



## Newsroom Midwest Region

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News Release  
March 15, 2016

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### U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Will Study the Status of the American Burying Beetle and Yellow-banded Bumble Bee

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service will assess the status of the American burying beetle, a species currently listed as endangered, to determine whether protection under the Endangered Species Act is no longer warranted. The Service will also assess the status of the yellow-banded bumble bee to determine whether protection under the Endangered Species Act is warranted. The Service is seeking input as it conducts in-depth studies of both species.

The Service is initiating status reviews of 16 species in response to a variety of petitions seeking to list, delist or reclassify species under the Endangered Species Act. The 16 substantial findings in this batch represent only the first step in a rigorous process by which we will ultimately determine whether any of these species warrant listing, delisting or reclassification under the ESA.

Of the 16 petitions with substantial information that the petitioned action may be warranted, 12 are petitions to list species, three are petitions to delist species and one petition is to uplist a species from threatened to endangered. Two of these petitioned species are found in the Midwest: the American burying beetle (petitioned to delist) and the yellow-banded bumble bee (petitioned to list).

The American burying beetle was once found throughout the eastern U.S. Currently the beetle is known to exist in only South Dakota, Nebraska, Kansas, Oklahoma, Texas, Arkansas, Missouri, Ohio, Rhode Island, and Massachusetts. In 1989, the American burying beetle was listed as endangered, primarily due to habitat loss and degradation across its range. On August 18, 2015, the Service received a petition from the American Stewards of Liberty, the Independent Petroleum Association of America, the Texas Public Policy Foundation, and Dr. Steven W. Carothers to delist the American burying beetle.

The yellow-banded bumble bee was once found from the Northeast, south to the Appalachian Mountains, across the upper Midwest to the Rocky Mountains and southeast Canada. Its historical range includes the Midwest states of Illinois, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio and Wisconsin. Recent studies cited in the petition suggest that this bumble bee has experienced drastic declines throughout much of its historical range. The Service received a petition from Defenders of Wildlife to protect the yellow-banded bumble bee under the Endangered Species Act.

Yellow-banded bumble bees are important pollinators for plants such as blueberries, cranberries and potatoes. According to the petition, threats are thought to include disease, pesticide use and habitat loss.

In response to these petitions, the Service is publishing a substantial 90-day finding, which is the first step in determining whether the American burying beetle should be delisted or the yellow-banded bumble bee should be listed. A substantial 90-day finding by the Service means that we will take a closer look at the status of these species.

The notice of the initiation of status reviews appears in the March 16, 2016, *Federal Register*. The Service is seeking information about these species; information may be submitted beginning March 16, 2016, through May 16, 2016. After that time, information must be submitted to the U.S. mail or hand-delivery address below.

**Electronically at [regulations.gov](http://www.regulations.gov):**

Use the specified docket number:

Species	Docket Number	Link
American burying beetle	FWS-R2-ES-2016-0011	<a href="http://www.regulations.gov/#!docketDetail;D=FWS-R2-ES-2016-0011">http://www.regulations.gov/#!docketDetail;D=FWS-R2-ES-2016-0011</a>
Yellow-banded bumble bee	FWS-R5-ES-2016-0024	<a href="http://www.regulations.gov/#!docketDetail;D=FWS-R5-ES-2016-0024">http://www.regulations.gov/#!docketDetail;D=FWS-R5-ES-2016-0024</a>

1. Go to the Federal eRulemaking Portal: <http://www.regulations.gov>.
2. In the Search box, enter the Docket Number for this action and the appropriate species
3. You may click on the document title to open the Federal Register notice or you may submit a comment by clicking on the "Comment Now!" button.

**U.S. mail or hand-delivery**

Public Comments Processing Attn: Docket No. *[Insert appropriate docket number]*  
U.S. Fish and Wildlife, MS: BPHC  
5275 Leesburg Pike  
Falls Church, VA 22041-3803

The Service will post all information received on <http://www.regulations.gov>. This generally means that the Service will post any personal information that is provided.

For more information on these and other Midwest endangered species and species of concern, visit [www.fws.gov/midwest/endangered](http://www.fws.gov/midwest/endangered) and [www.fws.gov/midwest/es/soc](http://www.fws.gov/midwest/es/soc).

*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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