

U.S. considers penguin protection

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U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service officials are considering extending endangered species protection to 10 species of penguins in the southern hemisphere.

Government officials said they plan a full review of the penguins' status to determine whether to include them on the federal list of endangered and threatened wildlife.

The penguins inhabit areas of Antarctica, Argentina, Australian Territorial Islands, Chile, French Territorial Islands, Namibia, New Zealand, Peru, South Africa and United Kingdom Territorial Islands. Threats include commercial fishing, competition for prey, habitat loss, contaminants, pollution and global warming.

An initial review of a petition asking that 12 species be protected found only 10 of the penguin species warranted protection. But such a listing would provide only limited and indirect protections, since no penguins are native to the United States.

The 10 species are the emperor penguin (*Aptenodytes forsteri*), southern rockhopper penguin (*Eudyptes chrysocome*), northern rockhopper penguin (*Eudyptes moseleyi* (*E. chrysocome moseleyi*)), fiordland crested penguin (*Eudyptes pachyrhynchus*), erect-crested penguin (*Eudyptes sclateri*), macaroni penguin (*Eudyptes chrysolophus*), white-flipped penguin (*Eudyptula albosignata* (*E. minor albosignata*)), yellow-eyed penguin (*Megadyptes antipodes*), African penguin (*Spheniscus demersus*), and Humboldt penguin (*Spheniscus humboldti*).

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