

## U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service



## News Release

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### U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Issues 90-day Endangered Species Act Finding for Lake Sammamish Kokanee

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### Contacts

Jeffrey Chan (360) 753-9542

Doug Zimmer (360) 753-4370

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service announced today that the Lake Sammamish kokanee population in King County, Washington may warrant federal protection under the Endangered Species Act (ESA) following an initial review of a petition seeking to protect this species. The finding is scheduled to be published in tomorrow's Federal Register.

The Service received the petition on July 10, 2007 from Trout Unlimited; City of Issaquah, Washington; King County, Washington; People for Puget Sound; Save Lake Sammamish; Snoqualmie Tribe; and the Wild Fish Conservancy to list the Lake Sammamish kokanee population as a threatened or endangered species. The ESA requires the Service to review petitions to determine whether they contain substantial scientific information that warrants a more thorough review. This petition met that requirement.

The Service determined that this kokanee population may warrant listing due to habitat loss and degradation, inadequacy of existing regulatory mechanisms, competition with native and non-native species, and projected habitat changes related to climate change.

The Service will now conduct a more detailed status review of the Lake Sammamish kokanee to determine whether to propose adding the species to the federal lists of endangered and threatened wildlife and plants.

Based on the status review, the Service will make one of three possible determinations:

- 1) Protection under the ESA is not warranted, in which case no further action will be taken.
- 2) Protection under the ESA as threatened or endangered is warranted.

In this case, the Service will publish a proposal to list, solicit independent scientific peer review of the proposal, seek input from the public, and consider the input before a final decision about listing the species is made. In general, there is a one-year period between the time a species is proposed and the final decision.

3) Protection under the ESA is warranted but precluded by other, higher priority activities. This means the species is added to the federal list of candidate species, and the proposal to list is deferred while the Service works on listing proposals for other species that are at greater risk. A warranted but precluded finding requires subsequent annual reviews of the finding until such time as either a listing proposal is published, or a not warranted finding is made based on new information.

To ensure this status review is comprehensive, the Service is soliciting information from state and federal natural resource agencies and all interested parties regarding the Lake Sammamish kokanee and its habitat.

You may submit comments by one of the following methods:

- Federal eRulemaking Portal: <http://www.regulations.gov>. Follow the instructions for submitting comments. Comments may be submitted via this portal beginning on the day the finding is published in the Federal Register.
- U.S. mail or hand-delivery: Public Comments Processing, Attn: [docket number]; Division of Policy and Directives Management; U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service; 4401 N. Fairfax Drive, Suite 222; Arlington, VA 22203.

We will not accept e-mail or faxes or anonymous comments. We will post all comments on <http://www.regulations.gov>.

Kokanee and sockeye salmon are two forms of the same species (*Oncorhynchus nerka*). Kokanee are nonanadromous - they spend their entire lives in freshwater habitats. Sockeye salmon are anadromous - they hatch and rear in freshwater habitat and then migrate to the Pacific Ocean to spend two to three years in marine waters before returning to freshwater to spawn. Although very similar to sockeye salmon, kokanee are usually smaller in size when mature. The adult kokanee typically has a bright red body with an olive green head.

There are three races of kokanee in the Sammamish River/Lake Sammamish watershed. Summer-run kokanee, which may now be extirpated, spawned from August through September in Issaquah Creek. Native middle-run kokanee, which spawned in late September through November in tributaries to the Sammamish River, were considered extinct by the 1970s. Late-run kokanee, which spawn in October through January, are still found in Lake Sammamish and its tributaries and are the subject of today's finding.

The mission of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is working with others to

conserve, protect and enhance fish, wildlife, plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. We are both a leader and trusted partner in fish and wildlife conservation, known for our scientific excellence, stewardship of lands and natural resources, dedicated professionals and commitment to public service. For more information on our work and the people who make it happen, visit [www.fws.gov](http://www.fws.gov).

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