

## **Settlement offers 31 species better protections**

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The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has agreed to offer stronger protections to 31 of the world's most imperiled birds, including the Fiji petrel and a Papua New Guinea shearwater, to settle a lawsuit filed by a San Francisco environmental group.

The settlement to list six species and propose 25 others for listing under the Endangered Species Act was signed Monday by Charles Breyer, a judge in U.S. District Court in San Francisco.

The Center for Biological Diversity had been negotiating with the federal government since January, arguing that it had missed mandated deadlines to protect the species. "Having the agency recognize the importance of the listings underscores the plight of these species," said Jacki Lopez, an attorney who filed the case.

If foreign bird species are protected under U.S. law, the president may issue funds for conservation programs. It's also the first step in protecting the birds from the negative effects of trade under international treaties.

Some of the birds set for final listing are the Galapagos petrel, New Zealand's magenta petrel and Heinroth's shearwater in Papua New Guinea.

Slated for proposed listing are the Brazilian merganser, Peruvian plantcutter, cherry-throated tanager and white-browed tit-spinetail in South America. In Southeast Asia, the greater adjutant stork and the salmon-crested cockatoo are on the list as is the slender-billed curlew in Russia, Europe and North Africa.

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