



Public Hearings - Recommendation to Delist Desert Bighorn Sheep

The New Mexico Department of Game and Fish (Department) will be conducting public hearings regarding the recommendation to delist desert bighorn sheep (*Ovis canadensis mexicana*) from the New Mexico threatened and endangered species list, pursuant to the Wildlife Conservation Act, Sections 17-2-37 through 17-2-46, NMSA 1978. The meetings are scheduled as followed:

- Tuesday September 6, 2011 at 6:00 p.m. in Truth or Consequences, NM in the Civic Center Chambers located at 400 W 4th St.
- Tuesday September 6, 2011 at 6:00 p.m. in Deming, NM in the Special Events Center located at 2300 E. Pine St.

Desert bighorn sheep were listed as a state endangered species in 1980 when their population was estimated at <70 animals. Through management efforts, the fall 2010 population estimate is approximately 565, with 3 populations or metapopulations with >100 animals. This exceeds the delisting criteria as defined in the Recovery Plan. The purpose of the delisting investigation is to evaluate if the bighorn population has met the recovery criteria. As specified in the WCA, a Delisting Investigation Report was developed to evaluate desert bighorn's biological status in relation to the delisting criteria established in the Recovery Plan. Both of these documents, as well as other information, are available on the Department's website at <http://wildlife.state.nm.us/conservation/bighorn/index.htm>. A public repository was subsequently established for comments and to document the investigation process, and may be viewed upon request. Following public hearings in southern New Mexico, the State Game Commission shall make the final decision on delisting the species. All views, data, and comments pertaining to the final Delisting Investigation Report may be presented orally or in writing to the hearing. Written comments and testimony to be included in the hearing record must be filed with the Department's Director no later than August 7, 2011. Notice of intent to present technical and scientific testimony and a written copy of the testimony to be presented shall be submitted to the State Game Commission no later than August 7, 2011. The public record shall remain open for comments for 30 days after the date of the final hearing, and will close on October 6, 2011.

All additional information or questions should be directed to Elise Goldstein, Department of Game and Fish, P.O. Box 25112, Santa Fe, NM 87505, (505) 476-8041, elise.goldstein@state.nm.us.