



Conservation Focus Group

January 28, 2025

3:00pm – 5:00pm

Covered Species

Definition: A species for which an applicant is requesting authorization for incidental take and is developing a conservation strategy with avoidance, minimization, and mitigation measures.

Process to develop proposed list of Covered Species

- Compiled initial list of 450 species to evaluate
- Consulted species experts and reviewed against preliminary screening criteria to refine list to 65 species for further evaluation
- Evaluate 65 species against 4 criteria:
 - Range, Status, Impact, Data
 - A species must meet all 4 criteria to be carried forward

Background Material:

- [Covered Species Analysis Report](#)
- [Proposed List of Covered Species](#)
- [Species Accounts \(Mojave Poppy Bee Addition\)](#)

Biological Goals and Objectives

Definition: Goals are broad, descriptive statements that guide the development and operation of conservation plans. Objectives are incremental steps taken to achieve biological goals.

- SMART principles
- Overview of the 4 Goals and the 17 Objectives to achieve the Goals.
 - Goal 1 – Maintain or improve habitat quality within Reserve System lands to promote resiliency, redundancy, and representation for Covered Species
 - Goal 2 – Avoid and minimize impacts to maintain the quality of habitat for Covered Species within the Plan Area
 - Goal 3 – Maintain stable or increasing populations of Covered Species occurring within Reserve System lands
 - Goal 4 - Foster community and stakeholder engagement to benefit Covered Species

Background Material:

- [Biological Goals and Objectives](#)

Avoidance and Minimization Measures

Definition: Strategies to reduce the impact of a project on a Covered Species.

- **Project Design Measures:** Reduce indirect effects to species and as a result of project implementation. These measures are intended to limit edge effects in adjacent habitats and provide corridors for species movements with buffers from sensitive habitats.
- **General Construction Measures:** Reduce direct impacts to species during project implementation.
- **Species Specific Measures:** Additional avoidance and minimization measures for Covered Species will be implemented when disturbance-related project activities (construction or maintenance) are conducted in areas designated as potential to be occupied by the species.

Background Material:

- [Avoidance and Minimization Measures](#)

Reserve System

Definition: A designated area of land set aside to specifically protect habitat of Covered Species.

Process to develop the proposed Reserve System

- Carry forward existing Desert Conservation Program (DCP)-managed properties – [Boulder City Conservation Easement](#) and [Muddy and Virgin River](#) properties
- Identify BLM-administered lands that can be designated and managed for conservation purposes
 - Conserve lands at a 1:1 ratio in comparison to potential impacts to Covered Species habitat
 - Reserve design criteria:
 - Provide high quality habitat for Covered Species
 - Large enough to support sustainable populations of Covered Species
 - Provide connectivity to other conserved lands
 - Provide a diversity of environmental gradients
 - Provide opportunities for habitat enhancement and restoration
 - Minimize length of land use edges that are detrimental
 - Nominations submitted to Bureau of Land Management (BLM) in 2009 for new Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACECs) –
 - To be cooperatively managed by the Desert Conservation Program
 - These are the areas where conservation actions will be carried out
 - BLM analyzed DCP nominations for inclusion in the revised Las Vegas Resource Management Plan (RMP) –
 - Boundaries refined through BLM analysis
 - RMP revision effort was terminated in 2019
 - DCP attempting to carry forward revised boundaries – pursuing both legislative and administrative paths

Reserve System Management

- Will require a BLM RMP amendment/update
- Cooperative Management Agreements
- Overview of Reserve System management activities

Background Material:

- [Measures to Mitigate Unavoidable Take](#)

Monitoring

Definition: A process that assesses the success of a habitat conservation plan and the permittee's compliance with the plan.

- Baseline Monitoring: establishes current conditions, necessary to assess changes to species/habitats over time
- Compliance Monitoring: ensure that the Permittees are complying with permit terms and conditions
- Effectiveness Monitoring: evaluates how Covered Species are responding to management actions

Adaptive Management

Definition: An approach to addressing uncertainty in management actions. Involves identifying areas of uncertainty, implementing alternatives, monitoring to learn about outcomes, and applying those lessons to subsequent actions.

- Overview of the Adaptive Management cycle
- Evaluation will occur every 10 years, but analysis of monitoring data can occur at any time
- Evaluate monitoring results against pre-defined triggers
- If a trigger is met, begin Adaptive Management process
- Overview of triggers

Background Material:

- [Monitoring and Adaptive Management](#)

Future Topic(s) –

- Process to develop species distribution models for Covered Species
- Covered Species impacts analysis methodology
- Other topics of interest?