

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Fish and Wildlife Service

50 CFR Part 17

Endangered and Threatened Wildlife and Plants; Reproposal of Critical Habitat for Mojave Rabbitbrush Longhorn Beetle

AGENCY: Fish and Wildlife Service, Interior.

ACTION: Reproposal of Critical Habitat for the Mojave rabbitbrush longhorn beetle.

SUMMARY: The Service repropo- ses Critical Habitat for the Mojave rabbitbrush longhorn beetle (*Crossidius mojavensis mojavensis*). Endangered status and Critical Habitat were originally proposed for this species on August 10, 1978 (43 FR 35636-43). The Critical Habitat portion of this proposal was withdrawn by the Service on March 6, 1979 (44 FR 12382-84) because of additional requirements imposed by the 1978 Endangered Species Act Amendments. This proposed rule complies with the requirements of the amendments.

DATES: Comments from the public must be received by June 30, 1980. Comments from the Governor of California must be received by July 30, 1980. A public meeting on this proposal will be held on May 23, 1980. A public hearing on this proposal will be held on June 13, 1980.

ADDRESSES: Interested persons or organizations are requested to submit comments to Director (OES), U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Washington, D.C. 20240. Comments and materials relating to this rulemaking are available for public inspection, by appointment, during normal business hours at the Service's Office of Endangered Species, Suite 500, 1000 North Glebe Road, Arlington, Virginia 22201. The time and place of the public meeting on this proposal are presented in the table below.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: For further information on this proposal, contact Mr. John L. Spinks, Jr., Chief, Office of Endangered Species (703-235-2771).

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Background. The Mojave rabbitbrush longhorn beetle is a yellowish-brown cerambycid beetle which measures from 10 to 18 millimeters in total length. The larvae bore in, and feed on, the roots of composite shrubs. Adults feed on the pollen of, and mate on, flowers of composite shrubs (Linsley and Chemsak, 1961). The beetle was scientifically

described from specimens collected near Palmdale, Los Angeles County, California (Linsley, 1955), but no longer occurs at this locality. The beetle now occurs at only one of the five localities where it was previously known (Opler and Williams, 1978). Land-clearing and urbanization have accounted for the decline of this species.

The Mojave rabbitbrush longhorn beetle was proposed as Endangered with Critical Habitat on August 10, 1978. The Critical Habitat portion of the proposal was withdrawn on March 6, 1979, so that additional requirements regarding proposal of Critical Habitat could be fulfilled, as mandated by the 1978 Endangered Species Act Amendments. This reproposal of Critical Habitat complies with the amendments.

Literature Cited

Linsley, E. G., and J. A. Chemsak, 1961, A distribution and taxonomic study of the genus (*Crossidius* (*Coleoptera: Cerambycidae*)). Misc. Pub. Entomol. Soc. Amer. 3(2):25-64.

Opler, P. A. and L. K. Williams, 1978, Proposed Endangered or Threatened status for ten beetles. *Federal Register* 43(155):35636-43.

Summary of Factors Affecting the Species

The Mojave rabbitbrush longhorn beetle is presently known to occur at one site six miles west of Lancaster, Los Angeles County, California. The major threat to the beetle is loss of habitat through changes in land use and urban development. Activities which could adversely affect the beetle include:

1. Conversion of land from native vegetation to agriculture.
2. Construction of roads and urban development.
3. Fires, which could destroy the beetle's host plants.
4. Collecting of beetles by coleopterists could be harmful as the beetle's range decreases.

Critical Habitat

The Service believes that the only known remaining site where the Mojave rabbitbrush longhorn beetle occurs should be designated as Critical Habitat, because it supports the host plants essential to this species' continued survival. This beetle is extremely restricted in distribution and is susceptible to any changes in land use in the area in which it occurs. Since major changes in land use could result in the beetle's extinction, designation of Critical Habitat is essential for the conservation of this species.

Section 4(b)(4) of the Act requires the Service to consider economic and other

impacts of specifying an area as Critical Habitat. The Service has prepared a draft impact analysis and believes at this time that economic and other impacts of this action are not significant in the foreseeable future. The Service is notifying Federal agencies which may have jurisdiction over the area under consideration for Critical Habitat designation in this reproposal.

Appropriate Federal agencies, interested parties, or organizations are requested to submit information on economic or other impacts of this action (see below).

