



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE
Southeast Regional Office
263 13th Avenue South
St. Petersburg, Florida 33701-5505
<https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/region/southeast>

MEMORANDUM FOR: Peer Reviewer

FROM: Alison Moulding
Natural Resource Specialist

SUBJECT: Peer Review of the Proposed Rule for a Change in Listing Status for Pillar Coral (*Dendrogyra cylindrus*) under the US Endangered Species Act

The purpose of this peer review is to evaluate the adequacy, appropriateness, and application of data used in the draft proposed rule to change the listing status of pillar coral (*D. cylindrus*) under the US Endangered Species Act. Peer review is an important process for science and our administration of the Endangered Species Act. We appreciate your dedication to both the process and the species. The information to be reviewed begins on page 4 in the section titled “Biology and Life History” and ends on page 16 with the section titled “Risk of Extinction.”

In conducting your review, please address the following questions:

1. Does the proposed rule include and cite the best scientific and commercial information available on the species and its biology, habitat and distribution, population structure, abundance trends, threats, and conservation measures?
2. Are specific conclusions factually supported, sound, and logical?
3. Where available and relevant, are opposing scientific studies or theories acknowledged and discussed?
4. Are uncertainties assessed and clearly stated?

A few items regarding your peer review:

1. The draft proposed rule should not be disseminated to third parties. ***All information associated with the proposed rule is to remain strictly confidential until it is published in the Federal Register.***
2. The Office of Management and Budget published a Peer Review Bulletin (December 2004) intended to enhance the quality and credibility of the federal government’s scientific information. It requires peer review of “influential” information and a transparent process for public disclosure. Therefore, a peer review report that includes reviewer names and affiliations and a compilation of reviewer comments will be posted online. In the report, comments will not be attributed to a specific reviewer. Previously submitted peer review reports are available on the [Peer Review Plans website](#).
3. The Peer Review Bulletin further requires that non-Federal peer reviewers complete a *Confidential Conflict of Interest Disclosure* form. I have attached the form and request that you return it with your review. Please note that you are required to submit a



curriculum vitae (CV) with the signed form. Peer reviewers who are federal employees do not need to sign the conflict of interest form; rather they must comply with applicable federal ethics requirements.

4. Notably, if NOAA Fisheries receives a Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request, anonymity of peer reviewers or comments cannot be guaranteed.

Logistics:

1. You may use the “track changes” features of Microsoft Word when reviewing the electronic version of the proposed rule, or you may submit a separate document with comments.
2. Please make sure that you return a signed conflict of interest form with the peer review and attach a CV.
3. Please return the report with your comments by **October 15, 2022**.
4. Please feel free to email me (alison.moulding@noaa.gov) if you have any questions or concerns.

Attachments:

1. *Draft Proposed Rule: Pillar Coral (Dendrogyra cylindrus)*
2. *Confidential Conflict of Interest Disclosure*