

Department of the Interior
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
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News Release



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01-129

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November 1, 2001

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE SEEKS COMMENTS ON FUTURE PLANS FOR THE SALINAS RIVER NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

SACRAMENTO, California--A draft Environmental Assessment/Comprehensive Conservation Plan to guide the future management of the Salinas River National Wildlife Refuge in Monterey County is available for public review, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service announced today. The comment period will extend until November 23, 2001.

The plan describes four alternatives for managing the refuge over the next 15 years to conserve native plants and wildlife. The Salinas River Refuge encompasses 366 acres located 11 miles north of Monterey where the Salinas River empties into Monterey Bay. Refuge lands include a range of terrestrial and aquatic habitats, including coastal dunes and beach, grasslands, wetlands and riparian scrub. Because of its location within the Pacific Flyway, the refuge is used by a variety of migratory birds during breeding, wintering and migration periods. It also provides habitat for several threatened and endangered animals and plants, including western snowy plover, California brown pelican, Smith's blue butterfly, Monterey gilia and Monterey spineflower. Approximately 40 species that occur or are suspected to occur on the refuge are considered sensitive by Federal or State agencies. Current recreational uses on the refuge include wildlife observation and photography, waterfowl hunting and access to surf fishing. The refuge is part of the San Francisco Bay National Wildlife Refuge Complex, which has its headquarters in Fremont, California

Comments as well as requests for the plan can be mailed to Mark Pelz, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, California/Nevada Refuge Planning Office, Room W-1916, 2800 Cottage Way, Sacramento, California, 95825. Copies of the plan are also available by contacting Ivette Loreda, Refuge Manager, Salinas River National Wildlife Refuge, P.O. Box 524, Newark, California 94560-0524; (510) 792-0222.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is the principal Federal agency responsible for conserving, protecting and enhancing fish, wildlife and plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. The Service manages the 94-million-acre National Wildlife Refuge System which encompasses more than 535 national wildlife refuges, thousands of small wetlands and other special management areas. It also operates 70 national fish hatcheries, 64 fishery resource offices and 78 ecological services field stations. The agency enforces Federal wildlife laws, administers the Endangered Species Act, manages migratory bird populations, restores nationally significant fisheries, conserves and restores wildlife habitat such as wetlands, and helps foreign governments with their conservation efforts. It also oversees the Federal Aid program that distributes hundreds of millions of dollars in excise taxes on fishing and hunting equipment to state fish and wildlife agencies.

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