The Service will prepare a final impact analysis prior to the time of final rulemaking. The Service's impact analysis is the basis for its decision as to whether or not to exclude any area from Critical Habitat for the Mojave rabbitbrush longhorn beetle. A detailed summary of comments in response to the original proposal and this reproposal of Critical Habitat will appear at the time of final rulemaking. Critical Habitat for the Mojave rabbitbrush longhorn beetle is hereby repropo- sed as: California, Los Angeles County. R. 13 W., T. 17 N. Section 15. (The previous proposal (43 FR 35642) erroneously described Section 11 as Critical Habitat.)

Effect of This Proposal if Published as a Final Rule

Section 4(f)(4) of the Act requires, to the maximum extent practicable, that any proposal to determine Critical Habitat be accompanied by a brief description and evaluation of those activities which, in the opinion of the Secretary, may adversely modify such habitat if undertaken, or may be impacted by such designation. Activities which could adversely affect the beetle's habitat were listed in the Factors Section. Critical Habitat designation only affects Federal agency activities, through Section 7 of the Act.

Designation of Critical Habitat is not expected to have any significant effect on these activities, because no Federal involvement is presently known, or described for the future, in the repropo- sed Critical Habitat area.

Public Meetings

The Service hereby announces that a public meeting and, if requested, a public hearing will be held on this proposed rule. The public is invited to attend the meeting and hearing to present opinions and information on the proposal.

Specific information relating to the public meetings is set out below:

Public Meeting*Place, Date, Time and Subject*

Essex House, 44916 North 10th Street West,
Lancaster, California, May 23, 1980, 7:30-10
pm; Mojave rabbitbrush longhorn beetle

Public Hearing*Place, Date, Time and Subject*

Essex House, 44916 North 10th Street West,
Lancaster, California, June 13, 1980, 7:30-10
pm; Mojave rabbitbrush longhorn beetle

Public Comments Solicited

The Director intends that the rules finally adopted be as accurate and effective as possible in the conservation of the Mojave rabbitbrush longhorn beetle. Therefore, any comments or suggestions from the public, concerned governmental agencies, the scientific community, industry, private interests or any other interested party concerning any aspect of this proposed rule are solicited. The Service particularly requests comments on the following:

1. Biological and other relevant data concerning any threat (or lack thereof) to these species.
2. Additional information concerning the range and the distribution of the species.
3. Current or planned activities in the subject areas.
4. The probable impacts on such activities if the area is designated as Critical Habitat.
5. The foreseeable economic and other impacts of the Critical Habitat designation.

National Environmental Policy Act

A draft environmental assessment has been prepared and is on file in the Service's Washington Office of Endangered Species. The assessment will be the basis for a decision as to whether this determination is a major Federal action which would significantly affect the quality of the human environment within the meaning of Section 102(2)(C) of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969.

The primary author of this rule is Dr. Michael M. Bentzien, Office of Endangered Species, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Washington, D.C. 20240 (703-235-1975).

Note.—The Department of the Interior has determined that this is not a significant rule and does not require preparation of a regulatory analysis under Executive Act 12044 and 43 CFR Part 14.

Regulation Promulgation

Accordingly, it is hereby proposed to amend Part 17, subchapter B of Chapter I, Title 50 of the Code of Federal Regulations, as set forth below:

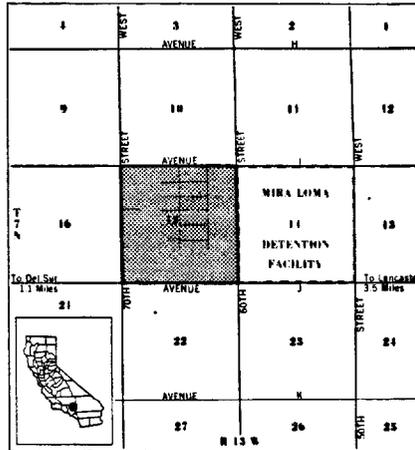
§ 17.95 [Amended]

1. It is proposed that Section 17.95(i), *Insecta*, be amended by adding Critical Habitat of the Mojave rabbitbrush longhorn beetle as follows:

Mojave Rabbitbrush Longhorn Beetle.

(*Crossidius mojavensis mojavensis*)

California. Los Angeles County. R. 13
W. T. 17 N. Section 15.



Dated: April 23, 1980.

Robert S. Cook,

Acting Director, Fish and Wildlife Service.

[FR Doc. 80-13463 Filed 5-1-80; 8:45 am]

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