

normal business hours in the FCC Reference Center (Room 239), 1919 M Street, NW., Washington, DC. The complete text of this decision may also be purchased from the Commission's copy contractor, International Transcription Service, Inc., (202) 857-3800, 2100 M Street, NW., Suite 140, Washington, DC 20037.

Provisions of the Regulatory Flexibility Act of 1980 do not apply to this proceeding.

Members of the public should note that from the time a Notice of Proposed Rule Making is issued until the matter is no longer subject to Commission consideration or court review, all *ex parte* contacts are prohibited in Commission proceedings, such as this one, which involve channel allotments. See 47 CFR 1.1204(b) for rules governing permissible *ex parte* contacts.

For information regarding proper filing procedures for comments, see 47 CFR 1.415 and 1.420.

List of Subjects in 47 CFR Part 73

Radio Broadcasting.

Federal Communications Commission.

John A. Karousos,

Acting Chief, Allocations Branch, Policy and Rules Division, Mass Media Bureau.

[FR Doc. 94-17992 Filed 7-22-94; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 6712-01-M

47 CFR Part 73

[MM Docket No. 94-82, RM-8487]

Radio Broadcasting Services; Spencer, Sac City, IA; St. James, MN

AGENCY: Federal Communications Commission.

ACTION: Proposed rule.

SUMMARY: The Commission requests comments on a petition filed by Iowa Great Lakes Broadcasting Company, Inc., seeking the substitution of Channel 285C2 for Channel 285A at Spencer, IA, and the modification of Station KIGL(FM)'s license to specify operation on the higher class channel. To accommodate the allotment of Channel 285C2 at Spencer, Iowa Great Lakes Broadcasting Company, Inc., also requests the substitution of Channel 288A for Channel 284A at St. James, MN, the modification of Station KXAX's license accordingly, and the deletion of unoccupied and unapplied-for Channel 284A at Sac City, IA. Channel 285C2 can be allotted to Spencer with a site restriction of 11.2 kilometers (6.9 miles) northwest, at coordinates 43-14-32 North Latitude and 95-09-19 West Longitude, to accommodate petitioner's

desired transmitter site and avoid short-spacings to Stations KLMJ, Channel 285A, Hampton, IA, KKLS-FM, Channel 284C1, Sioux Falls, SD, KARL, Channel 286C2, Tracy, MN, and KIWA-FM, Channel 287C2, Sheldon, IA. Channel 268A can be allotted to St. James, MN, at the presently licensed transmitter site of Station KXAX, at coordinates 44-03-15 North Latitude and 94-39-40 West Longitude.

DATES: Comments must be filed on or before September 12, 1994, and reply comments on or before September 27, 1994.

ADDRESSES: Federal Communications Commission, Washington, DC 20554. In addition to filing comments with the FCC, interested parties should serve the petitioner, or its counsel or consultant, as follows: Leonard S. Joyce, Esq., 5335 Wisconsin Avenue, Suite 300, Washington, DC 20015 (Counsel to petitioner).

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Leslie K. Shapiro, Mass Media Bureau, (202) 634-6530.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: This is a synopsis of the Commissioner's Notice of Proposed Rule Making, MM Docket No. 94-82, adopted July 12, 1994, and released July 20, 1994. The full text of this Commission decision is available for inspection and copying during normal business hours in the FCC Reference Center (Room 239), 1919 M Street, NW., Washington, DC. The complete text of this decision may also be purchased from the Commission's copy contractor, International Transcription Services, Inc., (202) 857-3800, 2100 M Street, NW., Suite 140, Washington, DC 20037.

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List of Subjects in 47 CFR Part 73

Radio broadcasting.

Federal Communications Commission.

John A. Karousos,

Acting Chief, Allocations Branch, Policy and Rules Division, Mass Media Bureau.

