

Appendix C: Threatened & Endangered/ Special Status Species Wildland Fire Suppression Guidelines

This section provides resource advisors and fire fighting personnel information about threatened and endangered (T&E)/special status species at risk from the fire. The information should be used in the wildland fire management decision-making process as it relates to suppression activities.

Of paramount importance is the safety of the firefighters and the protection of life and property. If a suppression action is determined to be necessary to control a wildfire, save lives and/or property, and ensure that fire crews can do their jobs safely and efficiently, then it is appropriate to act even if it results in the take of an endangered species. No wildland fire suppression guideline (Figure 7.1), for protection of endangered species or their habitat, will be considered if the FMO or Incident Commander feels the guidelines place firefighters or life or property in danger (see Appendix B).

Consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USF&WS):

Fire can and often does destroy endangered species and alters critical habitat. However, fire itself is considered a disaster or an act of God in the sense of 50 CFR 402.05. Consultation is conducted on the agency response to wildfires for those actions under control of the consulting agency. However, these consultations are in a special category, Emergency Consultations, and are handled in a very expeditious manner. The Resource Advisor (RA) should provide the guidelines (Figure 7.1) and any additional measures identified by the USF&WS to wildland fire managers.

The RA will be responsible for emergency consultation with the USF&WS. The RA should involve the FO biologist and/or ecologist; if possible, in initiating emergency consultation (see Appendix A).

Typically, the RA contacts the USF&WS by telephone if a wildfire is determined to involve an endangered species or if response actions may affect the species or habitat. This contact should be made at the earliest possible opportunity. An emergency consultation number will be provided to the RA. Subsequent calls to the USF&WS can add information. Information concerning the fire will be documented by the USF&WS. An estimate of "incidental take" of the endangered species can be discussed, if specific information is known.

After the wildfire is suppressed, the RA will work with the FO biologist or ecologist to provide an oral or written report to the USF&WS. Consultation is then concluded. The USF&WS provides an after the fact opinion that documents the effects of the emergency response on the listed species or critical habitat.

Table 1: Threatened & Endangered/ Special Status Species Wildland Fire Suppression Guidelines

Species	FMUs	Wildland Fire Suppression Guidelines	
SW Willow Flycatcher	C-1, C-6 (Potential Habitat)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Avoid aerial application of retardant or foam within 300 feet of any body of water including lakes, rivers, streams and ponds whether or not they contain aquatic life (as per OF&A - IM No. 2000_011). 	
	B-4, B-5 (Oxbow area) B-8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Consult resource advisor on occupied SWWFL habitat to identify and protect habitat. 	
	Migrational	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Updates should be reviewed with the associated fire management agencies so that firefighters know about the management plan before a fire actually threatens a site (as per pg. L-15 & L-20, SW Willow Flycatcher Draft Recovery Plan). 	
Canada Lynx	C-7 B-14 B-15 B-12	<p>Wildland fire suppression within mapped potential Canada lynx habitats will be performed in a manner consistent with conservation measures outlined in the <i>Canada Lynx Conservation Assessment and Strategy</i> (2000) Chapter 7 - Pages 7-6, 7-7 and 7-8. Considerations include;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Attempts will be made to keep linear openings (fire line, access routes and escape routes) out of mapped potential habitat and away from key components such as denning areas. ➤ Avoid constructing permanent firebreaks on ridges or saddles in lynx habitat. ➤ When managing wildland fire, minimize the creation of linear openings (fire line, access routes and escape routes) that could result in permanent travel ways for competitors and humans. ➤ Obliterate and reclaim linear openings (fire line, access routes and escape routes) associated with wildland fire suppression constructed within lynx habitat in order to deter future human and competitive species use. 	
	Bald Eagle	B-5 B-4 (Oxbow Hanson's Bluff area)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ In order to minimize effects, both direct and indirect, to potential nesting bald eagles, the following minimization measures are required along main waterways: Avoid unnecessary tree cutting within ¼ mile of known roost trees. ➤ Avoid aerial application of retardant or foam within 300 feet of any body of water including lakes, rivers, streams and ponds whether or not they contain aquatic life (as per OF&A - IM No. 2000_011).
		C-1 B-2 (Blanca Wetlands)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ To reduce indirect effects to bald eagles from potential modification of winter roost sites, the following minimization measures are required: Avoid aerial application of retardant or foam within 300 feet of any body of water including lakes, rivers, streams and ponds whether or not they contain aquatic life (as per OF&A - IM No. 2000_011).
		B-1 B-14(Rito Alto)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ To reduce indirect effects to bald eagles from potential modification of winter roost sites, the following minimization measures are required: Avoid aerial application of retardant or foam within 300 feet of any body of water including lakes, rivers, streams and ponds whether or not they contain aquatic life (as per OF&A - IM No. 2000_011).

