



United States Department of the Interior
FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration



Governor Nikki Haley
1205 Pendleton Street
Columbia, SC 29201

APR - 5 2016

Dear Governor Haley:

On behalf of NOAA's National Marine Fisheries Service and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, we would like to inform you that after considering the public comments, we have finalized our Endangered Species Act (ESA) listing determinations for the green sea turtle (*Chelonia mydas*). You can read the listing determinations and our responses to public comments in the final rule, posted here: <http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/species/turtles/green.htm>.

We found that the green sea turtle is composed of 11 distinct population segments (DPSs) that qualify as "species" for listing under the ESA. We are removing the current range-wide listing and, in its place, listing eight DPSs as threatened and three as endangered under the ESA (Figure 1).

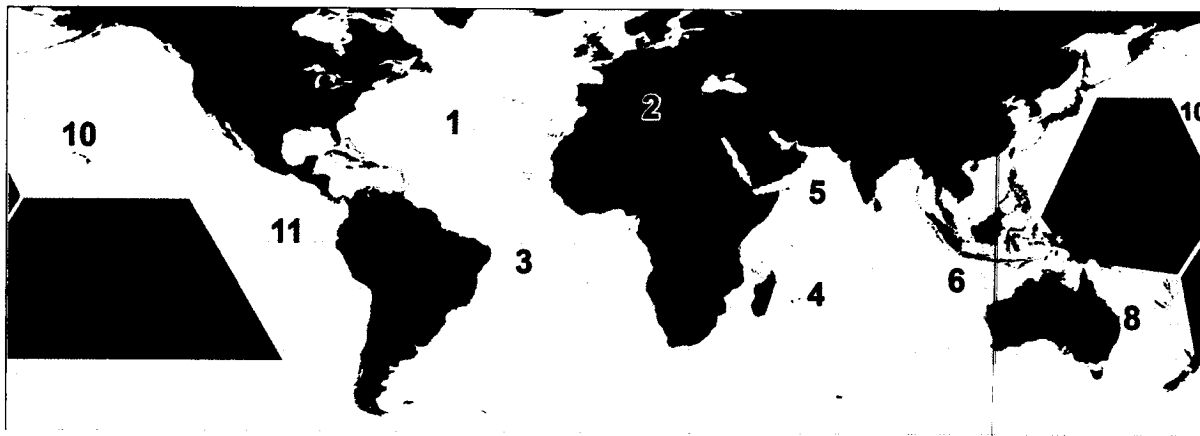


Figure 1. Threatened (light blue) and endangered (dark blue) green turtle DPSs:

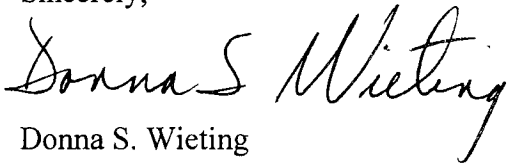
1. North Atlantic, 2. Mediterranean, 3. South Atlantic, 4. Southwest Indian, 5. North Indian, 6. East Indian-West Pacific, 7. Central West Pacific, 8. Southwest Pacific, 9. Central South Pacific, 10. Central North Pacific, and 11. East Pacific.

Green sea turtles were previously listed under the ESA as a threatened species, with the Florida and Mexican Pacific coast breeding populations formerly listed as endangered species. We have reclassified these formerly endangered populations as members of the threatened North Atlantic and East Pacific DPSs, respectively. We were petitioned to identify the Hawaiian green sea turtle population as a DPS and to delist the DPS. We found this population constitutes a DPS, referred to as the Central North Pacific, which warrants listing as a threatened species under the ESA.

We are reviewing potential critical habitat for designation under the ESA and appreciate any information you have on areas within U.S. jurisdiction for the following DPSs: North Atlantic, South Atlantic (U.S. Virgin Islands), Central South Pacific (American Samoa), Central West Pacific (Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands and Guam), Central North Pacific, and East Pacific DPSs.

We are notifying you because green sea turtles occur on beaches or within waters under your jurisdiction. Thank you for your continued efforts to conserve sea turtles. If you have any questions about this listing decision, please contact Jennifer Schultz at 301-427-8443 (jennifer.schultz@noaa.gov) or Ann Marie Lauritsen at 904-731-3032 (annmarie_lauritsen@fws.gov).

Sincerely,



Donna S. Wieting
Director, Office of Protected Resources
NOAA National Marine Fisheries Services



Gary Frazer
Assistant Director, Ecological Services
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service