[FR Doc. 94-17993 Filed 7-22-94; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Fish and Wildlife Service

50 CFR Part 17

143-94

Endangered and Threatened Wildlife and Plants; Finding on a Petition To List the Fluvial Population of the Arctic Grayling as Endangered

AGENCY: Fish and Wildlife Service, Interior.

ACTION: Notice of 12-month petition finding.

SUMMARY: The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) announces a 12-month finding for a petition to add the fluvial population of the Arctic grayling (*Thymallus arcticus*) to the List of Threatened and Endangered Wildlife and Plants. The Service finds that listing the fluvial population of the Arctic grayling is warranted but precluded by other higher priority listing actions.

DATES: The finding announced in this notice was made on July 18, 1994. Comments and information may be submitted until further notice.

ADDRESSES: Information, comments, or questions concerning this finding may be submitted to the Field Supervisor, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Montana Field Office, 100 N. Park Avenue, Suite 320, Helena, Montana 59601. The petition, 90-day finding, 12-month finding, and supporting data are available for public inspection, by appointment, during normal business hours at the above address.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Dale Harms, Assistant Field Supervisor, at the above address, telephone (406) 449-5225.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Background

Section 4(b)(3)(E) of the Endangered Species Act (Act) of 1973, as amended (16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.*), requires that for any petition to revise the Lists of Endangered and Threatened Wildlife and Plants, a finding be made within 12 months of the date of receipt of the petition on whether the petitioned action is (i) not warranted, (ii) warranted, or (iii) warranted but precluded by the efforts to revise the lists and expeditious progress is being made in listing and delisting species. Notice of the finding is to be published promptly in the *Federal Register*. This notice meets the latter requirement for the 12-month finding made earlier for the petition discussed below. Information contained in this notice is a summary of the information in the 12-month finding, which is the Fish and

Wildlife Service's (Service) decision document.

A petition dated October 2, 1991, was received by the Service from the Biodiversity Legal Foundation and George Wuerthner on October 9, 1991. The petition request that the "fluvial Arctic grayling" be listed as an endangered species throughout its historic range in the conterminous United States. Additionally, the petitioners requested that critical habitat be designated. The petitioners stated that the decline of the Fluvial Arctic grayling is a result of many factors. The primary causes cited by the petitioners were habitat degradation as a result of the effects of domestic livestock grazing and stream diversions for irrigation, competition with nonnative trout species, and past overharvesting by anglers. Additionally, the petition stated that much of the annual recruitment is lost in irrigation ditches.

Notice of a 90-day finding published in the January 19, 1993, *Federal Register* (58 FR 4975) found that the petitioners provided substantial information indicating that listing the fluvial population of the Arctic grayling of the upper Missouri River, in Montana and northwestern Wyoming, may be warranted. The notice also indicated that the Fluvial Arctic grayling population in Michigan is extinct, thus there was not substantial information to indicate that listing that population may be warranted. Concurrent with publishing notice of the 90-day finding in the *Federal Register*, the Service initiated a status review.

All Arctic grayling in North America belong to a single species, *Thymallus arcticus* (family Salmonidae). Within North America, Arctic grayling are distributed throughout Alaska and across Canada to the Hudson Bay. Additionally, two geographically isolated populations of Arctic grayling occurred outside of Canada and Alaska in the contiguous United States, apparently as glacial relicts (Vincent 1962). One of these populations was found in Michigan and the other in the drainage of the upper Missouri River in Montana and extreme northwestern Wyoming (Scott and Crossman 1973). The upper Missouri River drainage population was the subject of the Service's finding.

The validity of subspecific distinctions for Arctic grayling has not been proven (Scott and Crossman 1973). A status review was first initiated for the "Montana Arctic grayling" (*T. a. montanus*), as the fluvial Arctic grayling of the upper Missouri River is sometimes known, by a notice of review published December 30, 1982 (47 FR

58454). However, this subspecific designation is not widely accepted (Kaya 1990).