Species	FMU's	Wildland Fire Suppression Guidelines
Mountain Plover	C-1, C-2, C-3, C-6, B-3, B-6 thru B-9, B-11, B-12, and B-14	Wildfire, while infrequent in Mountain plover habitat should be allowed to burn wherever possible except during the nesting period from April 1 thru July 15. (Fire combined with lighter grazing achieves a vegetative structure similar to that produced by heavy grazing alone.
Boreal toad	Potential Habitat in C-7 on Poncha Pass	Not known to exist on BLM-Several established sightings on adjacent Forest Land in upper elevations of Saguache, Conejos and Divide districts. ➤ Avoid aerial application of retardant or foam within 300 feet of any body of water including lakes, rivers, streams and ponds whether or not they contain aquatic life (as per OF&A - IM No. 2000_011).
Western Yellow-billed cuckoo	Unconfirmed on BLM lands and rare historic documentation on private	This species historically occurred in portions of western Colorado, No individuals have been recorded or confirmed to nest within the planning area. ➤ Avoid aerial application of retardant or foam within 300 feet of any body of water including lakes, rivers, streams and ponds whether or not they contain aquatic life (as per OF&A - IM No. 2000_011).
Gunnison Sage Grouse	C-7, B-12 Potential in C-1 near Rio Grande	➤ Aggressively suppress wildland fires in sagebrush vegetation within mapped sage grouse habitats to minimize expansive losses of sagebrush. ➤ Identify and avoid known lek sites when managing wildland fire and using heavy equipment. ➤ In sage grouse winter habitats, protect unburned patches of sagebrush within the fire perimeter. ➤ Post-fire; Evaluate burned area to determine whether reseeding is necessary to achieve habitat management objectives as recommended in the <i>Guidelines to manage sage grouse populations and their habitats (Connelly, Schroeder, Sands and Braun 2000)</i> .
Northern goshawk	C-6(Trickle Mountain) B-11 (Carnero) B-9 (Lower Rock Creek) B-8,b-11,B-12, B-13,B-14,B-15,C-7,C-3	➤ Fire line construction will attempt to avoid the destruction of any known nest trees. ➤ Linear openings (fire line, access routes and escape routes) associated with fire suppression will be obliterated and reclaimed in order to deter future human use.
Northern leopard frog	B-1 thru B-6, C-1	➤ Avoid aerial application of retardant or foam within 300 feet of any body of water including lakes, rivers, streams and ponds whether or not they contain aquatic life (as per OF&A - IM No. 2000_011).

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Ferruginous Hawk	B-1 thru B-12, B-14,B-15 C-2,C-3,C-4,C-7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Fire line construction will attempt to avoid the destruction of any known nest trees. ➤ Linear openings (fire line, access routes and escape routes) associated with fire suppression will be obliterated and reclaimed in order to deter future human use. ➤ Special attention to this specie will be during the winter months of November to March because they are more common in the San Luis Valley during that period.
Bats (Fringed, Yuma, Free-tailed, townsend's)	B-13,B-14 B-3, C-6,C-7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ No Prescribed burning or vegetative alteration in shrub-steppe or piñon/juniper habitats will be conducted within a 1.5 mile radius of <i>C.townsendii</i> roost sites. (as per Species Conservation Assessment and Conservation Strategy for the Townsend's Big-eared bat) ➤ Within the 0.5 radius of <i>C.townsendii</i> roost sites, no more than half of the forested habitat can be subjected to prescribed burning per decade, and only one at a time when the roost is not occupied.
Texas horned lizard		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ No occurrence, No documentation in the San Luis Valley.
Utah milk snake	Rare occurrence in SLV. Last documented in 1968 in abandoned mine shaft.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ This specie is typically nocturnal and stays hidden during the day. It has potential to exist in a wide variety of habitats in the San Luis Valley, including shortgrass prairie, sandhills, shrubby hillsides, canyons and open stands of ponderosa pine and piñon /juniper to include arid river valleys. Special attention and field surveys will be conducted prior to any fire projects.
American White pelican	B-2, B-1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Avoid aerial application of retardant or foam within 300 feet of any body of water including lakes, rivers, streams and ponds whether or not they contain aquatic life (as per OF&A - IM No. 2000_011).
White-faced ibis	B-1,B-2,B-5 B-4(Oxbow bluff area) C-1(along Conejos river)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Avoid aerial application of retardant or foam within 300 feet of any body of water including lakes, rivers, streams and ponds whether or not they contain aquatic life (as per OF&A - IM No. 2000_011).
Barrows Golden-eye	C-7(Potential)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Avoid aerial application of retardant or foam within 300 feet of any body of water including lakes, rivers, streams and ponds whether or not they contain aquatic life (as per OF&A - IM No. 2000_011).
Western Snowy Plover	B-2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Avoid aerial application of retardant or foam within 300 feet of any body of water including lakes, rivers, streams and ponds whether or not they contain aquatic life (as per OF&A - IM No. 2000_011).
Black Tern	B-1, B-2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Avoid aerial application of retardant or foam within 300 feet of any body of water including lakes, rivers, streams and ponds whether or not they contain aquatic life (as per OF&A - IM No. 2000_011).