

Prepared in conformance with the National Wildlife Refuge System Administration Act of 1966, as amended by the National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act of 1997, and the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, the plan describes how we intend to manage the refuge over the next 15 years.

ADDRESSES: You may obtain copies of this CCP on compact disk or in print by writing to Rachel Carson NWR, 321 Port Road, Wells, Maine 04090, telephone 207-646-9226. You may also access and download a copy from the Web sites <http://library.fws.gov/ccps.htm> or <http://rachelcarsonrefuge.fws.gov>.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Ward Feurt, Refuge Manager, Rachel Carson NWR, at 207-646-9226, or by electronic mail at Ward_Feurt@fws.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The 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.*), requires CCPs for all refuges to provide refuge managers with 15-year strategies for achieving refuge purposes and furthering the mission of the National Wildlife Refuge System. Developing CCPs is done according to the sound principles of fish and wildlife science and laws, while adhering to Service planning and related policies. In addition to outlining broad management direction on conserving refuge wildlife and habitat, CCPs identify wildlife-dependent recreational opportunities available to the public, including opportunities for hunting, fishing, wildlife observation and photography, and environmental education and interpretation. We will review and update this CCP at least once every 15 years.

Rachel Carson NWR spans over 5,293 acres, which comprises 10 divisions between the towns of Kittery and Cape Elizabeth in York and Cumberland Counties, Maine. The refuge harbors estuaries that provide nurseries for many marine fish. Its tidal rivers provide passage to upstream spawning areas for anadromous fish. Its diverse aquatic and upland habitats support breeding, migrating, and wintering birds, and provide essential habitat for nationally threatened and endangered species. The Service acquired most of the refuge under authority of the Migratory Bird Conservation Act of 1929 (16 U.S.C. 715-715r) for "use as an inviolate sanctuary, or for any other management purposes, for migratory birds."

We distributed a draft CCP/ Environmental Assessment (EA) for

public review and comment for 30 days between August 17 and September 18, 2006. Its distribution was announced in the **Federal Register** on August 17, 2006 (71 FR 47511). That draft analyzed three alternatives for managing the refuge. We also held two public meetings on August 29 and September 7, 2006, to obtain public comments. We received 41 comments from local towns, conservation and recreational organizations, and local residents. Appendix J of the final CCP includes a summary of those comments and our responses to them.

We selected Alternative B (the Service-proposed action) from the draft CCP/EA as the alternative for implementation. Our final CCP fully describes its details. Staff from Rachel Carson NWR headquarters office in Wells, Maine, will continue to administer all divisions of the refuge. Highlights of Alternative B, which will be incorporated into the final CCP, include:

(1) Acquire the remaining 3,833 acres within the approved acquisition boundary and expand the refuge by 5,558 acres beyond its current approved boundary for future acquisitions;

(2) Build a new administrative complex including office space, maintenance facilities, and visitor contact station;

(3) Combine the Moody, Lower Wells, Upper Wells, and Mousam River Divisions into one Wells Bay Division;

(4) Increase public use opportunities, e.g., provide expanded hunting and fishing opportunities in new land acquisitions;

(5) Improve the availability and quality of interpretive signs and kiosks, nature trails, and parking areas;

(6) Incorporate a pilot recreation fee program to support public use activities;

(7) Enhance outreach and partnerships with local communities, expand the role and membership of our Friends Group, and strengthen our relationships with neighbors and elected officials; and

(8) Develop Rachel Carson NWR as an outstanding center for research and demonstration emphasizing land management techniques for restoring and sustaining healthy estuarine ecosystems in concert with the Service's Land Management Research and Demonstration program.

Dated: July 25, 2007.

Thomas J. Healy,
Acting Regional Director, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Hadley, Massachusetts.
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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Fish and Wildlife Service

Vieques National Wildlife Refuge

AGENCY: Fish and Wildlife Service, Interior.

ACTION: Notice of availability of the Final Comprehensive Conservation Plan and Environmental Impact Statement.

SUMMARY: The Fish and Wildlife Service announces that a Final Comprehensive Conservation Plan and Environmental Impact Statement for Vieques National Wildlife Refuge in Puerto Rico is available for distribution. The plan was prepared pursuant to the National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act of 1997, and in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, and describes how the refuge will be managed for the next 15 years. The compatibility determinations for wildlife observation, wildlife photography, and environmental education and interpretation; bicycling, horseback riding, hiking, jogging, and moped/motorcycle riding; and kayaking and canoeing are also available in the plan.

DATES: A Record of Decision may be signed on or after September 21, 2007.

ADDRESSES: A copy of the plan and environmental impact statement is available on compact diskette or hard copy by writing: Oscar Diaz, Refuge Manager, Vieques National Wildlife Refuge, P.O. Box 1527, Vieques, Puerto Rico 00765. The plan and environmental impact statement may also be accessed and downloaded from the Service's Web site address: <http://www.fws.gov/southeast/planning/>.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Gisella Burgos, Telephone: 787/741-2138.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The availability of the Draft Comprehensive Conservation Plan and Environmental Impact Statement for Vieques National Wildlife Refuge for a 60-day public review and comment period was announced in the **Federal Register** on February 28, 2007 (72 FR 9018). The plan and environmental impact statement identified and evaluated three alternatives for managing the refuge over the next 15 years.

