

PRESS RELEASE

US Fish and Wildlife Service designates critical habitat for coastal marten

Over 1 million acres of critical habitat identified as essential for species survival

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Media Contacts

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ARCATA, Calif. - The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is designating 1.2 million acres of critical habitat in northwestern California and southwestern Oregon for the coastal distinct population segment of the Pacific marten, also known as the coastal or Humboldt marten.

In this final rule, the Service identified critical habitat, or areas that are essential for the coastal marten to thrive based on information received during two public comment periods held in 2022. Final critical habitat land ownership includes approximately 1.1 million acres of federal, 23,724 acres of state and 13,008 acres of private or unassigned lands.

This final rule also identifies approximately 140,705 acres of critical habitat the Service determined as appropriate for exclusion under section 4(b)(2) of the Endangered Species Act. These areas include those being managed under several collaborative agreements with the Service that will provide ongoing conservation efforts for marten.

Two of these efforts include the Yurok Tribe and Green Diamond Resource Company, both of whom have a Memorandum of Understanding with the Service for managing land to benefit the conservation of the species. In addition, Green Diamond has a safe harbor agreement with the state of California.

Critical habitat designation requires federal agencies to ensure that actions they plan to undertake, fund, or authorize do not destroy or adversely modify that habitat. It does not establish a wildlife refuge, allow the government or public to access private lands or require non-federal landowners to restore habitat or recover species.

The coastal marten is a cat-sized mammal in the weasel family that currently exists in four small, isolated populations in forested habitats of northern coastal California and coastal Oregon. The species has lost over 90% of its historical range and was listed as threatened under the ESA in November 2020. Loss of habitat, effects from historic trapping, catastrophic wildfire, and impacts from vegetation management were determined to be key threats to the marten's survival.

The final rule will publish in the Federal Register on Wednesday May 29, 2024, and may be viewed at www.federalregister.gov/documents/current by searching Docket Number [FWS-R8-ES-2020-0151](#).

The ESA is extraordinarily effective at preventing species from going extinct and has inspired action to conserve at-risk species and their habitat before they need to be listed as threatened or endangered. Since it was signed into law in 1973, more than 99% of all species listed under the law are still with us today.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service works with others to conserve, protect and enhance fish, wildlife, plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. For more information, visit www.fws.gov and connect with us on social media:

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