

## Peer Review Plan for Species Status Assessment Report for the Alabama Beach Mouse

### About the Document

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service intends to seek peer review of the Species Status Assessment Reports for the following documents/species:

**Title:** Species Status Assessment Report for the Alabama Beach Mouse (*Peromyscus polionotus ammobates*) v.1.1.

**Estimated Timeline of Peer Review:** July 2024 – January 2025

**Determination:** These reports will inform a recovery plan or a recovery plan revision for the species listed above. A recovery plan is a guidance document that describes the envisioned recovered state for a listed species (when it should no longer meet the Act's definitions of a threatened species or endangered species) and include a recovery strategy, recovery criteria, recovery actions, and the estimates of time and cost needed to achieve it. It only presents recommendations.

### About the Peer Review Process

In accordance with our July 1, 1994, peer review policy (59 FR 34270), the Service's August 22, 2016, Director's Memo on the Peer Review Process, and the Office of Management and Budget's December 16, 2004, Final Information Quality Bulletin for Peer Review, we, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) will solicit independent scientific reviews of the information contained in our Species Status Assessment Report. The purpose of seeking independent peer review is to ensure use of the best scientific and commercial information available and to ensure and to maximize the quality, objectivity, utility, and integrity of the information upon which the report is based, as well as to ensure that reviews by recognized experts are incorporated into the Species Status Assessment process.

**Type of Peer Review:** The Service will solicit comments on the draft report from independent expert or scientific reviewers via individual invitation letters. Peer reviewers will submit comments in written form.

**Anticipated Number of Reviewers:** The Service will request review from at least three individuals for the report. We will consider the following criteria for selected reviewers.

- **Expertise:** The peer reviewers should have knowledge of or experience with the species or related taxon's biology, habitats in which they occur, management of the species or habitat, threats to the species, and/or analytical methods used in the report.
- **Independence:** The peer reviewers should not be employed by the Service. Academic, consulting, or government scientists should have sufficient independence from the Service if the government supports their work.
- **Objectivity:** The peer reviewers should be recognized by his or her peers as being objective, open-minded, and thoughtful. In addition, the reviewer should be comfortable sharing his or her knowledge and perspectives and openly identifying his or her knowledge gaps.
- **Conflict of Interest:** The peer reviewers should not have any financial or other interest that

conflicts or that could impair his or her objectivity or create an unfair competitive advantage. If an otherwise qualified reviewer has an unavoidable conflict of interest, the Service may publicly disclose the conflict.

While expertise is the primary consideration, the Service will select peer reviewers (considering, but not limited to, these selections) that add to a diversity of scientific perspectives. We will not be providing financial compensation to peer reviewers. We will solicit reviews from at least three qualified experts for each report.

The Service will provide each peer reviewer with information explaining their role and instructions for fulfilling that role, the Species Status Assessment Report and a conflict of interest form. Peer reviewers will be asked to comment specifically on the quality of any information and analyses used or relied on in the document; identify oversights, omissions, and inconsistencies; provide advice on reasonableness of judgments made from the scientific evidence; ensure that scientific uncertainties are clearly identified and characterized, and that potential implications of uncertainties for the technical conclusions drawn are clear; and provide advice on the overall strengths and limitations of the scientific data used in the document. Peer reviewers will be advised that they are not to provide advice on policy or provide recommendations on the listing determination or any other associated rulemaking under the Act.

Peer reviewers will provide individual, written responses to the Service. Peer reviewers will be advised that their reviews, including their names and affiliations, will: (1) be included in the administrative record; and (2) be available to the public upon request once all reviews are completed. We will summarize and respond to the issues raised by the peer reviewers in an updated version of the documents.

### **About Public Participation**

This peer review plan is made available to allow the public to monitor our compliance with the Office of Management and Budget's Final Information Quality Bulletin for Peer Review. After the reviews are completed, the peer-reviewed versions of the Species Status Assessment Reports, along with the released documents incorporating comments, and the peer review comments will be made available to the public through direct email to interested parties and posts on Service websites.

The Species Status Assessment Reports incorporating peer review and technical review comments will be made available to the public on the species profile pages, which can be accessed through our online system: <https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/>.

### **Contact**

For more information, contact:

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