Alternative A, the "No Action" alternative, would have continued current management.

Alternative B would have focused on wildlife and habitat management but would have maintained the existing visitor programs and public uses. Habitat management and monitoring

would have been expanded and agreements with research, governmental, and non-governmental organizations would have been developed to provide information needed for the management of forests, grasslands, coastal wetlands, beaches, and listed species and their habitats. In partnership with others, programs would have been developed for management of nesting sea turtle populations on Vieques beaches.

Alternative C, the preferred alternative, will direct the refuge toward a realistic and achievable level of both habitat management and public use and will provide a management program that will address the needs of the resources and, where appropriate and compatible with the refuge purposes, the needs of the community. This alternative will provide for increases in management efforts to restore habitats without diminishing the wildlife values associated with the current conditions. There is also a focus on management activities to benefit threatened and endangered species. This includes the possible reintroduction of species extirpated from Vieques and expansion of populations of species already found on the refuge. Some priority public uses, as identified in the National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act of 1997, will be expanded and other uses that are determined to be compatible with the refuge mission may be permitted. Historic and archaeological resources will be stabilized and, where possible, interpretation of their significance and role in the evolution of Vieques Refuge will be provided.

Vieques National Wildlife Refuge, consisting of approximately 17,771 acres (3,100 acres on western Vieques and 14,671 acres on eastern Vieques), was created from former Navy managed lands by congressional actions in 2001 and 2003. The transferred lands are to be managed in accordance with the National Wildlife Refuge System Administration Act of 1966, as amended by the National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act of 1997. The refuge lands were historically used for agricultural purposes and more recently for military training activities. As a result, the wildlife habitats and communities are significantly altered and non-native invasive species are common along with remnants of native habitats. As a result of the military training, portions of the refuge contain unexploded ordnance and other contaminants. These areas have been classified as a "superfund site" under the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA). Cleanup of these

portions of the refuge is being conducted by the Navy in accordance with CERCLA. In addition, a Federal Facilities Agreement between the Navy, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Fish and Wildlife Service, and the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico will help to guide the cleanup process.

Although the short-term use and management of areas contaminated with unexploded ordnance would be restricted, the alternatives presented were developed with the assumption that these lands would be cleaned of any contaminants that would pose a threat to either the wildlife or visitors to the refuge.

Authority: This notice is published under the authority of the National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act of 1997, Public Law 105-57.

Dated: June 14, 2007.

Cynthia K. Dohner,

Acting Regional Director.

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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Fish and Wildlife Service

Draft Recovery Plan for the Ivory-billed Woodpecker (*Campephilus principalis*)

AGENCY: Fish and Wildlife Service, Interior.

ACTION: Notice of document availability for review and comment.

SUMMARY: The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service ("we") announce the availability of the Draft Recovery Plan for the Ivory-billed Woodpecker (*Campephilus principalis*). This draft recovery plan includes specific criteria and measures that should be taken in order to effectively recover the species to the point where delisting is warranted under the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended (Act). We solicit review and comment from local, State, and Federal agencies and the public on this draft recovery plan. **DATES:** Comments on the draft recovery plan must be received on or before October 22, 2007.

ADDRESSES: Copies of the draft recovery plan are available by request from the Lafayette Field Office of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 646 Cajundome Boulevard, Suite 400, Lafayette, Louisiana 70506, or by visiting our recovery plan Web site at <http://endangered.fws.gov/recovery/index.html#plans>. If you wish to comment, you may submit your comments by one of the following methods:

1. You may mail or hand-deliver written comments and materials to the Field Supervisor, at the above address or;

2. You may fax your comments to 337-291-3139.

Comments and materials received are available for public inspection on request, by appointment, during normal business hours at the above address.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Deborah Fuller, at the above address, or telephone 337-291-3100.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Restoring listed animals and plants to the point where they are again secure, self-sustaining components of their ecosystems is a primary goal of our threatened and endangered species program. To help guide the recovery effort, we prepare recovery plans for listed species native to the United States, pursuant to section 4(f) of the Act, unless such a plan would not promote the conservation of a particular species. Recovery plans describe actions that may be necessary for conservation of the species, establish criteria for reclassification from endangered to threatened status or removal from the list of threatened and endangered species, and estimate the time and cost for implementing the needed recovery measures.

The Ivory-billed woodpecker is extremely rare and was, until recently, commonly accepted as extirpated from its known range in the United States. The species appeared to be widely distributed throughout the southeast prior to European settlement. The Ivory-billed woodpecker's disappearance is closely linked with logging and clearing of the contiguous forest habitats which once covered much of the southeastern United States. Additionally, as habitats became fragmented and the species increasingly rare, collecting and direct mortality may have extirpated the bird in certain areas.

Despite having been listed since 1967, no recovery plan was prepared, in large part due to the lack of any clear, undisputed evidence (since 1944) of the species' continued existence. Evidence supporting the presence of at least one bird in the Bayou de View area of Cache River National Wildlife Refuge in 2004, as well as additional information, has generated the need to complete a recovery plan. Given the limited information on the current number of individuals throughout the species' range and the limited knowledge on biology, habitat requirements, and genetic information, we recognize the need to generate scientific information to better address the threats and limiting