



NOAA FISHERIES SERVICE



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*For more information,
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727-824-5312

or

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Petition to List Queen Conch 90-Day Finding Frequently Asked Questions

Q: Why is NOAA Fisheries reviewing a petition to list queen conch as endangered or threatened?

On March 2, 2012, the WildEarth Guardians submitted a petition to NOAA Fisheries requesting the agency list the queen conch as threatened or endangered under the Endangered Species Act. The petition listed the following threats, among others, as reasons for the listing: overharvest from commercial fisheries, loss of nursery habitat, inadequate regulations, and water pollution.

Q: What did NOAA Fisheries determine about the request?

On August 24, 2012, NOAA Fisheries determined the petition presented substantial information indicating that listing may be warranted and filed a positive 90-day finding in the [Federal Register](#). In particular, we are concerned about the potential effects of water contamination on reproductive success, overharvest, and the reduced production of eggs and larvae to populations.

Q: Is there an opportunity for public input?

We are seeking information from the public over the next 60-days to help determine the status queen conch across their range. You can help inform the queen conch status review by providing us with information on the topics listed below. The more specific your comments are to the topics listed, the more helpful they will be.

- Historical and current distribution, abundance, throughout its range;
- Biological information (life history, genetics, population connectivity, etc.);
- Landings and trade data;
- Management, regulatory, and enforcement information;
- Any current or planned activities that may adversely impact the species; and
- Ongoing or planned efforts to protect and restore the species and their habitats.

Information should be accompanied with your name, maps if possible, and any reference or weblink to supporting information.



Q: How do I submit information?

For your convenience, there are many methods you can use to submit your information. In all instances, please reference Docket ID: NOAA-NMFS-2012-0182 with your submission. We encourage electronic filing. You may submit information electronically by using the Federal eRulemaking Portal [http:// www.regulations.gov](http://www.regulations.gov). Information can also be submitted by fax at 727-824-5309, and mailed or hand delivered to NOAA Fisheries, Southeast Regional Office, 263 13th Avenue South, St. Petersburg, Florida 33701.

Q: What are the next steps to a positive 90-day finding?

Step 1: Status Review (Current Step)

The current finding automatically initiates a status review. This is a comprehensive assessment of a species' biological status and threats. The status review will be peer reviewed and will be the scientific basis for our determination whether or not a species warrants listing under the Endangered Species Act. Any scientific or commercial information the public submits within the comment period will be considered in the status review.

Step 2: 12-Month Determination (Next Step)

We will utilize the status review, existing conservation efforts, and Endangered Species Act policies to make a determination whether to list the species as endangered or threatened or not to list the species. To make this determination, the agency considers the information in the status review report, existing conservation efforts, and Endangered Species Act policies.

Step 3: Proposed Rule (Possible Future Step)

If we decide a listing is warranted, a proposed rule is published in the *Federal Register*. The proposed rule outlines reasons for the decision with supporting information. We encourage the public to comment. We sometimes also hold public hearings to receive public comments.

Step 5: Final Rule (Possible Future Step)

Within a year after we publish the proposed rule, we must make a final determination to either list or not list the species. We take into consideration any public comment received and will analyze all new data received. We publish this decision in the *Federal Register*.

Q: What are the possible implications for commercial and recreational fisheries at this time?

There are no impacts to fishermen at this time; however, there may be if the species is listed as endangered or threatened.

Q: What can I do to make sure that my concerns are heard by NOAA Fisheries?

The Endangered Species Act can be confusing and NOAA Fisheries encourages all concerned members of the public to ask questions and stay informed. If we determine that listing queen conch as endangered or threatened is warranted, there will be opportunities for the public to provide comment. We strongly recommend that you provide information during public comment periods. For more information or to track the status of the response to the queen conch petition, visit: <http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/ListingPetitions.htm>