(IMO) adopted this recommendation in 1990.

The United States elected to postpone implementation of the amendment until the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary was designated and a study of potential impacts was conducted. The Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary Vessel Management Final Report was published October 22, 1998. Similar to the 1979 PARS and the IMO adopted amendments, the report recommended shifting the ''southern approach'' of the San Francisco TSS slightly west to reduce risk of groundings along the San Mateo coastline and to improve north-south alignment.

Necessity for a new port access route study: The Coast Guard is always seeking ways to enhance the safety of life at sea. The Coast Guard has identified a potential safety enhancement by increasing predictability of vessel traffic patterns in a popular offshore fishing area near the northern approach of the traffic separation scheme off San Francisco. When vessels follow predictable and charted routing measures, congestion may be reduced, and mariners may be better able to predict where vessel interactions may occur and act accordingly.

The Coast Guard plans to study whether extending the traffic lanes of the Traffic Separation Schemes off San Francisco would increase safety in the area just outside the radar range of Vessel Traffic Service (VTS) San Francisco. Because the VTS does not monitor this region, extending the traffic lanes may increase the predictability of vessel movements and encounters and improve navigation safety. In addition, the study will also assess whether extending the traffic lanes may interfere with fishing vessels operating in the area.

Furthermore, the present traffic lanes go through the Gulf of the Farallones National Marine Sanctuary and, if extended, will go into the Cordell Bank National Marine Sanctuary. The increased predictability of vessel traffic using established traffic lanes may decrease the potential for oil spills, collisions and other events that could threaten the marine environment.

Timeline, study area, and process of this PARS: The Eleventh Coast Guard District will conduct this PARS. The study will begin immediately and should take 6 to 12 months to complete.

The study area will encompass the traffic separation schemes off San Francisco extending to the limit of the VTS area and vessel traffic patterns of vessels departing from or approaching the traffic lanes. The VTS area covers the seaward approaches within a 38 nautical mile radius of Mount Tamalpais (37°55.8′ N., 122°34.6′ W).

As part of this study, we will consider previous studies, analyses of vessel traffic density, fishing vessel information, and agency and stakeholder experience in vessel traffic management, navigation, ship handling, and effects of weather. We encourage you to participate in the study process by submitting comments in response to this notice.

We will publish the results of the PARS in the **Federal Register.** It is possible that the study may validate existing vessel routing measures and conclude that no changes are necessary. It is also possible that the study may recommend one or more changes to enhance navigational safety and the efficiency of vessel traffic. The recommendations may lead to future rulemakings or appropriate international agreements.

Possible Scope of the Recommendations

We are attempting to determine the scope of any safety problems associated with vessel transits in the study area. We expect that information gathered during the study will help us identify any problems and appropriate solutions. The study may recommend that we—

- Maintain the current vessel routing measures;
- Modify the existing traffic separation scheme;
- Create one or more precautionary areas;
- Create one or more inshore traffic zones;
- Establish area(s) to be avoided;
- Create deep-draft routes;
- Establish a Regulated Navigation Area (RNA) with specific vessel operating requirements to ensure safe navigation near shallow water; and
- Identify any other appropriate ships' routing measures.

Questions

To help us conduct the port access route study, we request information that will help answer the following questions, although comments on other issues addressed in this notice are also welcome. In responding to a question, please explain your reasons for each answer and follow the instructions under ''Public Participation and Request for Comments'' above.

1. What navigational hazards do vessels operating in the study area face? Please describe.

2. Are there strains on the current vessel routing system, such as increasing traffic density? Please describe.

3. Are modifications to existing vessel routing measures needed to address hazards and strains and to improve traffic efficiency in the study area? If so, please describe.

4. What costs and benefits are associated with the measures listed as potential study recommendations? What measures do you think are most cost-effective?

5. What impacts, both positive and negative, would changes to existing routing measures or new routing measures have on the study area?

This notice is issued under authority of 33 U.S.C. 1223(c) and 5 U.S.C. 552.

Dated: October 13, 2009.

Kevin S. Cook,

Rear Admiral, U.S. Coast Guard, Director of Prevention Policy.

[FR Doc. E9–29415 Filed 12–9–09; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4910–15–P

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Fish and Wildlife Service

[FWS–R1–ES–2009–N231] [10120–1113–0000–F5]

Endangered Wildlife and Plants; Permits

AGENCY: Fish and Wildlife Service, Interior.

ACTION: Notice of availability of permit applications; request for comments.

SUMMARY: We, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service), invite the public to comment on applications for permits to conduct enhancement of survival activities with endangered species. The Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended (Act) requires that we solicit public comment on these permit applications involving endangered species.

DATES: To ensure consideration, please send your written comments by January 11, 2010.

ADDRESSES: Program Manager, Endangered Species, Ecological Services, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 911 NE. 11th Avenue, Portland, OR 97232–4181.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Linda Belluomini, Fish and Wildlife Biologist, at the above address or by telephone (503–231–6131) or fax (503–231–6243).

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The following applicants have applied for recovery permits to conduct certain activities with endangered species under section 10(a)(1)(A) of the Act (16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.*). We are soliciting

review of and comment on these applications by local, State, and Federal agencies and the public.

