

Three-Toed Sloth/Endangered Species Act: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Proposes Threatened Listing



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The United States Fish and Wildlife Service (“Service”) has proposed to list the Three-Toed Sloth (“Sloth”) under the Endangered Species Act (“ESA”). See Docket No. FWS-HQ-ES-2023-0151.

The Service has proposed to list the Sloth as threatened.

Section 4 of the ESA in its implementing regulations in Title 50 of the Code of Federal Regulations outlines the procedures for adding species to, removing species from, or reclassifying species on the endangered or threatened list.

A species may be determined to be an endangered species or threatened species because of one or more of the five factors (A-E) described in Section 4(a)(1) of the ESA. The five factors are:

1. The presence or threatened destruction, modification, or curtailment of its habitat;
2. Overutilization for commercial, recreational, scientific, or educational purposes;
3. Disease or predation;
4. The inadequacies of existing regulatory mechanisms; or
5. Other natural or manmade factors affecting its continued existence.

The Service has stated that it searches for factors that may have a negative effect on individuals of the species and/or actions or conditions that may ameliorate any negative effects or may have positive effects.

This Sloth has been described as the world’s smallest sloth. It has been considered critically endangered by the International Union for Conservation of Nature.

The Center for Biological Diversity states that a 2017 study indicated that only 48 individuals remained in the wild. They are found only on the small Panamanian Island Isla Escudo De Veraguas.

Threats to the Sloth’s viability are stated to include:

- Small extent of the island that they inhabit.
- Naturally limited size of the species’ single population.
- Direct and indirect impact of tourism.
- Habitat loss from small-scale timber harvest.
- Habitat loss from sea-level rise and erosion.

A copy of the Prepublication Federal Notice can be downloaded [here](#).