

Bear gall bladders and bile are among the most coveted ingredients in traditional Asian medicine. To address this situation, CITES member countries focussed on the bear trade during recent meetings of the Animals Committee and Standing Committee. At its September 1996 meeting in the Czech Republic, the Animals Committee adopted a decision regarding the continued illegal trade in bear parts and derivatives, to direct the CITES Secretariat to request certain information from range States of bears and from countries of import, re-export, and consumption of bear parts and derivatives. The Standing Committee subsequently agreed to accept the recommendation of the Animals Committee, and referred it to the CITES Secretariat for action. The Secretariat issued a Notification to the Parties (No. 946) requesting that all range states supply all available information on the status of their wild bear populations, trade threats, and legislative and regulatory controls on the killing of bears and on trade in their parts and derivatives; and that all countries of import, re-export, and consumption of bear parts and derivatives supply all information on their enforcement efforts to interdict illegal shipments of bear parts and derivatives, legislative and regulatory controls on trade in these parts and derivatives, prosecutions relating to illegal trade in bear parts or derivatives, the kinds of bear derivatives available on the market, efforts to promote the use of substitutes in traditional medicine, and education programs. At the 10th meeting of the Conference of the Parties in Zimbabwe in June 1997, the CITES Parties will consider two very similar proposals to transfer all Asian and European populations of the brown bear (*Ursus arctos*) from CITES Appendix II to Appendix I.

As part of its ongoing responsibility to implement CITES, the Office of Management Authority of the Service monitors the trade in species protected by CITES to determine whether or not any country is diminishing the effectiveness of CITES. The Service has been assessing information on the international bear trade for a number of years, particularly its impact on North American bear populations. The Service is aware that poaching of wild specimens can be extremely detrimental to bear populations, and is cognizant of the important role of bear species within an ecosystem. Further, the U.S. government supported recent actions taken by the CITES Animals and Standing Committees to address the international bear trade problem. The

Service is aware that, upon acceding to CITES in July 1993, the Republic of Korea took a three-year reservation on Appendix II bear species, effectively allowing unrestricted trade with non-Party countries. In October 1996, after that reservation had expired, domestic trade in bear species was banned, according to Korean English-language press reports. The Service fully intends to examine closely all evidence submitted during the comment period in order to assess the accuracy and implications of these reports. The Service is currently reviewing and analyzing the petition, as well as other information in the Service's files on trade in bears and bear parts. After the close of the public comment period, the Service will review all of the data in its administrative record before submitting its recommendation to the Secretary of the Interior.

#### Request for Information and Comments

This notice requests comments and information from the public on the following: (1) Existence of poaching, taking, smuggling, or trade in bears, bear parts or bear products/derivatives by Republic of Korea nationals; (2) The effect of take or trade in bears, bear parts or bear products/derivatives on bear species' conservation status in the Republic of Korea or elsewhere; (3) Whether or not actions of Republic of Korea nationals are undermining the effectiveness of CITES; (4) Any illegal trade in bear species, bear parts, or bear products/derivatives by nationals of other countries; (5) Any affirmative measures taken by the Republic of Korea to enhance CITES implementation, especially measures to regulate trade in bears, bear parts or bear products/derivatives, as well as evidence regarding the efficacy of these measures. This information will be used by the Department of the Interior in determining what actions should be taken.

Authors: This notice was prepared by Dr. Susan S. Lieberman and Theodora Greanias, Office of Management Authority, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (703/358-2093; FAX 703/358-2280).

Dated: April 28, 1997.

**John G. Rogers,**

*Acting Director.*

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## DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

### Fish and Wildlife Service

#### Notice of Availability of the Draft Conservation Strategy for the Southern Rocky Mountain Population of the Boreal Toad for Review and Comment

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

**ACTION:** Notice of document availability.

**SUMMARY:** The Fish and Wildlife Service announces the availability of a Draft Conservation Strategy for the southern Rocky Mountain population of the boreal toad. (*Bufo boreas boreas*). This population of the boreal toad is a candidate for listing under the Endangered Species Act of 1973. The Draft Conservation Strategy compliments a State recovery plan for this population of the boreal toad which the Colorado Division of Wildlife had the lead for preparing. Several agencies and organizations were involved in preparation of the recovery plan which appears as an appendix to the Draft Conservation Strategy. The Conservation Strategy was written by ad hoc members of the Boreal Toad Recovery Team and included personnel with the Biological Resources Division of the US Geological Survey, Bureau of Land Management, Colorado Division of Wildlife, National Park Service, US Fish and Wildlife Service, and the US Forest Service. Earlier drafts of the Conservation Strategy underwent peer review by three scientists. One of the scientists is an amphibian expert, Dr. Paul Bartelt, who is a professor at Waldorf College in Iowa. Another amphibian expert, Dr. David Pettus, was a former professor at Colorado State University. The third person, Dr. David Cooper, is a wetland specialist at Colorado State University. The Conservation Strategy focuses on land management practices that can be applied to reduce or eliminate threats to the boreal toad that warrant its candidate status. Full implementation of the Conservation Strategy and recovery plan represents the best approach to the long-term survival of this population of the boreal toad. The Service solicits review and comment from the public on the Draft Conservation Strategy.

**DATES:** Comments on the Draft Conservation Strategy must be received on or before June 4, 1997, to be considered for preparation of the final Conservation Strategy.

