



NOAA Fisheries Service

Milestones on the Road to Listing Elkhorn and Staghorn corals as Threatened Species Under the ESA



1980s: Elkhorn and Staghorn corals undergo precipitous declines

1991: NMFS places elkhorn and staghorn corals on the candidate species list for the Endangered Species Act (ESA)

1997: NMFS removes elkhorn and staghorn corals from the ESA candidate species list because of a lack of sufficient information (62 FR 37560)

1998: NMFS conducts an analysis of major reef-building corals, including elkhorn and staghorn corals

1999: NMFS again adds elkhorn and staghorn corals to the ESA candidate species list (64 FR 33466)

2004: NMFS places elkhorn and staghorn corals on the Species of Concern list (69 FR 19976)

MARCH 2004: The Center for Biological Diversity petitions NMFS to list elkhorn and staghorn corals as threatened or endangered and to designate critical habitat.

JUNE 2004: NMFS publishes a 90-day positive finding indicating that the petitioned actions may be warranted and establishes a biological review team (69 FR 34995). Elkhorn and staghorn corals are once again ESA candidate species.

DECEMBER 2004: NMFS holds public meetings for gathering information about *Acropora* sp. abundance, distribution, critical habitat, and listing potential of the species.

MARCH 2005: The *Acropora* Biological Review Team publishes its status review document for Atlantic *Acropora* and NMFS releases its 12-month positive finding for listing elkhorn and staghorn corals (70 FR 13151).

MAY 2005: NMFS publishes its proposed rule to list elkhorn and staghorn corals as threatened under the ESA (70 FR 24359).

JUNE 2005: NMFS holds public comment hearings in Florida, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

AUGUST 2005: The public comment period for the proposed rule to list elkhorn and staghorn corals as threatened closes.

MAY 2006: NMFS publishes its final rule listing elkhorn and staghorn corals as threatened under the ESA and holds public scoping workshops to gather information for a 4(d) rule and designating critical habitat.