

CONCISE EXPLANATORY STATEMENT

Tufted puffin

WAC 232-12-014 Wildlife classified as endangered species.

Agency reason for adoption:

The department has reviewed all relevant data pertaining to the population status of tufted puffins in Washington. These data show that the population has strongly declined in recent decades, both in numbers of birds present and in numbers of active breeding sites. This information indicates that if the current rate of decline continues, the species is at serious risk of extirpation in Washington over the next few decades. Thus, tufted puffins should be added to the state's endangered species list.

Changes, if any, from the text of the proposed rule and reasons for difference:

No Changes

Agency response Written Comments Received During Official Comment Period:

Written Comments Received During Official Comment Period:

WDFW received 15 comments on this proposed rule change during the official comment period. Four people (27%) supported the proposed change, no one (0%) opposed the proposed change, and 11 comments (73%) were outside the scope.

Supporting Comments:

All supporting comments were of a general nature. All gave support for the proposal without providing additional detail.

Opposing and Other Comments:

None the comments opposed the proposed change.

Direction and Rationale:

As described in WDFW's background report (Washington State Status Report for the Tufted Puffin) accompanying this proposal, tufted puffins have experienced a precipitous decline in Washington over the past 4-5 decades. Declines have occurred in total numbers of breeding birds, numbers of breeding colonies occupied, and the species' distribution in the state's inner marine waters. Based on this combined evidence, WDFW recommended that the species be classified as a state endangered species.

Public Testimony Received During February 6-7 Commission Meeting:

Five people gave public testimony on the proposal during the February 6-7 Commission meeting. All supported the listing of tufted puffins as a state endangered species. Four of the people represented conservation organizations and one was from an academic institution.