

OCTC Impact Area – Wildlife Specialist Report

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14 August, 2014

Area Description (Wildlife):

The OCTC lies within the western portion of the Snake River Plain, an area characterized by gentle terrain with basalt ridges, buttes, and cinder cones (Collett 1980). Snake River Plain lava flows are responsible for the gently rolling terrain of the OCTC (Shallat 1994). Elevation in the OCTC ranges from 3,000 to 3,500 feet above mean sea level. The southern border of the training area is within 1-2 miles of the Snake River Canyon; however, the OCTC lacks any permanent surface water. The Southern Xeric Shrubland and Steppe vegetation community classification (IDFG 2005) describes the area landscape as a patchwork of shrub (under 3 feet tall) and grass communities with no tree species.

Various inventories have confirmed the occurrence of 21 mammals, 22 raptors, 53 other birds, zero fish, and 14 reptile and amphibian species on the OCTC (Appendix A). Birds of prey (raptors) are the principle animal species of concern on the OCTC. Most of these raptors nest in the nearby Snake River Canyon, foraging in the training area, or are seasonal occupants. Since the OCTC has no permanent water and no trees, non-raptorial avifauna diversity is limited to sagebrush steppe obligates and a few grassland generalists. Impact Area bird species diversity is very low with horned larks the most common species observed. The lack of water also restricts the diversity of mammals to a few ground burrowing species and the occasional pronghorn antelope. The numerous lava flows, basalt ridges and buttes scattered in primarily sage brush areas support several bat species. Twenty one species of mammals have been observed on the OCTC (Appendix B).

The OCTC does contain a few ephemeral playas (pools) in which IDARNG personnel discovered a new species of fairy shrimp, described as *Branchinecta raptor* (Rogers et al. 2006). This unusual predatory species is known from only three ephemeral playas, two of which are within the OCTC. These sites are located outside the Impact Area and are off-limits to training. Other more common species of invertebrates have been found in ephemeral pools and roadside ditches following heavy rain/snow events. These precipitation events and the appearance of shrimp species are not common and years may separate observations of the *Branchinecta raptor* species. No fish species are found within the OCTC.

Available Data Investigation

This report is based on a comprehensive search of all data related to wildlife species observed or with published ranges within or near the OCTC and specifically the OCTC Impact Area. Location data include IDARNG project reports and general observation data, combined with the IDFG animal species diversity database (IDFG 2014). Individual species range data was obtained from University of Idaho Northwest GAP project (University of Idaho 2013) and National Gap Analysis Program (US Geological Survey GAP 2011).

The USFWS identified seven federally listed wildlife species within Ada and Elmore Counties (Table 1) (USFWS 2013). Elmore County is included due to its close proximity to the eastern edge of the project area. The Snake River Physa, Bliss Rapids Snail, Bull Trout, Wolverine, Canada Lynx, and Yellow-billed Cuckoo all require streams, wetlands, riparian areas, or forested habitat that is not found within or adjacent to the OCTC. In March of 2010, the greater sage grouse was put on the candidate list for future action by USFWS, meaning the species would not receive statutory protection under the Endangered Species Act and states would continue to be responsible for managing the bird. There is no habitat for the species found within the OCTC (USDI BLM 2008), and the species has not been observed within the OCTC for more than fifty years.

Table 1. Ada/Elmore County USFWS Listed, Proposed, and Candidate Species

Common Name	Scientific Name	Status	County
Greater Sage Grouse	<i>Centrocercus urophasianus</i>	Candidate	Ada, Elmore
Yellow-billed cuckoo	<i>Coccyzus americanus</i>	Proposed	Ada, Elmore
Canada Lynx	<i>Lynx Canadensis</i>	Threatened	Elmore
Wolverine	<i>Gulo gulo</i>	Proposed	Elmore
Bull trout	<i>Salvelinus confluentus</i>	Threatened	Ada
		Threatened- Designated Critical Habitat	Elmore
Bliss Rapids Snail	<i>Taylorconcha serpenticola</i>	Threatened	Elmore
Snake River physa snail	<i>Haitia (Physa) natricinia</i>	Endangered	Ada, Elmore

Source: www.fws.gov/idaho/species/IdahoSpeciesList.pdf, 08/04/2014

The BLM and IDFG were also consulted for a list of recorded occurrences and/or potential for occurrence of special status species based on existing habitat type (Appendix B).

