

Attachment 4: Template Biological Assessment

**YOUR PROJECT NAME HERE
DISTRICT AND FOREST OR PARK NAME OR AGENCY NAME**

LOCATION:

[County Name] County, [State Name]
[Township, Range, and Section]

Contact Person: Your name here

Phone Number: (xxx)xxx-xxxx

Introduction

The purpose of this biological assessment is to review the proposed [project name] in sufficient detail to determine whether the proposed action may affect any of the threatened, endangered, proposed or sensitive species listed below. This biological assessment is prepared in accordance with legal requirements set forth under Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act (16 U.S.C. 1536 (c)), and follows the standards established in [your agency's NEPA guidance].

The species considered in this document are:

Threatened, Endangered, Proposed Threatened or Proposed Endangered Species

common name (*Scientific name*) **T**
common name (*Scientific name*) **E**
common name (*Scientific name*) **PT**
common name (*Scientific name*) **PE**

Candidate Species

common name (*Scientific name*)

Sensitive Species and Species of Concern

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common name (*Scientific name*)

list them all!!!

[Don't forget, Interior agencies often have additional responsibilities to help prevent these species from becoming listed. Check your agencies guidelines.]

Critical Habitat

The action addressed within this biological assessment falls within Critical Habitat for [identify]. Final ruling on Critical Habitat for the [common name (*Scientific name*)] was established by USFWS [date].

Consultation to Date

[Summarize and include meetings and correspondence that were important to the decision-making process.]

Current Management Direction

[Discuss relevant State and County General Plans, and Action Plans, and the goals of the plans].

Description of the Proposed Action

[Describe (1) **WHAT** the project or action is; (2) **WHERE** the project is (refer to attached maps); (3) describe **WHEN** the action is going to take place, time line/implementation schedule; (4) specify **WHO** is going to do the action and under what authority, include name and address of the applicant; (5) include those measures that relate to **HOW** the action will be accomplished--*e.g.*, bulldozer, pile driver, feller-buncher, chain saw, steam roller; and, (6) include Conservation measures such as avoidance measures, seasonal restrictions, compensation, restoration/creation (on-site and in-kind, off-site and in-kind, on-site and out-of-kind, off-site and out-of-kind).]

Here are some examples:

Type of project
Project location
Project footprint
Start and end times

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Construction access

Habitat status on site

Habitat between work areas and endangered species locations

Permanent vs. temporary

If temporary, how long

Information on mitigation: what kind?

Whether the project is growth-inducing

Surrounding land-use

Hydrology and drainage patterns

[Other potential information needed: type of equipment used, who is doing to work, what is happening up and down drainage.]

Species Accounts

[Include aspects of biology that relate to the impact of the action, such as noise, inundation, fire, seasonal use--*e.g.*, if the species is sensitive to loud sounds, and your project involves loud tools or equipment, reference that aspect of their biology.]

[Reference field notes, unpublished data, research in progress, etc., also views of recognized experts. Include local population information. Include survey information.]

[Keep out the extraneous stuff, please don't discuss biology that is totally unrelated to project impacts--*e.g.*, discussion of pelage color, teat number, and number of digits for and aft when project is a seasonal wetland establishment.]

Habitat Status

[Describe habitat use--*e.g.*, nesting, roosting, foraging--habitat condition, habitat designation such as:

- * critical habitat, if any--provide unit name or number
- * essential habitat, important habitat
- * recovery area, recovery unit]

Existing Environment

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[Identify the species considered by this document that do not occur in the project area--according to historic records, or distance from suitable habitat--specify.]

[Include sufficient information to support the determinations--no effect, not likely to adversely affect, likely to adversely affect, likely to benefit--of this biological assessment, based on the past and current survey information for this area.]

[Include impacts to the listed and proposed species in the area that you know are occurring and that are unrelated to your action--e.g., road kills from off-road vehicle use, poaching, trespass, etc.]

Effects

[Elaborate on each effect. Effect determinations must be consistent with types of actions in the project description, the biology in the species accounts, and the habitat status and existing environment.]

Here are some examples of effects:

Direct/indirect/cumulative [according to ESA, indirect is "later in time"]

Loss of habitat (indirect/direct)

Infrastructure (roads, water, supply, pets, maintenance activities)

Mortality

Access through adjacent habitat

Effect of noise/light during construction

Fragmentation

Growth induction

Increased predation

Water quality (Look at watershed/corridors)

Recovery units/constituent elements of critical habitat

[Address interrelated and interdependent effects. This is required by case law]

[Identify when incidental take is expected to occur and identify each form of take expected to occur--such as harm, harass, etc.]

[Reference other consultations in area, if known, and include Fish and Wildlife Service file number.]

Cumulative Effects (state and private actions)

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[Present all known and relative effects to population, *e.g.*, fish stocking, fishing, hunting, other recreation, private wells, some developments, grazing, *etc.*]

Analysis of alternate actions

[Optional, unless major action]

Conclusion and Determination

[This is where you put your overall effect determination after you have analyzed direct, indirect, cumulative, and interrelated and interdependent effects. The handbook on "Biological Assessment Preparation and Review" has a very useful section called "Common Flaws in Developing an Effect Determination."

The Service looks for one of the following statements:

Not likely to adversely affect

Likely to adversely affect

Likely to benefit

[If you make a "No effect" determination, you might have to defend it. Keep the document for your administrative record.]

[Once you have made your determination, summarize the high points that led you to it-- *e.g.*, The action is not likely to adversely affect the . . . based on the following rationale: . . .]

Literature Cited

List of Contacts/Contributors/Preparers

Maps

[Please include an area map as well as a vicinity map. The vicinity map should be at a 1:24,000 scale with the USGS quad name included.]

Biological Assessment for [Project Name]