



United States Department of the Interior



BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

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To: Field Managers, Bakersfield, Folsom, Hollister, and Ukiah

From: State Director

Subject: Final Rule Determining Threatened Status for the California Tiger Salamander

On August 4, 2004, the Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) published a final rule (*Federal Register* 69:47211-47248) determining threatened status for the California tiger salamander (*Ambystoma californiense*). (See Attachment 1.) This rule adds the Central California tiger salamander population to the Federal List of Endangered and Threatened Wildlife and also reclassifies (from endangered to threatened) the previously listed Sonoma and Santa Barbara County Distinct Population Segments. The distinct salamander population in Santa Barbara County was listed as endangered in 2000. The Sonoma County population was listed as an endangered species by emergency rule in 2002. The FWS did not designate critical habitat for the California tiger salamander concurrently with this final rule. However, the final rule states: "We will also soon publish a proposed rule designating critical habitat for the Central California tiger salamander in 20 counties in California."¹

The distribution of the California tiger salamander was described as follows by FWS in the May 2003 proposed rule:

The range of the California tiger salamander is restricted to California. The species persists in disjunct remnant vernal pool complexes in Sonoma and Santa Barbara counties, in vernal pool complexes and isolated ponds scattered mainly along narrow strips of rangeland on each side of the Central Valley from southern Colusa County south to northern Kern County, and in sag ponds and human-maintained stock ponds in the coast ranges from Suisun Bay south to the Temblor Range.

¹In a July 26, 2004, news release, the FWS announced it intends to propose 47 critical habitat units (involving a total of 382,666 acres) in portions of 20 counties in Central California: Alameda, Amador, Calaveras, Contra Costa, Fresno, Kern, Kings, Madera, Mariposa, Merced, Monterey, Sacramento, San Benito, San Joaquin, San Luis Obispo, Santa Clara, Solano, Stanislaus, Tulare, and Yolo. This proposal will not include Sonoma or Santa Barbara counties. Santa Barbara County already has proposed critical habitat, and critical habitat is not being proposed for the Sonoma County population at this time. Although some Federal, State, or local government lands occur within the boundaries of these prospective critical habitat units, the majority of the areas to be proposed as critical habitat occur on privately owned lands.

This rule has an effective date of September 3, 2004. After this date, the Endangered Species Act (ESA) procedures and responsibilities described in Section 7 of the ESA, and the implementing regulations at 50 CFR Part 402, apply to actions affecting this species. Any BLM actions that “may adversely affect” the California tiger salamander will require formal consultation with FWS to ensure that such actions do not jeopardize the continued existence of this species. Additionally, the policy guidance in Manual Section 6840.06 states: “The BLM shall conserve listed species and the ecosystems upon which they depend and shall use existing authority in furtherance of the purposes of the ESA.”

Questions regarding this final rule may be directed to Ed Lorentzen at (916) 978-4646.

Signed
James Wesley Abbott
Acting State Director

Authenticated
Louise Tichy
Records Management

Attachment

1 - Final Rule Determining Threatened Status for the California Tiger Salamander (23 pp.)

Distribution

CA-190 (Attn: Project Manager, Fort Ord)
WO-230, MS 204 LS (Attn: Peggy Olwell)