

ENDANGERED SPECIES ACT (ESA) EVALUATION FORM

1. Species and Habitat within the action area: The action area includes the immediate area where the proposed action will occur, as well as any other areas where direct or indirect impacts of the action may be expected. For example, effects of an action in the headwaters of a stream may affect endangered fish that occur downstream. It is necessary to list all threatened and endangered species and critical habitats in the action area that will not be affected so the reviewer understands that such species have been considered. Consider both beneficial and adverse effects, regardless of their magnitude. A compilation of listed species or critical habitats may be requested from the appropriate Endangered Species Office (ESO). This section may be satisfied by attaching a current species list from the applicable ESO and many species lists can now be obtained on-line through their web-site.

A. Listed species and/or their designated critical habitat: List all federally-threatened or endangered species and designated critical habitat in the action area.

B. Proposed species and/or proposed critical habitat: List all federally-proposed species and proposed critical habitats in the action area for which a proposed listing rule (but not a final rule) has been published in the Federal Register.

C. Candidate species within the action area: List all federally-candidate species that may be in the action area.

2. Geographic area or station name and action: Briefly describe the proposed action and where it will occur.

Location (attach maps): In addition to the following specific descriptions, it is vital to attach a map(s). The reviewer may not be familiar with the project area and will need the maps to precisely relate the proposed project to the affected species. Maps should depict, preferably in large scale, the exact locations of project elements. Topographic maps are preferred, with the action area depicted on them. For scattered project sites, such as in fish stocking, a location map should be given for each site.

A. Eco-region Number and Name: Self-explanatory.

B. County and State: Self-explanatory.

C. Section, township, and range (or latitude and longitude): Self-explanatory.

D. Distance (miles) and direction to nearest town: Self-explanatory.

E. Species/habitat occurrence: Depict on the location map the species and habitat occurrences.

3. Description of proposed action (attach additional pages as needed): What is the purpose of this proposed action and how do you plan to accomplish it? Describe the project area as well as the project. These descriptions should be detailed enough so that the reviewer can fully understand what the components of the action include and how the project will affect the species. Do not assume that the reviewing office will understand procedures that are taken for granted within your project. Details can be provided here, or by attaching copies of project plans, management plans, stocking schedules, or other project documents. Any relevant documents are usually helpful attachments. Sketches or blueprints of the proposed action and proposed project dates should be provided. Attach a biological assessment if the project is considered a "major construction activity."

4. Evaluation of effects:

A. Explanation of effects of the action on species and critical habitats: Discuss either the effects of the action on each listed, proposed, or candidate species and critical habitat in the action area, or why those species or critical habitats will not be affected. For species or critical habitats affected by the proposed action, provide the following information:

- (1) Status of species in action area; is it native (natural and/or stocked) or non-native in the action area? Include population and/or distribution trends (provide survey information).
- (2) Species habitat in the action area and its significance to spawning, feeding, migratory habits (or behavior), cover, roost, etc. Is the area currently occupied or unoccupied historic range for the species?
- (3) Impacts of the proposed action on species and/or critical habitat, including direct, indirect, interdependent, interrelated, and cumulative impacts.
- (4) Quantification of effects - acres of habitat, miles of habitat, number of individuals, etc.
- (5) Summary of effects - include the basis for your conclusion - best judgment, literature, citations, studies, etc.

B. Explanation of actions to be implemented to reduce adverse effects: Project modification ideas may be found in recovery plans. Include any measures agreed to through informal consultation to reduce any adverse impacts.

C. Effect Summary: For each species listed above, provide your evaluation as to the level of project effects that may occur, preferably in table format.

No effect/no adverse modification. This conclusion is reached if the proposed action and its interrelated and interdependent actions will not directly or indirectly affect listed species or destroy/adversely modify designated critical habitat.

May Affect, but is not likely to adversely affect species/adversely modify critical habitat. This conclusion is appropriate when effects to the species or critical habitat are expected to be discountable, insignificant, or completely beneficial. Beneficial effects are contemporaneous positive effects without any adverse effects to the species or habitat. Insignificant effects relate to the size of the impact (and should never reach the scale where take occurs), while discountable effects are those that are extremely unlikely to occur. Based on best judgment, a person would not: (1) be able to meaningfully measure, detect, or evaluate insignificant effects; or (2) expect discountable effects to occur.

May affect, and is likely to adversely affect species/adversely modify critical habitat. This conclusion is reached if any adverse effect to listed species or critical habitat may occur as a direct or indirect result of the proposed Service action or its interrelated or interdependent actions, and the effect is not discountable, insignificant or beneficial (see definition of "is not likely to adversely affect". In the event the overall effect of the proposed action is beneficial to the listed species or critical habitat, but may also cause some adverse effect on individuals of the listed species or segments of the critical habitat, then the determination should be "is likely to adversely affect."