

in conjunction with a survey of cave fauna. Survey data will contribute to knowledge of the distribution and abundance of the species in the wild. Activities are proposed for the survival and enhancement of the species in the wild.

Written data or comments should be submitted to the Regional Director, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Ecological Services Operations, 1 Federal Drive, Fort Snelling, Minnesota 55111-4056, and must be received within 30 days of the date of this publication.

Documents and other information submitted with this application are available for review by any party who submits a written request for a copy of such documents to the following office within 30 days of the date of publication of this notice: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Ecological Services Operations, 1 Federal Drive, Fort Snelling, Minnesota 55111-4056. Telephone: (612) 713-5343; FAX: (612) 713-5292.

Dated: December 14, 1998.

**Lynn M. Lewis,**

*Acting Program Assistant Regional Director,  
Ecological Services, Region 3, Fort Snelling,  
Minnesota.*

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## DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

### Fish and Wildlife Service

#### Notice of Availability of the Draft Comprehensive Conservation Plan and Environmental Assessment for the Alameda National Wildlife Refuge and Notice of Public Meeting to Seek Comments

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

**ACTION:** Notice of Availability and Notice of Public Meeting.

**SUMMARY:** This notice advises agencies and the public that the draft Comprehensive Conservation Plan (Plan) and Environmental Assessment (Assessment) for the proposed Alameda National Wildlife Refuge are available for public review and comment. This notice also advises that an open house meeting will be held to solicit public comments on the draft Plan and Assessment.

The purpose of the Comprehensive Management Plan is to guide Refuge management decisions and to identify strategies to meet the goals and objectives of the Alameda Refuge and National Wildlife Refuge System. The Comprehensive Conservation Plan addresses resources protection,

management, and restoration; research and monitoring; education and interpretation; public involvement, use, and access; facilities development; and compatibility of uses with the purpose of the refuge.

The Environmental Assessment evaluates the alternatives and analyzes the environmental effects of establishing the Alameda Refuge and of implementing the Comprehensive Conservation Plan. The four alternatives evaluated in the Environmental Assessment provide different levels of wildlife management and public use opportunities. The Environmental Assessment will be used to determine whether the implementation of the selected alternative would have a significant impact upon the quality of the human environment.

**DATES:** The agency must receive written comments on the Plan and Assessment on or before February 16, 1999. The agency will hold an open house meeting on January 14, 1999, 6:30 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. in Alameda, California.

**ADDRESSES:** Address written comments to Charles Houghten, Division of Refuge Planning (ARW-RPL), U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 911 NE 11th Avenue, Portland, OR 97232-4181. The public open house will be held at the Alameda High School Cafeteria, 2200 Central Avenue between Walnut and Oak Streets in Alameda, California.

See the Supplementary Information Section for the electronic access and filing address.

#### SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

##### Availability of Documents

Individuals who want copies of the draft Comprehensive Conservation Plan for the Alameda National Wildlife Refuge and associated Environmental Assessment should immediately contact the Division of Refuge Planning at the above referenced address or call 800-662-8933. These documents are also available at [www.r1.fws.gov/planning/plnhome.html](http://www.r1.fws.gov/planning/plnhome.html).

##### Background Information

The draft Comprehensive Management Plan presents an overview of the Service's proposed management approaches to wildlife and habitats, public uses and wildlife-dependent recreation activities, and facilities. This plan corresponds to Alternative C, the preferred alternative, in the draft Environmental Assessment. The proposed management actions only apply to lands and waters within the National Wildlife Refuge System.

The proposed Refuge would be managed for the conservation and

management of native species of wildlife and fish and their habitats. Wildlife species identified as endangered or threatened will receive management priority, with a special emphasis on stewardship of the California least tern nesting colony. Management actions, including expanding the colony, would be taken to assure that the Alameda least tern colony continues to be one of the most successful breeding sites in California. Habitat management will emphasize keeping most of the currently unvegetated areas free of vegetation to deter predators, removing exotic species of plants, and restoring wetland habitat. Predators of least terns will be managed by an integrated program of preventative and selective humane control methods.

Four alternatives for management of wildlife and habitat are analyzed in the draft Environmental Assessment. All alternatives except the no-action alternative would establish a national wildlife refuge of the same size but would differ in the type of management. Alternative A—No Action, Alternative B—Establish a national wildlife refuge with a minimum level of management, Alternative C—Establish a national wildlife refuge and optimize Wildlife Management and Wildlife-Dependent Public Uses (Preferred Alternative), and Alternative D—Establish a national wildlife refuge and maximize public use with moderate wildlife management.

The environmental review of the Comprehensive Conservation Plan and associated Environmental Assessment will be conducted in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, as amended (42 U.S.C. 4321 *et seq.*), NEPA regulations (40 CFR 1500-1508), National Wildlife Refuge System Administration Act of 1966 as amended by the National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act of 1997 (16 U.S.C. 668dd *et seq.*), other appropriate Federal laws and regulations, and Service policies and procedures for compliance with those regulations.

##### Electronic Access and Filing Address

You may submit comments by sending electronic mail (e-mail) to [r1planning\\_guest@fws.gov](mailto:r1planning_guest@fws.gov) (with "Alameda NWR" typed in the subject line). If comments are an attached file, submit as an ASCII file, avoiding the use of special characters and any form of encryption.

Dated: December 14, 1998.

**Michael J. Spear,**

*Manager, California/Nevada Operations,  
Sacramento, California.*

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