The native Arctic grayling populations of the upper Missouri River were predominantly fluvial (Vincent 1962). Fluvial fishes are those that are permanently stream-dwelling. Adfluvial (also described as lacustrine) fish are those that spend most of their lives in lakes except that they spawn in streams. The only indigenous adfluvial Arctic grayling in the upper Missouri River basin are thought to be those in Red Rock Lakes and, perhaps, Elk Lake (Vincent 1962, Kaya 1990).

Because fluvial Arctic grayling are adapted to life-long residency in stream environments, they are believed to be behaviorally distinct from adfluvial grayling. The adfluvial Arctic grayling was not under consideration in the Service's finding as it is believed to be a distinct population from the fluvial Arctic grayling.

Historically, in the upper Missouri River drainage the fluvial Arctic grayling was widely but irregularly distributed and locally abundant above the Great Falls in Montana. Varley and Schullery (1983) estimate that Arctic grayling of the upper Missouri River drainage presently occur in 8 percent or less of their historic range. Kaya (1992) estimates that the remaining upper Missouri distribution of fluvial Arctic grayling in 80 to 130 km (50 to 80 miles) of the upper Big Hole River may represent 4 to 5 percent of the historic range of fluvial Arctic grayling in Montana. Kaya (1992) arrived at this estimate by using available information to conclude that, historically, grayling may have inhabited approximately 2,000 km (1,250 miles) of streams in the upper Missouri River basin until early in this century.

The only confirmed, self-sustaining remnant of the indigenous upper Missouri River fluvial Arctic grayling population exists in the Big Hole River and the lower reaches of its tributaries in Beaverhead, Deer Lodge, and Silver Bow Counties in Montana (Liknes and Gould 1937, Shepard and Oswald 1989, Kaya 1990, Kaya 1992). Fluvial Arctic grayling are concentrated in the upper Big Hole River above the Divide dam, although they have been documented down to the mouth (Liknes and Gould 1937, Shepard and Oswald 1989). The numbers of grayling in the Big Hole River have been in decline; recent estimates for a section of the Big Hole with the highest grayling densities were 69 grayling per km (111 per mile) in 1983, decreasing to 14 per km (22 per mile) in 1989. The population appears to have stabilized in the past 3 years at

approximately 20 grayling per km (32 per mile) (Kaya 1990; Byorth 1991, 1993).

An additional remnant of the fluvial Arctic grayling population of the upper Missouri River drainage may occur in and around Ennis Reservoir on the Madison River in Madison County, Montana. Until the Service receives conclusive information to the contrary, the Arctic grayling of Ennis Reservoir/Madison River will be considered a remnant of the upper Missouri River fluvial Arctic grayling population.

A factor complicating identification of the upper Missouri River fluvial Arctic grayling population is the extensive hatchery propagation and transplantation of Arctic grayling stocks that has occurred in lakes and rivers throughout Montana and elsewhere (Lee et al. 1980, Everett 1986). The Service does not regard the introduced, lake-dwelling grayling to be part of the indigenous upper Missouri River fluvial Arctic grayling population.

Introduced Arctic grayling that display partially fluvial characteristics reside in Sunnyslope Irrigation Canal in Teton County, Montana. The Service does not consider the Sunnyslope Canal Arctic grayling to be a remnant of the native upper Missouri River fluvial Arctic grayling population.

Summary of Factors Affecting the Species

The following information is a summary and discussion of the five factors or listing criteria as set forth in Section 4(a)(1) of the Endangered Species Act (16 U.S.C. 1531 et seq.) and regulations (50 CFR Part 424) promulgated to implement the listing provisions of the Act and their applicability to the current status of the fluvial population of the Arctic grayling.