Fifty eight special status species, including protected nongame and or Idaho Regional/State Imperiled Wildlife Species, have an estimated range within or adjacent to the OCTC. Of those on this list, suitable habitat does not exist within the training area for thirty five species. The remaining twenty three species with at least some potential habitat particularly within the Impact Area; thirteen have a low potential of suitable habitat, eight have a medium potential of suitable habitat, and only 2 are highly likely to have suitable habitat. Medium potential habitat species that likely forage inside the Impact Area include: ferruginous hawk, peregrine falcon, prairie falcon, short-eared owl and golden eagle. Sage sparrow and Brewer's sparrow nest in the small sagebrush area in the north of the Impact Area. No loggerhead shrikes have ever been observed nesting in the OCTC. Two species common to the OCTC and the Impact Area include long-billed curlew and burrowing owl. Both species nest and forage in grassland areas of the OCTC and are fairly common to the area. IDARNG and IDFG annual surveys suggest stable local populations for both species (IDARNG 2014). The BLM Snake River Birds of Prey NCA Resource Management Plan and Record of Decision (USDI BLM 2008) listed several species found in the project area as "regional and State imperiled". Under this plan, special conservation emphasis is given to the prairie falcon and Piute ground squirrel. Ongoing IDARNG Piute ground squirrel trapping/marketing studies monitor the OCTC squirrel population. Detailed IDARNG BMPs concerning OCTC wildlife may be found the IDARNG's Integrated Natural Resources Management Plan (IDARNG 2013).

Existing Site Investigations

These surveys conducted by IDARNG environmental staff provide a comprehensive understanding of wildlife resources on the OCTC and include (for details see individual project reports, IDARNG 2014):

- Long-term vegetation monitoring (350 plots 1989-Present);
- Small mammal/rodent populations monitoring (70 annual plots, 8 annual trapping grids, 1989-present);
- Piute ground squirrel behavior and use study (forage and use of forage kochia) BSU;
- Forage kochia movement monitoring (2013) and control pilot project (2014);
- Herpetological Inventory and monitoring (36-trapping locations 1989, 1999, and 2010-2013, 4 annual sites);
- Raptor Surveys (Two 30-mile road surveys monthly);
- Migratory Bird Surveys (150 surveys plots/50 conducted annually);
- Jack Rabbit population surveys (monthly from April-October annually);
- Harvester ant control survey for LEPA (BLM, IDFG, FWS, BSU...);
- Long Billed Curlew Surveys (35 mile road surveys conducted 4 times annually in coordination with IDFG);
- Burrowing Owl Surveys (35 mile road surveys conducted 4-6 times annually in coordination with IDFG);
- Golden Eagle Monitoring Project (BLM);

- Northern Harrier Monitoring Project (BSU);
- Vegetation mapping (2000 and 2013), best vegetation mapping conducted to date in NCA (BSU);
- UAV vegetation and slick spot monitoring (pilot project with INL, ISU, and BSU);
- Bat monitoring program for WNS (state monitoring program, mobile and stationary acoustic, mist netting, cave load sampling...)-IDFG, FWS, BLM;
- Invertebrate monitoring program (*Banchnecta raptor*).

1918 Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA)

The IDARNG environmental staff conducts year round surveys for the presence of all migratory bird species, emphasizing raptor and sagebrush obligatory species. Site specific surveys are also conducted to record the presence or use of an area, and are conducted prior to all training exercises and construction activities. Training exercises and construction activities with the potential to adversely impact bird species are relocated or modified in following the Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1918. All bird species found on the OCTC nest during early spring and IDARNG activities typically occur after this timeframe. Direct impacts from activities are likely limited to some temporary displacement of foraging birds. Migratory grassland bird species found in the project area show a low sensitivity to disturbance (USDI BLM 1996) and would experience minimal adverse impacts.

Over the past 20 years there have been no known incidences of bird mortality as a result of a training exercise or construction activity within the OCTC or associated support structures. Prior to each training exercise or construction activity, soldiers and contractors receive a mandatory environmental briefing. This briefing directs individuals to avoid all wildlife with particular emphasis on birds of prey and migratory birds. In addition, OCTC military personnel and environmental staff actively monitor training and construction sites to prevent nest construction on or in training equipment or structures. If nest construction is initiated, non-intrusive actions are taken to deter further use. In the event a nest is developed with eggs present, training exercises and construction activities with the potential to adversely impact the bird, nest, or eggs are relocated or modified.

Golden and Bald Eagle Protection Act

Neither golden nor bald eagles nests in the project area and foraging use by golden eagles varies widely by season. Bald eagles occasionally pass through the OCTC (1 or 2 sightings per year) but rarely forage on the OCTC. Golden eagles forage mostly in and near shrublands of the OCTC, and their presence is highly correlated with black-tailed jackrabbits (USDI BLM 1996).

