



United States Department of the Interior



FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE


Washington, D.C. 20240

In Reply Refer To:
FWS/AES/043241

REC 4 103

Memorandum

To: Regional Director, Region 2
From: Assistant Director, Endangered Species
Subject: Sonoran Desert Bald Eagle DPS Analysis



I commend you and your staff on the effort put forth on the Region's Sonoran Desert bald eagle DPS analysis. It is a complex and difficult subject that the Service has struggled with for several years, and I greatly appreciate you and your staff's attention, concerns, and dedication to the subject, and to bald eagle conservation in general.

As you know, a DPS analysis of the Sonoran Desert bald eagle population was conducted in the July 2007 delisting rule for the bald eagle. I appreciate the concerns you raised in the Region's memo that this analysis overlooked features of the unique desert environment, and that it did not focus on the birds' response or adaptation to the uniqueness of the Sonoran Desert setting. I kept these concerns in mind while reviewing and evaluating the previous analysis and the Region's draft analysis, but was unable to find any error or omission in the previous DPS analysis. It is my judgment that the June 2007 rule reached the correct conclusion based on the best data available at the time. Moreover, there does not appear any significant relevant new information, nor has our DPS policy changed since the previous analysis was published. Thus, I conclude that the best data currently available also supports a conclusion that this population is not a valid DPS. This conclusion is based on my evaluation of the past DPS analysis, portions of the administrative record made available to me, and the Region's draft analysis.

My staff will work with you on development of the revised version of the finding. Obviously, the finding should not simply cite to my conclusion, but rather reflect the thorough analysis of the best available information upon which the July 2007 DPS analysis and my conclusion was based.

Please let me know if you have any questions or need clarification on the reasons for my conclusion.

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