listing is appropriate; we require evidence that these stressors are operative threats to the species and its habitat, either singly or in combination, to the point that the species meets the definition of an endangered or a threatened species under the Act.

In making our 12-month findings, we considered and evaluated the best available scientific and commercial information regarding the past, present, and future stressors and threats. We reviewed the petition, information available in our files, and other available published and unpublished information. This evaluation may include information from recognized experts; Federal, State, and tribal governments; academic institutions: foreign governments; private entities, and other members of the public.

## Arizona Treefrog, Huachuca-Canelo Population (*Hyla wrightorum*)

Previous Federal Actions

In our annual candidate notice of review (CNOR) published on December 6, 2007 (72 FR 69034), we recognized the Huachuca-Canelo population of the Arizona treefrog as a candidate for listing as a distinct population segment (DPS). Subsequently, we published similar findings in our CNORs on December 10, 2008 (73 FR 75176), November 9, 2009 (74 FR 57804), November 10, 2010 (75 FR 69222), October 26, 2011 (76 FR 66370), November 21, 2012 (77 FR 69994), November 22, 2013 (78 FR 70104), December 5, 2014 (79 FR 72450), and December 24, 2015 (80 FR 80584). In 2007, the Huachuca-Canelo population of the Arizona treefrog was assigned a listing priority number (LPN) of 3, reflecting the taxonomic identity of the listable entity as a subspecies/ population with threats that we considered to be imminent and high in magnitude. The LPN numbers range from 1 to 11, with 1 being the highest priority.

## Background

The Arizona treefrog (Hyla wrightorum) is a small (4.6 centimeters (cm) (1.8 inches (in)) green frog with a dark eyestripe that extends past the shoulder onto the side of the body, and sometimes to the groin area. It occurs in Madrean oak woodland and savannah. pine-oak woodland, mixed conifer forest, and Plains grasslands at elevations of approximately 1,525 to 2,590 meters (m) (5,000 to 8,500 feet (ft)), and requires ponds for successful reproduction.

The Arizona treefrog is known to occur within Arizona, New Mexico, and

Mexico. In Arizona and New Mexico. the Arizona treefrog occurs along the Mogollon Rim (central Arizona and western New Mexico), in the Huachuca Mountains and Canelo Hills area (a disjunct mountain range on the Arizona/Sonora, Mexico border), and farther south in Mexico (in the Sierra Madre Occidental and sky island mountain ranges). We refer to these three areas as the Mogollon Rim, Huachuca-Canelo, and Mexico populations.

Within the Huachuca-Canelo population, historical information has documented Arizona treefrogs from three general localities at Rancho Los Fresnos, Sonora, Mexico, and from 13 to 15 verified localities in the Huachuca Mountains and Canelo Hills, Arizona. The Huachuca-Canelo population of Arizona treefrog has continued to persist in Arizona sky island mountain range and Plains grassland habitats, and the treefrog has recently been found in new locations within grasslands and ciénegas (a swamp or marsh, especially one formed and fed by springs) in Arizona. These new locations in varied habitats indicate that the Arizona treefrogs may be less selective in choosing breeding habitat than previously thought. In addition, the species likely occurs in other wet canyons with suitable breeding habitat in the Huachuca Mountains, and perhaps in ciénegas in the vicinity of Rancho Los Fresnos.

The Huachuca-Canelo DPS of the Arizona treefrog was originally defined based on the historical locations. However, recently the Service has received information on Arizona treefrog locations nearby, but outside of, the DPS area. This new information, along with many new location detections in the Huachuca Mountains and Canelo Hills, indicates that the Arizona treefrog is not only more numerous, but is much more widespread than we knew when the Service made this Arizona treefrog a candidate species as a DPS. There are now approximately more than 30 known localities in Arizona in the Huachuca Mountains and Canelo Hills, and the Arizona treefrog also occurs in areas outside of the DPS boundary, but within the vicinity of the Huachuca Mountains and Canelo Hills.

## Summary of Status Review

Based on new information and review of previously referenced studies, we find that the Huachuca-Canelo population of the Arizona treefrog does not meet the requirements of the Service's Policy Regarding the Recognition of Distinct Vertebrate

Population Segments (DPS Policy) published in the Federal Register on February 7, 1996 (61 FR 4722). The DPS Policy sets forth three elements for the Service to consider in determining whether a vertebrate population is a DPS that warrants listing: Whether the population is discrete and whether the population is significant. If the population is determined to be both discrete and significant, then the DPS Policy requires the Service to evaluate the conservation status of the population to determine whether the population falls within the Act's definition of an "endangered species" or of a "threatened species."

On the basis of the best available scientific and commercial information, and in accordance with our DPS Policy. we conclude that the Huachuca-Canelo population of the Arizona treefrog is discrete but it is not significant (i.e., it is not biologically or ecologically important) to the taxon as a whole. Regarding discreteness, we have reviewed the best available scientific and commercial information and the evidence relative to potential differences in physical, behavioral, morphological, and genetic attributes. We conclude that the Huachuca-Canelo population of the Arizona treefrog is discrete based on its geographical separation from the other two populations on the Mogollon Rim and

Regarding significance, we considered the four classes of information listed in the DPS Policy as possible considerations in making a determination, as well as all other information that might be relevant to making this determination for the Huachuca-Canelo population. The Huachuca-Canelo population of the Arizona treefrog does not appear to exhibit any direct or indirect habitat adaptation or behavioral advantage that would indicate that their persistence in the Huachuca Mountains and Canelo Hills area is biologically or ecologically important to the taxon as a whole. Moreover, we considered the other three considerations that the DPS Policy sets out for evaluating significance, and none of them provides evidence that the Huachuca-Canelo population is significant to the Arizona treefrog as a whole: (1) Loss of the Huachuca-Canelo population would not result in a significant gap in the range; (2) the Huachuca-Canelo population does not represent the only surviving natural occurrence of the Arizona treefrog; and (3) the Huachuca-Canelo population's genetic characteristics do not differ markedly from those of other Arizona treefrog populations.