**ADDRESSES:** Persons wishing to review the Draft Conservation Strategy may obtain or request a copy from the US

Forest Service, Pike-San Isabel National Forest, 1920 Valley Dr., Pueblo, CO 81008, (719) 545-8737. Comments on the Draft Conservation Strategy should be sent to the Acting Assistant Colorado Field Supervisor, US Fish and Wildlife Service, 764 Horizon Dr., S. Annex A, Grand Junction, CO 81506. Comments and materials received will be available upon request, by appointment, during normal business hours at the Fish and Wildlife Service address.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Mr. Terry Ireland, Fish and Wildlife Biologist, at the Fish and Wildlife Service's Grand Junction address or call (970) 243-2778.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:**

**Background**

The boreal toad (*Bufo boreas boreas*) is one of the two subspecies of the western toad which is found throughout western North America. The southern Rocky Mountain population is geographically isolated from boreal toad populations to the north and west by dry, non-forested intermountain valleys. It is genetically differentiated and probably represents an independently evolving lineage or species.

The southern Rocky Mountain boreal toad occupies forest habitats between 2250 to 3600 m (7500-12000 ft.) in Colorado, southwest Wyoming, and north-central New Mexico. Boreal toad occupy three different types of habitat during the course of the year: breeding ponds, summer range, and overwinter refugia. All of these specific habitats occur within lodgepole pine or spruce-fir forests. Few boreal toads have been recorded from lower-elevation ponderosa pine forests and willow/sage communities.

Southern Rocky Mountain boreal toads were once considered common to abundant throughout the higher elevations of Colorado and southeastern Wyoming along the Snowy and Sierra Madre ranges (Medicine Bow, Sierra Madre and Pole Mountains). The southern periphery of the species range was located in New Mexico along the San Juan Mountains at Lagunitas, Canjilon, and Trout Lakes.

Boreal toad decline in New Mexico was first observed in the mid 1980's. Surveys conducted in 1989 and 1993 at the three previously occupied boreal toad locations revealed no populations. Recent observations of boreal toads in Colorado, within 29 km (20 miles) of New Mexico's historically occupied areas provide some hope that boreal toads may still exist in New Mexico. Between 1974 and 1982, 11 populations of boreal toads disappeared to the West

Elk Mountains of west-central Colorado. By the late 1980's boreal toads were absent from 85 percent of known localities in northern Colorado. Once known to occur in 25 of 63 counties, and potentially in 7 others, the boreal toad is absent in over 83 percent of previously known locations in Colorado. Rangelwide, primarily in Colorado, and including a single breeding location in Wyoming, there are now 50 known breeding sites. However, most of the sites have only a few breeding adults.

The Service received a petition to list the southern Rocky Mountain population of the boreal toad as endangered on September 30, 1993, by the Biodiversity Legal Foundation. The Service made a 90-day petition finding (59 FR 37439) on July 22, 1994, that stated that sufficient information existed to indicate that Federal listing may be warranted. Subsequently, the Service made a 12-month finding (60 FR 15281) on March 23, 1995, that stated that Federal listing was warranted, but precluded by higher listing priorities.

In an effort to address the threats to the boreal toad prior to Federal listing the Colorado Division of Wildlife assembled a Recovery Team and published a recovery plan in 1994. The Recovery Team recently completed a revised recovery plan in 1997 that addressed the range of the boreal toad in Colorado as well as Wyoming and New Mexico and provided more details for research and management recommendations. It was also decided that a conservation strategy was needed to address more specific land management practices. A Conservation Agreement is also planned and signatory parties will be agreeing to follow recommendations in the recovery plan and Conservation Strategy. The Conservation Strategy focuses on eight general impacts to the boreal toad and ways to reduce or eliminate those impacts.

**Author**

The primary author of this notice is Terry Ireland (see **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION** section).

**Authority:** Authority for this action is the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended (16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.*).

Dated: April 25, 1997.

**Terry T. Terrel,**

*Deputy Regional Director, Denver, Colorado.*  
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**DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR**

**Bureau of Indian Affairs**

**Information Collection Submitted to the Office of Management and Budget for Review Under the Paperwork Reduction Act**

**AGENCY:** Bureau of Indian Affairs.

**ACTION:** Notice.

**SUMMARY:** This notice announces that the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) has submitted the proposed renewal of the collection of information for Federal Documented Petitions for Federal Acknowledgment as an Indian Tribe to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) for approval under the provisions of the Paperwork Reduction Act (44 U.S.C. 3501 *et seq.*). On February 7, 1997, BIA published a notice in the **Federal Register** (62 FR 5837) requesting comments on this proposed collection. The comment period ended on April 8, 1997. BIA received no comments from the public in response to the notice.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Copies of the proposed collection of information and related forms and explanatory materials may be obtained by contacting Holly Reckord, Bureau of Indian Affairs, Branch of Acknowledgment and Research, 1849 C Street, NW., MS: 4603-MIB, Washington, DC 20240, (202) 208-3592.

**DATES:** OMB is required to respond to this request within 60 days of publication of this notice or before July 7, 1997 but may respond after 30 days. For maximum consideration, your comments should be submitted by June 4, 1997.

**ADDRESSES:** Your comments and suggestions on the requirements should be made directly to the Office of Management and Budget, Interior Department Desk Officer (1076-0104) Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs, Washington, DC 20503, (202) 395-7340. Please provide a copy of your comments to Holly Reckord, Bureau of Indian Affairs, Branch of Acknowledgment and Research, 1849 C Street, NW., MS: 4603-MIB, Washington, DC, (202) 208-3592.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:**

*1. Abstract*

The information collection is needed to establish whether a petitioning group has the characteristics necessary to be acknowledged as having a Government-to-Government relationship with the United States.