

Department of the Interior
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
Carlsbad Fish and Wildlife Office
Hidden Valley Road
Carlsbad, California 92009
Phone: 760/431-9440
Fax: 760/431-9624

News Release



<http://carlsbad.fws.gov>

(SC)

04-102

Contact: Jane Hendron, Carlsbad Fish and Wildlife Office – 760/431-9440 ext. 205

For Release: October 1, 2004

U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE RELEASES ECONOMIC COST ESTIMATES FOR SANTA ANA SUCKER CONSERVATION

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service announced today it is making available for public review and comment a draft analysis of economic impacts associated with conservation activities for the federally threatened Santa Ana sucker (*Catostomus santaanae*).

Comments on the draft analysis will be accepted through 5:00pm on October 11, 2004. The public can view the draft analysis online at <http://carlsbad.fws.gov>. Copies may also be obtained by contacting the Carlsbad Fish and Wildlife Office by telephone at 760/431-9440 or by facsimile at 760/431-9618.

Preliminary results of the draft analysis indicate potential impacts associated with conservation activities for the Santa Ana sucker could range from \$21.8 to \$30.5 million over the next 20 years. Annualized impacts are estimated to be about \$2.0 million.

Costs of measures to avoid, minimize or offset impacts to the species from the time it was listed in 1998 to the present are estimated to be about \$4.2 million, with the bulk of these costs associated with transportation projects.

In compliance with a court order, the Service published a final rule on February 26, 2004, designating critical habitat for the Santa Ana sucker on approximately 21,129 acres of streams in Los Angeles, Riverside, and San Bernardino counties. Concurrent with the final designation, the Service published a proposed rule to allow for full public review and comment on Santa Ana sucker critical habitat.

“The results of the economic analysis and information provided by the public will be reviewed and, if appropriate, may result in a final designation that differs from the current designation,” said Steve Thompson, Manager of the Service’s California/Nevada Operations Office.

This draft economic analysis includes an appendix which provides an assessment of the potential benefits that may accrue to homeowners living in the vicinity of a protected riparian corridor.

One of southern California's native fish, the Santa Ana sucker measures about six inches long and has a dark, blotchy back and a silvery underside. Santa Ana suckers have large, thick lips and a small mouth used to 'vacuum' algae and invertebrates from stream beds. This species appears to be most abundant where water is clean and clear, although it can tolerate seasonally murky water.

Threats to the Santa Ana sucker include the destruction and alteration of its habitat from urban development, channeling of streams, water diversions, and the introduction of nonnative competitors and predators.

Comments are being solicited on all aspects of the draft economic analysis, including current or planned activities in areas subject to critical habitat designation and their possible impacts on critical habitat; the benefits of including or excluding critical habitat on lands covered by an approved Habitat Conservation Plan or other adequate management plan; and the appropriateness of including an analysis of potential benefits associated with the designation of critical habitat without doing a complete analysis of that type of economic effect (e.g., stigma effects) in general, or relative to the critical habitat designation for Santa Ana sucker.

Comments and information about the draft economic analysis can be submitted in writing to the Field Supervisor, Carlsbad Fish and Wildlife Office, 6010 Hidden Valley Road, Carlsbad, California 92009, or by facsimile to 760/431-9618.

The Service will also accept written comments and information by electronic mail at fw1sasu@r1.fws.gov. If submitting electronic comments, please insert "Attn: RIN 1018-AT57" in the subject line and include your name and address in the body of your message.

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 95-million-acre National Wildlife Refuge System which encompasses 542 national wildlife refuges, thousands of small wetlands and other special management areas. It also operates 69 national fish hatcheries, 64 fishery resource offices and 81 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.

For more information about the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, visit our website at www.fws.gov.