

News Release
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**Agencies release revised plan, assessment
for protecting Canada lynx affected by Maine trapping program**
Maine to manage at least 4,785 acres for Canada lynx

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) is one step closer to making a decision on permitting Maine's state-regulated trapping programs for effects to the federally protected Canada lynx. The Service and Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife reviewed public comments on the necessary documents for the permit and have released revised versions for public review and comment through September 5, 2014.

The agencies previously released draft versions of MDIFW's incidental take plan and the Service's draft environmental assessment for public comment in November 2011, followed by three highly attended public information sessions. The Service received about 285 unique letters, 129 comment cards from public information sessions and 6,100 form letters commenting on issues from outreach and monitoring measures to lynx handling procedures and enforcement.

The revised plan describes measures proposed by MDIFW to minimize the effects of incidental trapping on lynx, such as increased trapper outreach, compliance monitoring by wardens and veterinary oversight, and it incorporates several new methods of trapping and new trapping regulations. MDIFW proposes to offset, or mitigate, for the effects on lynx by maintaining at least 4,785 acres of lynx habitat in the state's Bureau of Parks and Lands Seboomook Unit in northern Maine. The agency has added the predator management and animal damage control programs as activities to be covered under the plan, but the addition has not changed the expected effect on lynx.

The Endangered Species Act makes it illegal to "take"—meaning trap, capture, collect, harass, harm, wound or kill—federally threatened or endangered wildlife, such as the threatened Canada lynx. Some activities, such as trapping for common species like bobcat or fisher, have the risk of incidentally taking protected species. An incidental take permit would allow trapping through the recreational, predator management and animal damage control programs to continue as MDIFW undertakes practical measures to avoid, minimize, and mitigate take of lynx.

Incidental take plans, known also as habitat conservation plans, identify the impacts to wildlife from a project or program; the steps the applicant will take to reduce or compensate for such impacts; what alternative actions were considered; and how conservation efforts will be funded.

To learn more and comment on the documents:

- Visit the Maine Field Office website, <http://www.fws.gov/mainefieldoffice/>, for questions

and answers about the revised documents, species information and an archive of the draft documents.

- Visit www.regulations.gov and enter docket FWS-R5-ES-2014-0020 to review comments submitted during the 2011-2012 comment period, the Service's response to comments, and the revised plan and assessment.

- Comments can be submitted at regulations.gov or by hard copy to: Public Comments Processing, Attn: FWS-R5-ES-2014-0020; Division of Policy and Directives Management; U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service; 4401 N. Fairfax Drive, MS 2042-PDM; Arlington, VA 22203. Please reference the docket number for this notice.

After the comment period ends, the Service will determine whether the application meets the permit issuance requirements.

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