References

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- U.S. Department of Interior. Bureau of Land Management. 1996. Effects of military training and fire in the Snake River Birds of Prey National Conservation Area. BLM/IDARNG Research Project Final Report. U.S. Geological Survey Biological Research Division, Snake River Field Station, Boise, ID.
- U.S. Department of Interior. Bureau of Land Management. 2008. Snake River Birds of Prey National Conservation Area, Resource Management Plan and Record of Decision. Boise District, Boise, ID.
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS). 2013. Idaho's Endangered, Threatened, Proposed, and Candidate Species. Available at: <http://www.fws.gov/idaho/species/IdahoSpeciesList.pdf>. Valid for 90 days after 08/04/2014.
- US Geological Survey Gap Analysis Program (GAP). 2011. National GAP vertebrate species range data.
<http://gapanalysis.usgs.gov/species>



United States Department of the Interior



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In Reply Refer To:
Consultation Code: 01EIFW00-2018-SLI-0831
Event Code: 01EIFW00-2018-E-01760
Project Name: IDARNG DAGIR Range

March 23, 2018

Subject: List of threatened and endangered species that may occur in your proposed project location, and/or may be affected by your proposed project

To Whom It May Concern:

The enclosed species list identifies threatened, endangered, proposed and candidate species, as well as proposed and final designated critical habitat, that may occur within the boundary of your proposed project and/or may be affected by your proposed project. The species list fulfills the requirements of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) under section 7(c) of the Endangered Species Act (Act) of 1973, as amended (16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.*).

New information based on updated surveys, changes in the abundance and distribution of species, changed habitat conditions, or other factors could change this list. Please feel free to contact us if you need more current information or assistance regarding the potential impacts to federally proposed, listed, and candidate species and federally designated and proposed critical habitat. Please note that under 50 CFR 402.12(e) of the regulations implementing section 7 of the Act, the accuracy of this species list should be verified after 90 days. This verification can be completed formally or informally as desired. The Service recommends that verification be completed by visiting the ECOS-IPaC website at regular intervals during project planning and implementation for updates to species lists and information. An updated list may be requested through the ECOS-IPaC system by completing the same process used to receive the enclosed list.

The purpose of the Act is to provide a means whereby threatened and endangered species and the ecosystems upon which they depend may be conserved. Under sections 7(a)(1) and 7(a)(2) of the Act and its implementing regulations (50 CFR 402 *et seq.*), Federal agencies are required to utilize their authorities to carry out programs for the conservation of threatened and endangered species and to determine whether projects may affect threatened and endangered species and/or designated critical habitat.

A Biological Assessment is required for construction projects (or other undertakings having similar physical impacts) that are major Federal actions significantly affecting the quality of the human environment as defined in the National Environmental Policy Act (42 U.S.C. 4332(2)(c)). For projects other than major construction activities, the Service suggests that a biological evaluation similar to a Biological Assessment be prepared to determine whether the project may affect listed or proposed species and/or designated or proposed critical habitat. Recommended contents of a Biological Assessment are described at 50 CFR 402.12.

If a Federal agency determines, based on the Biological Assessment or biological evaluation, that listed species and/or designated critical habitat may be affected by the proposed project, the agency is required to consult with the Service pursuant to 50 CFR 402. In addition, the Service recommends that candidate species, proposed species and proposed critical habitat be addressed within the consultation. More information on the regulations and procedures for section 7 consultation, including the role of permit or license applicants, can be found in the "Endangered Species Consultation Handbook" at:

<http://www.fws.gov/endangered/esa-library/pdf/TOC-GLOS.PDF>

Please be aware that bald and golden eagles are protected under the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act (16 U.S.C. 668 *et seq.*), and projects affecting these species may require development of an eagle conservation plan (http://www.fws.gov/windenergy/eagle_guidance.html). Additionally, wind energy projects should follow the wind energy guidelines (<http://www.fws.gov/windenergy/>) for minimizing impacts to migratory birds and bats.

Guidance for minimizing impacts to migratory birds for projects including communications towers (e.g., cellular, digital television, radio, and emergency broadcast) can be found at: <http://www.fws.gov/migratorybirds/CurrentBirdIssues/Hazards/towers/towers.htm>; <http://www.towerkill.com>; and <http://www.fws.gov/migratorybirds/CurrentBirdIssues/Hazards/towers/comtow.html>.

Please note: The IPaC module for producing a list of proposed and designated critical habitat is currently incomplete. At this time, we ask that you use the information given below to determine whether your action area falls within a county containing proposed/designated critical habitat for a specific species. If you find that your action falls within a listed county, use the associated links for that species to determine if your action area actually overlaps with the proposed or designated critical habitat.

Canada Lynx (*Lynx canadensis*) - Designated February 24, 2009.

Counties: Boundary County.

