

News Release

Washington Fish and Wildlife Office
510 Desmond Drive SE
Lacey, WA
Phone: (360)753-9440
<https://www.fws.gov/wafwo/>



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Contact: Andrew LaValle, andrew.lavalle@fws.gov, 360-628-3810

Service Proposes to List the Mount Rainier White-tailed Ptarmigan Under Endangered Species Act

LACEY, Wash. – Today, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is proposing to list the Mount Rainier white-tailed ptarmigan, a unique alpine bird species from Washington, as a threatened species under the Endangered Species Act (ESA). The Service is also proposing a 4(d) rule that provides measures for its conservation by prohibiting take, except as otherwise authorized or permitted. The designation of critical habitat for this species was deemed not prudent.

The Mount Rainier white-tailed ptarmigan is a unique alpine bird in the grouse family. White-tailed ptarmigan is one of the few animals that lives on alpine mountaintops throughout their entire life. These birds are well-adapted to life above the treeline, with feathered, snowshoe-like feet and seasonally changing plumage. Mount Rainier white-tailed ptarmigan require a mix of specific moist alpine vegetation communities, rocks and nearby snow or water.

The Mount Rainier white-tailed ptarmigan's range includes the Cascades Mountains of Washington State from Mount Adams northward into southern British Columbia, Canada. The Service has determined that habitat loss and degradation resulting from climate change will affect the Mount Rainier white-tailed ptarmigan within the foreseeable future.

The Service and many partners continue to work toward conservation and recovery of the Mount Rainier white-tailed ptarmigan. Federal protections will help raise awareness about threats to this species and inspire diverse partnerships on its behalf.

"We look forward to continuing to work with federal partners and other stakeholders to conserve and recover this species," said Robyn Thorson, Service Regional Director. "Our strong research and conservation partnerships will provide a firm foundation for working together to conserve and recover the Mt. Rainier white-tailed ptarmigan."

A public comment period on the proposed rule is open through Monday, August 16, 2021. The Service is looking for additional information about the species, and public comment on the proposed listing. The public is invited to submit written comments at <http://www.regulations.gov/> or via regular mail to: Brad Thompson, State Supervisor,

Washington Fish and Wildlife Office, 510 Desmond Drive SE, Lacey, Washington 98503.
Comments may be submitted on or before Monday, August 16, 2021.

To read the *Federal Register* notice, or for more information about management activities and conservation of the Mt. Rainier white-tailed ptarmigan visit: www.fws.gov/wafwo.

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