



Fish and Wildlife Commission Presentation Summary Sheet

Meeting date:

1/26/2024

Agenda item:

Spotted Owl Periodic Status Review, Briefing, Public Comment, Decision

Presenter(s):

Taylor Cotten, Conservation Assessment Section Manager and Emilie Kohler, Wildlife Biologist.

Background summary:

The decline of Spotted Owls has not subsided in Washington and the population has become critically imperiled, having declined by up to 80-90 percent in some predominantly federal landscapes in Washington. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has concluded that uplisting the Spotted Owl from threatened to endangered status under the Endangered Species Act was “warranted but precluded.” We recommend the continued recognition of Endangered status of the species in Washington.

Staff recommendation:

Maintain the Northern Spotted Owl as an Endangered Species in Washington.

Policy issue(s) and expected outcome:

No policy changes with a vote to maintain.

Fiscal impacts of agency implementation:

None.

Public involvement process used and what you learned:

The agency sent out a press release and posted a request on our website to solicit information from the public to be included in the coming Periodic Status Reviews and Status Reports. In accordance with WAC regulations, individuals and organizations had one year to contribute information for the reviews. Department staff included this information as applicable in the status review documents. The documents were then reviewed by Department staff and external species experts before 90-day public comment periods on the document and our findings. We incorporated appropriate edits received as part of that 90-day public comment period on the Periodic Status Review which included some points of clarification on results, figures, and data.

Action requested and/or proposed next steps:

Briefing, time for public comment, and decision.

Draft motion language:

I move that the Northern Spotted Owl maintain its current status as an Endangered species in Washington as recommended by Department staff.

Post decision communications plan:

Since the species is already Endangered and we are recommending that it remain so, our current management of the species will not change. We will share information with the public affairs team for any necessary news release as well as update the website with the final Periodic Status Review for the species.

Form revised 1-20-21