of studies have reported declining trends in goshawk populations (Crocker-Bedford 1990a, Kennedy 1989, Patla 1991, Zinn and Tibbitts 1990). In response to concern for goshawk populations, several programs have been developed to manage habitat to promote goshawk population viability (Crocker-Bedford 1991, Fowler 1988, Merrill 1989, USFS 1991). Thus, concern now exists for both the overall forest ecology and for goshawks themselves.

The Service has determined that substantial scientific and commercial information exists to indicate goshawk numbers may be declining and present and future threats of habitat destruction or modification may exist. The Service is therefore classifying the northern goshawk (*Accipiter gentilis*) as a Candidate species (Category 2) throughout its range in the United States. Category 2 includes those taxa for which there is some evidence of vulnerability, but for which there are not enough data to support a listing proposal at this time. Elevation to Category 2 does not mandate initiation of a status review. However, because of the level of concern for the goshawk, the Service is initiating this status review (50 CFR 424.15) to better understand trends in population size and stability and loss or modification of habitat. The Service's Southwest Region (Albuquerque, New Mexico) will assume lead responsibility in pursuing this status review.

The Service requests information on the northern goshawk (*Accipiter gentilis*) primarily throughout its range

in the United States, but also solicits information on the species in Canada, Mexico, and Eurasia. The Service requests information primarily on the following topics:

1. Population trends and dynamics, and documented or suspected influencing factors.
2. Reproduction trends and documented or suspected influencing factors.
3. Trends in loss, modification, and recovery of goshawk habitat.
4. Qualitative and quantitative partitioning of habitat by goshawks for wintering, nesting, and foraging.
5. Taxonomic clarification of North American goshawk subspecies.
6. Migration and dispersal.

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#### Authors

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#### List of Subjects in 50 CFR Part 17

Endangered and threatened species, Exports, Imports, Reporting and recordkeeping requirements, and Transportation.

Authority: 16 U.S.C. 1381-1487; 16 U.S.C. 1531-1544; 16 U.S.C. 4201-4245; Pub L. 99-625, 100 Stat. 3500; unless otherwise noted.

Dated: December 30, 1991.

Richard N. Smith,

Acting Director, Fish and Wildlife Service.

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