



United States Department of the Interior



FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

Washington Fish and Wildlife Office
510 Desmond Dr. SE, Suite 102
Lacey, Washington 98503

April 8, 2019

Dear Interested Party:

Subject: Mt. Rainier White-tailed Ptarmigan Status Assessment; Request for Information

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) is conducting a status review of the Mt. Rainier white-tailed ptarmigan (*Lagopus leucura rainierensis*) to determine if listing the species as threatened or endangered, and designating critical habitat under the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended (16 U.S.C. 1531 et seq.) (Act), is warranted. We request information on the species to help with this determination.

Background

In response to a petition to list the Mt. Rainier white-tailed ptarmigan and designate critical habitat for the species under the Act, we published a 90-day finding (77 FR 33143). The finding concluded that listing and critical habitat designation may be warranted based on potential threats from the present or threatened destruction, modification, or curtailment of the species' habitat or range as a result of the habitat changes brought about by climate change, depressed population growth rates, and the physiological response of the species to climate warming.

The white-tailed ptarmigan is endemic to alpine habitats in western North America and is the only species of ptarmigan whose range extends south of Canada. The Mt. Rainier white-tailed ptarmigan is known to occur on Mt. Rainier and areas north of there in the Cascade Mountains of Washington but is not known to inhabit areas south of there. Please see the 90-day finding (<https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/FR-2012-06-05/pdf/2012-13320.pdf>) for more information regarding the species and its habitat.

Requested Information

For this review of the Mt. Rainier white-tailed ptarmigan, we seek the latest scientific information on the subspecies. Please note that it is not necessary to resubmit information provided to us previously or used as part of our 90-day finding. We are requesting additional information on any of the following topics, including but not limited to:

1. Distribution, genetics, population sizes, population trends, and results and analysis from the most recent occupancy surveys;
2. Updates to the subspecies' historical, overall, or predicted ranges, including any information about their range that was not reflected in the 90-day finding;