A. The Present or Threatened Destruction, Modification, or Curtailment of Its Habitat or Range

A substantial portion of the historic range of the fluvial Arctic grayling has been altered by the extensive construction of dams and reservoirs that have created barriers obstructing migrations to spawning, wintering or feeding areas; inundating grayling habitat; and altering the hydrology of river systems (Vincent 1962, Kaya 1990). In the upper Missouri River drainage, the dominant land use has become agriculture-related (Vincent 1962). The major impact from these activities on Arctic grayling habitat is by the diversion of water for irrigation, which reduces available instream habitat for grayling. This results in stranding of incubating eggs or young

fish, thus increasing predation on young because they are concentrated in the remaining water, reducing food availability, increasing water temperatures (Kaya 1990), decreasing survival of young grayling (Shepard and Oswald 1989), and increasing mortality of trapped fish when diversions are shut down (Shepard and Oswald 1989, Streu 1990). Increased sedimentation from agricultural run-off is also a problem (Vincent 1962, Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks 1989, Shepard and Oswald 1989).

B. Overutilization for Commercial, Recreational, Scientific, or Educational Purposes

Since Arctic grayling are easily caught by anglers, historical exploitation likely contributed to past declines or local extirpations of the grayling population in the upper Missouri River drainage (Vincent 1962, Kaya 1990). A commercial fishery for Arctic grayling existed on the upper Missouri River (Vincent 1962). Catch-and-release fishing regulations are currently in effect on the Big Hole in order to reduce mortality from recreational fishing (Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks 1989).

C. Disease or Predation

Although data has been inconclusive, Arctic grayling interactions, including competition and predation, with nonnative trout species are thought to be factors contributing to the decline of Arctic grayling (Vincent 1962, Kaya 1990, 1992).

D. The Inadequacy of Existing Regulatory Mechanisms

Most of the Big Hole River is managed to produce abundant, large, nonnative trout (Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks 1989). Other than catch and release regulations, grayling are a management priority only in the one reach in which they are concentrated.

E. Other Natural or Manmade Factors Affecting Its Continued Existence

Vincent (1962) suggested that a gradual climatic change could have been a factor in the decline of Arctic grayling populations. Since the latter part of the 1980's, drought conditions have been prevalent throughout the upper Missouri River drainage. During this same period, densities of Arctic grayling and other fishes in the Big Hole River have declined (Oswald 1990; Byorth 1991; C. Hunter, Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks, *in litt.*, 1992). Drought exacerbates the impacts of others factors affecting Arctic

grayling. Decreased fish population densities appear to be a natural response to low water flows which restrict the amount of fish habitat that is available, particularly during critical spawning and rearing periods (C. Hunter, *in litt.*, 1992).

Finding

The Act requires the Service to make determinations regarding listing solely on the basis of the best scientific and commercial data available after conducting a review of the status of the species and after taking into account those efforts being made by States and others to protect the species. Additionally, the Act allows the Service to list distinct population segments of vertebrate fish and wildlife as threatened or endangered. The fluvial form of the Arctic grayling in the upper Missouri River drainage is geographically isolated from other fluvial grayling populations and is behaviorally distinct from adfluvial grayling. For these reasons, the Service believes the fluvial form of the Arctic grayling in the upper Missouri River drainage is a distinct population segment.

As discussed above, the fluvial Arctic grayling faces threats primarily from a reduction in historical range, decrease in available habitat as a result of dewatering within streams, potential competition or predation by nonnative fish, and habitat degradation. The Service finds that listing of the fluvial population of the Arctic grayling is warranted but precluded by work on other species having a higher priority for listing.

Section 4(b) of the Act states that petitioned actions may be found to be warranted but precluded by other listing actions when it is found that the Service is making expeditious progress in revising the lists. Expeditious progress in listing endangered and threatened species is being made and is reported annually in the **Federal Register**. Furthermore, on September 21, 1983, (48 FR 43098), the Service published a system for prioritizing species for listing. This system considers 3 factors in assigning species numerical listing priorities on a scale of 1 to 12 (with number 1 as the highest priority). The three factors are magnitude of threat, immediacy of threat, and taxonomic distinctiveness. Earlier the service had assigned a listing priority of 3 to the fluvial Arctic grayling because the Service considered the magnitude of threat to be high, the immediacy of threat to be imminent, and the taxonomic distinctiveness to be a vertebrate population. The Service is

now changing the magnitude of threat to moderate, primarily as a result of the cooperative efforts that have been initiated among private organizations and individuals, universities, and State and Federal Agencies to restore the fluvial Arctic grayling population in the upper Missouri River drainage (C. Hunter, *in litt.*, 1993). Changing the magnitude of threat to moderate results in a change of the listing priority from 3 to 9. The cooperative efforts include, but are not limited to, the efforts discussed below.

