

Regulatory Language

Add Section 749.9, Title 14, CCR to read:

§749.9. Incidental Take of Tricolored Blackbird (*Agelaius tricolor*) During Candidacy Period

This regulation authorizes take as defined by Fish and Game Code Section 86, of tricolored blackbird in the limited circumstances described below, subject to certain terms and conditions, during the species' candidacy under the California Endangered Species Act (Fish and Game Code, Section 2050 et seq.).

(a) Take Authorization.

The commission authorizes the take of tricolored blackbird during the candidacy period subject to the terms and conditions herein.

(1) Actions to Protect, Restore, Conserve, or Enhance Habitat.

Take of tricolored blackbird incidental to otherwise lawful activity, where the purpose of the activity is to protect, restore, conserve, or enhance habitat for a species designated as an endangered, threatened, or candidate species under state or federal law.

(2) Actions to Monitor Tricolored Blackbird Breeding Colonies.

Take of tricolored blackbird incidental to efforts to monitor active tricolored blackbird breeding colonies, including entering colonies to perform walking transects. Only trained observers who are approved by the department will be authorized to engage in such monitoring.

(3) Harvest of Grain Crops Under Harvest Management Program to Protect Colonies.

Take of tricolored blackbird incidental to harvest of grain fields and related agricultural activities is authorized where an individual participates in a harvest management program administered by the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), or harvest management program administered or approved by the department; the harvest management program shall include the establishment of a buffer zone and harvest date as described under Topics 1 and 2 in the document "California Department of Fish and Wildlife (Department) Staff Guidance Regarding Avoidance of Impacts to Tricolored Blackbird Breeding Colonies on Agricultural Fields in 2015" (adopted on March 19, 2015 and available at <https://nrm.dfg.ca.gov/FileHandler.ashx?DocumentID=99310&inline>), hereby incorporated by reference. The individual seeking authorization for take incidental to harvest of grain fields and related agricultural activities shall receive written confirmation of participation in the harvest management program and must obtain specific authorization for the timing of harvest and related agricultural activities from NRCS, the department, or a biologist authorized by the department or NRCS before proceeding with any harvest activities that take tricolored blackbirds.

(b) Reporting.

Any person, individual, organization, or public agency, or their agents, for which incidental take of tricolored blackbirds is authorized pursuant to subsections (a)(1) or (a)(3), shall report observations and detections of tricolored blackbird colonies, including take, to the department's Wildlife Branch by August 1 during the candidacy period. Information reported to the department pursuant to this subsection shall include: a contact name; the date and location (GPS coordinate preferred) of the colony or take; colony size; colony outcome; and details regarding the tricolored blackbirds observed. Colony outcome means whether the colony was abandoned or whether young in a colony fledged. Any person, individual, organization, or public agency, or their agents seeking incidental take authorization pursuant to subsection (a)(3), shall report their participation in an approved harvest management program to the department prior to grain harvest.

(c) Additions, Modifications or Revocation.

Incidental take of tricolored blackbird from activities not addressed in this section may be authorized during the candidacy period by the commission pursuant to Fish and Game Code Section 2084, or by the department on a case-by-case basis pursuant to Fish and Game Code Section 2081, or other authority provided by law.

Note: Authority cited: Sections 200, 265, 399 and 2084, Fish and Game Code.

Reference: Sections 200, 265, 399, 2080, 2084 and 2085, Fish and Game Code.