



Suggested Talking Points on Marbled Murrelet Survival Guidelines in Oregon

Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission Meeting – Friday, August 3rd 2pm

Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife Headquarter | 4034 Fairview Industrial Dr SE, Salem, OR 97302

Submit written comments by email to: odfw.commission@state.or.us

Important Background Information:

- The Marbled Murrelet is an iconic Oregon seabird that nests in coastal old-growth and mature forests and forages at sea. Despite being listed as threatened under the Oregon and Federal Endangered Species Acts for over two decades, continued destruction of its nesting habitat has driven the species to a historically low population level.
- In 2016, conservation groups filed a petition to reclassify the Marbled Murrelet as endangered in Oregon.
- Oregon does not have a comprehensive Marbled Murrelet conservation strategy for state lands, despite the fact that state forests are critical to the species survival. Uplisting would require a comprehensive plan.
- Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife staff released a draft status review on the Marbled Murrelet in the fall of 2017 that indicates this iconic seabird is heading toward extinction, primarily due to habitat loss in coastal forests.
- The Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission is met in February 2018 to consider the final status review and determine whether the circumstances meet the legal requirements to uplist the Marbled Murrelet to endangered status, and decided that it did.
- The Commission met again in June 2018 to finalize the uplisting but in an unprecedented move, they reversed on their February decision and decided not to uplist the murrelet. This decision was based on selective science backed by vested economic interest groups
- Agenda and supporting materials from ODFW available here: www.dfw.state.or.us/agency/commission/minutes

Key Message – The Commission has not followed due process with the decision to not uplist marbled murrelet and are now proposing advisory instead of mandatory guidelines for the species. This is against scientific information and the general public's interest.

- The best available science from ODFW is clear -- habitat loss on state lands is putting the Marbled Murrelet at the risk of extinction. State forests protections are critical for the species continued survival. ODFW's own report indicates that the Marbled Murrelet meets all the legal criteria for uplisting. Yet the Commission went against their own staff's recommendations and the bulk of scientific information available, and decided not to uplist the species. The whole process lacked accountability and transparency and does not reflect the environmental interests of Oregonians
- Now they are meeting to discuss the survival guidelines which are being proposed as advisory, meaning there is no obligation to implement them. The survival guidelines are meant to be interim step to ODFW developing actual recovery and management plans for the species. If the survival guidelines are not made mandatory on public lands, then, they are ineffective.

Talking Points:

- Continued habitat loss and fragmentation due to inadequate regulations on logging – most dramatically on state lands – and increasingly poor oceanic conditions have resulted in a historically small and vulnerable Oregon Marbled Murrelet population.
- ODFW staff cited a demographic model that shows that the probability of Marbled Murrelet extinction in Oregon is as high as 80% by 2060.
- The whole process employed by the Commission from February 2018 until now is very disheartening to the general public and does not reflect the interests and concerns of Oregonians who care about their environment and their wildlife. Total disregard for scientific information and use of selective scientific data shakes Oregonians' faith in the

Commission.

- Washington and California have recognized the need to bolster protections for the Marbled Murrelet and reclassified the species as endangered. It's time for Oregon to do its part and for the Commission to reconsider their June decision.
- Even without the uplisting the murrelet is still a "threatened" species on both state and federal lists and therefore needs a recovery plan. Without a roadmap for recovery on state lands, which contains a significant percentage of remaining high quality Marbled Murrelet nesting habitat, efforts to bring this species back from the brink will continue to fail.
- The guidelines should be mandatory on public lands. Advisory guidelines, much like advisory speed limits, are seldom followed by anyone. To actually stop the population decline trend in murrelets, ODFW and the Commission should step up and make stronger and enforceable commitment. Developing a plan to ensure the survival of the Marbled Murrelet would also benefit a variety of other species that depend on old-growth coastal habitat. These species include salmon, Northern Spotted Owl, Northern Goshawk, and martens. Although the focus of this uplisting petition is on Marbled Murrelet, by protecting this species and its habitat, the state may also be able to halt the declines of other at-risk species.