Federal Register Notice: <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2009-02-25/pdf/E9-3512.pdf#page=1>

Printable Maps:

http://www.fws.gov/mountain-prairie/species/mammals/lynx/criticalhabitat_files/

[20081222_fedreg_unit3_draft.jpg](#)

GIS Data: http://criticalhabitat.fws.gov/docs/crithab/zip/lunx_ch.zip

KML for Google Earth: (None Currently Available)

Selkirk Mountains Woodland Caribou (*Rangifer tarandus Caribou*) - Proposed November 30, 2011.

Counties: Bonner and Boundary Counties.

Federal Register Notice: <http://www.fws.gov/idaho/home/2011-30451FINALR.pdf>

Printable Maps: http://www.fws.gov/idaho/home/Map1_sub1_150.pdf

GIS Data: (None Currently Available)

KML for Google Earth: (None Currently Available)

Bull Trout (*Salvelinus confluentus*) - Designated September 30, 2010.

Counties: Adams, Benewah, Blaine, Boise, Bonner, Boundary, Butte, Camas, Clearwater, Custer, Elmore, Gem, Idaho, Kootenai, Lemhi, Lewis, Nez Perce, Owyhee, Shoshone, Valley, and Washington Counties.

Federal Register Notice: <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2010-10-18/pdf/2010-25028.pdf#page=2>

Printable Maps: http://www.fws.gov/pacific/bulltrout/CH2010_Maps.cfm#CHMaps

GIS Data: <http://criticalhabitat.fws.gov/docs/crithab/zip/bulltrout.zip>

KML for Google Earth: http://www.fws.gov/pacific/bulltrout/finalcrithab/BT_FCH_2010_KML.zip

Kootenai River White Sturgeon (*Acipenser transmontanus*) - Designated July 9, 2008.

Counties: Boundary County.

Federal Register Notice: <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2008-07-09/pdf/E8-15134.pdf#page=1>

Printable Maps: (None Currently Available)

GIS Data: http://criticalhabitat.fws.gov/docs/crithab/zip/fch_73fr39506_acit_2009.zip

KML for Google Earth: (None Currently Available)

Slickspot Peppergrass (*Lepidium papilliferum*) - Proposed May 10, 2011. Counties: Ada, Canyon, Elmore, Gem, Owyhee, and Payette Counties.

Federal Register Notice: <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2011-10-26/pdf/2011-27727.pdf>

Printable Maps: <http://www.fws.gov/idaho/Lepidium.html>

GIS Data: (None Currently Available)

KML for Google Earth: (None Currently Available)

We appreciate your concern for threatened and endangered species. The Service encourages Federal agencies to include conservation of threatened and endangered species into their project planning to further the purposes of the Act. Please include the Consultation Tracking Number in

the header of this letter with any request for consultation or correspondence about your project that you submit to our office.

Attachment(s):

- Official Species List

Official Species List

This list is provided pursuant to Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act, and fulfills the requirement for Federal agencies to "request of the Secretary of the Interior information whether any species which is listed or proposed to be listed may be present in the area of a proposed action".

This species list is provided by:

Idaho Fish And Wildlife Office
1387 South Vinnell Way, Suite 368
Boise, ID 83709-1657
(208) 378-5243

Project Summary

Consultation Code: 01EIFW00-2018-SLI-0831

Event Code: 01EIFW00-2018-E-01760

Project Name: IDARNG DAGIR Range

Project Type: MILITARY OPERATIONS / MANEUVERS

Project Description: Construction, operation, and maintenance of a digital air-ground integrated range (DAGIR) within the IDARNG Impact Area. Total construction footprint is 30 acres.

Project Location:

Approximate location of the project can be viewed in Google Maps: <https://www.google.com/maps/place/43.21840632378004N116.11181841736179W>



Counties: Ada, ID

Endangered Species Act Species

There is a total of 1 threatened, endangered, or candidate species on this species list.

Species on this list should be considered in an effects analysis for your project and could include species that exist in another geographic area. For example, certain fish may appear on the species list because a project could affect downstream species.

IPaC does not display listed species or critical habitats under the sole jurisdiction of NOAA Fisheries¹, as USFWS does not have the authority to speak on behalf of NOAA and the Department of Commerce.

See the "Critical habitats" section below for those critical habitats that lie wholly or partially within your project area under this office's jurisdiction. Please contact the designated FWS office if you have questions.

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1. [NOAA Fisheries](#), also known as the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), is an office of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration within the Department of Commerce.

Flowering Plants

NAME	STATUS
Slickspot Peppergrass <i>Lepidium papilliferum</i> There is proposed critical habitat for this species. Your location is outside the critical habitat. Species profile: https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/4027	Threatened

Critical habitats

THERE ARE NO CRITICAL HABITATS WITHIN YOUR PROJECT AREA UNDER THIS OFFICE'S JURISDICTION.