Permit No. TE–225693

Applicant: Amy B.H. Greenwell Ethnobotanical Garden, Captain Cook, Hawaii.

The applicant requests a permit to remove and reduce to possession *Prithchardia affinis* (loulu) in conjunction with seed collection and phenology studies on National Park Service land on the island of Hawaii in the State of Hawaii, for the purpose of enhancing its survival.

Permit No. TE–003483

Applicant: U.S. Geological Survey, Biological Resources Division, Pacific Island Ecosystems Research Center, Honolulu, Hawaii.

The permittee requests a permit amendment to remove and reduce to possession (collect) *Cyanea glabra* (haha) and *Pritchardia affinis* (loulu) in conjunction with assessing genetic diversity and population structure on the islands of Hawaii and Maui in the State of Hawaii for the purpose of enhancing their survival.

Public Comments

Please refer to the permit number for the applications when submitting comments.

We are soliciting public review and comment on these recovery permit applications. Before including your address, phone number, e-mail address, or other personal identifying information in your comment, you should be aware that your entire comment—including your personal identifying information—may be made publicly available at any time. While you can ask us in your comment to withhold your personal identifying information from public review, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so.

All comments and materials we receive in response to this request will be available for public inspection, by appointment, during normal business hours at the above address.

Dated: November 16, 2009.

David J. Wesley,

Regional Director, Region 1, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

[FR Doc. E9–29433 Filed 12–9–09; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4310–55–P

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Fish and Wildlife Service

[FWS–R1–ES–2009–N188; 10120–1113–0000–D2]

Notice of Intent to Prepare an Environmental Impact Statement Related to Experimental Removal of Barred Owls for the Conservation Benefit of Threatened Northern Spotted Owls

AGENCY: Fish and Wildlife Service, Interior.

ACTION: Notice of intent to prepare an environmental impact statement.

SUMMARY: Under the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA), this notice advises the public that we, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), intend to gather information necessary to prepare an environmental impact statement (EIS) for barred owl (*Strix varia*) removal experiments designed to determine if the species' presence is affecting northern spotted owl (*Strix occidentalis caurina*) population stability and growth, and to test the feasibility of removing barred owls from specific locations. We furnish this notice to advise other agencies and the public of our intentions, and to obtain suggestions and information on the scope of issues to include in the EIS.

DATES: To ensure consideration, please send your written comments by January 11, 2010. Interested parties may contact us for more information at the addresses and phone numbers listed in **ADDRESSES**.

ADDRESSES: You may submit information by one of the following methods:

1. You may mail written comments and information to Paul Henson, Field Supervisor, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Oregon Fish and Wildlife Office, 2600 SE. 98th Ave., Ste. 100, Portland, OR 97266.

2. You may hand-deliver written comments to the above address.

3. You may send comments by electronic mail (e-mail) to *BarredOwlEIS@fws.gov.* Please see the ''Request for Information'' section below for file format and other information about electronic filing.

4. You may fax your comments to 503–231–6195.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Robin Bown, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Oregon Fish and Wildlife Office, 2600 SE. 98th Ave., Ste. 100, Portland, OR 97266; telephone, 503–231–6179; facsimile, 503–231–6195.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Background

We listed the northern spotted owl as threatened in June 1990 under the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended (ESA; 16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.*), based primarily on the loss and degradation of suitable habitat by human activity and natural events (55 FR 26114). Conservation efforts for the northern spotted owl since the species' listing have focused mainly on securing forest habitat with characteristics essential for its survival and conservation. The 1989 Status Review Supplement for the northern spotted owl indicated that the long-term impact of the expansion of the barred owl into the range of the spotted owl was unknown, but of concern (USFWS 1989, p. 3.15). This assessment was mirrored in the listing rule for the northern spotted owl, which noted that the long-term impact of barred owls on the spotted owl was unknown but of considerable concern (55 FR 26114, p. 26190). However, the best available information now suggests that competition from barred owls poses a significant threat to the northern spotted owl, because barred owls have continued to expand and saturate their range throughout the listed range of the northern spotted owl. Therefore, securing habitat alone may not result in the recovery of the northern spotted owl.

In the past century barred owls have expanded their range westward, reaching the range of the northern spotted owl in British Columbia by about 1959. Barred owl populations have continued to expand southward within the range of the northern spotted owl, and were first documented in that portion of Washington in 1973, Oregon in 1972, and California in 1976 (Livezey *et al.* 2007, p. 49; Sharp 1989, p. 179). The population of barred owls behind the expansion front continues to increase, and they now outnumber spotted owls in many of the northern portions of the northern spotted owl's range (Pearson and Livezey 2003, p. 272).

Competition and predation from barred owls may cause direct and indirect negative effects to the northern spotted owl. This threat could result in extirpation of the northern spotted owl from a substantial portion of its historical range and severely reduce the likelihood of its recovery, even if other known negative effects are eliminated.

Potential direct negative effects include declines in site occupancy by northern spotted owls resulting from their exclusion from high-quality habitat by barred owls. This exclusion drives