The Service is a member of the Workgroup (Workgroup) and a party to a Memorandum of Understanding entered into in 1991 with Federal, State, and private entities whose purpose is to conserve and restore fluvial Arctic grayling. The Workgroup is near completion of a final restoration plan for the fluvial Arctic grayling of the upper Missouri River.

The Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks and the U.S. Forest Service have begun working with landowners to reduce water and habitat-related threats to the population. Since 1992, irrigators in the Big Hole have voluntarily reduced their water withdrawals in order to sustain flows in the river system. Many water users have modified their diversions to reduce the incidence of grayling becoming entrapped in ditches.

The Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks has intensified its annual monitoring of the Big Hole River grayling population since 1991. Recent habitat improvement projects have taken place on the Big Hole with the cooperation and assistance of private landowners. In 1992, a channel of the Big Hole River was reopened, restoring substantial historical grayling habitat. Fishing regulations have been introduced to protect grayling from harvest. Results from a hooking mortality study conducted in 1992 and 1993 indicate that mortality of released grayling is low. Field research, begun in 1993, is underway to clarify the threat of nonnative fish to fluvial grayling.

In order to better understand grayling habitat requirements, the U.S. Geological Survey collected physical, chemical, and biological measurements in segments of the Big Hole River in 1993. The results are now being finalized. The Service's Fish Technology Center (Center) in Bozeman, Montana, completed a study in 1993 to identify water temperatures that may be limiting for grayling.

Since 1989, the Center has managed and maintained fluvial grayling broodstock. Protocols have been established for the development and use

of a genetic reserve of Big Hole River grayling. The development of this genetic reserve is an integral component in fluvial grayling restoration because this stock will be used for the reestablishment of grayling in other drainages and will provide a "safety net" in case of a catastrophic loss of fluvial grayling in the Big Hole River.

In 1992, sites within the upper Missouri River drainage were evaluated to identify those with the best potential for successful fluvial grayling reestablishment. Progeny of Arctic grayling from the Big Hole River were reintroduced into three rivers within their historic range and additional reintroductions are planned to reestablish viable stocks.

After reviewing the petition, accompanying documents, research findings, and literature cited; the Service concludes that the petition requesting that the fluvial population of the Arctic grayling be listed as an endangered species is warranted but

precluded by other higher priority listing actions. After arriving at the warranted but precluded finding, the Service recommended that the fluvial Arctic grayling be given a listing priority of 9 because the magnitude of threats have been moderated as a result of ongoing cooperative conservation actions. The petitioners also requested that critical habitat be designated. In the future if the warranted but precluded finding for the fluvial population of Arctic grayling in the upper Missouri River drainage is changed to warranted, then the designation of critical habitat would be addressed in the subsequent proposed rule.

The Service's 12-month finding contains more detailed information regarding the above decisions. A copy may be obtained from the Montana Field Office (see **ADDRESSES** section).

References Cited

A complete list of references cited in this rule is available upon request from

the Montana Field Office (see **ADDRESSES** section).

Author

This notice was prepared by Lori E. Nordstrom (see **ADDRESSES** section).

Authority

The authority for this action is the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended (16 U.S.C. 1531-1544).

List of Subjects in 50 CFR Part 17

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

Dated: July 18, 1994.

Mellie H. Beattie,

Director, Fish and Wildlife Service.

IFR Doc. 94-18048 Filed 7-22-94; 8:45 am

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