

# Protection sought for two rare snakes

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Federal wildlife officials are proposing to add a pair of rare snakes found in the American Southwest to the list of threatened species.

The northern Mexican garter snake and the narrow-headed garter snake are found in Arizona and New Mexico. Their populations have declined thanks to predators such as nonnative bullfrogs as well as threats to their stream-side habitat.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service will accept comments on the proposal through Sept. 9.

The proposal also calls for setting aside hundreds of stream miles as critical habitat for the snakes. That would include areas in seven Arizona counties and four New Mexico counties.

Center for Biological Diversity attorney Collette Adkins Giese says the snakes have been in trouble for some time and protecting them could have benefits for other species that depend on riparian areas.