

POTENTIAL RESOURCE ISSUE:

Protection of special-status wildlife species and their habitats.

PROJECT NEXUS:

Project operations and maintenance activities and potential Project betterments could disturb or result in loss of habitat for special-status wildlife species.

POTENTIAL LICENSE CONDITION:

- Vegetation and Integrated Pest Management Plan.
- Special-status wildlife protection measures.

STUDY OBJECTIVE:

- Document U.S. Department of Agriculture-Forest Service (USDA-FS) land allocations and known occurrences of special-status wildlife species at Project facilities, roads, trails, recreation facilities, Project-related dispersed concentrated use areas, and bypass and peaking reaches.
- Document USDA-FS land allocations and known occurrences of special-status wildlife species at potential Project betterments.
- Identify special-status wildlife species potentially occurring in California Wildlife Habitat Relationships (CWHR) habitats documented as part of the Vegetation Communities and Wildlife Habitats Technical Study Plan.
- Determine whether Project communication and power lines are consistent with Avian Power Line Interaction Committee (APLIC) Guidelines.

EXTENT OF STUDY AREA:

The study area is ¼ mile around Project facilities, roads, trails, recreation facilities, Project-related dispersed concentrated use areas, and bypass and peaking reaches. Refer to Project Description Table 5-1 and REC1–Recreation Use and Facilities Assessment Technical Study Plan Table REC1-1).

The study area will be expanded to include ¼ mile around potential Project betterments, including new facilities, roads, and trails; staging and disposal sites; as well as new inundation areas. Refer to Project Description Table 6-1.

Species-specific survey areas are identified below.

STUDY APPROACH:

A special-status wildlife species is defined as any species that is granted status by a federal, state, or local agency. Federally listed species granted status by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) under the Federal Endangered Species Act (ESA) include threatened (FT), endangered (FE), proposed threatened or endangered (FPT, FPE), candidate (FC), or listed

species proposed for delisting (FPD). USDA-FS maintains lists of Forest Service Sensitive (FSS) wildlife species, and National Forest Management Indicator Species (MIS) for each forest. State of California listed wildlife species, which are granted status by the California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG) under the California Endangered Species Act (CESA), include threatened (ST), endangered (SE), California Fully Protected species (CFP), and California Species of Special Concern (CSC).

The study approach for special-status wildlife species and their habitats is provided below.

Special-status Wildlife Species

General Approach

- Identify and map known occurrences of special-status wildlife species within ¼ mile of Project facilities, roads, trails, recreation facilities, Project-related dispersed concentrated use areas, bypass and peaking reaches, and potential Project betterments, based on agency consultation and a review of existing information. Preliminary information is presented in the *Middle Fork American River Hydroelectric Project (FERC No. 2079) Draft Existing Resource Information Report, First Series* (PCWA 2006).
- Identify special-status wildlife species potentially occurring within CWHR designations based on *A Guide to Wildlife Habitats of California* (Meyer and Laudenslayer 1988). Preliminary information is presented in the *Middle Fork American River Hydroelectric Project (FERC No. 2079) Draft Existing Resource Information Report, First Series* (PCWA 2006).
- Identify and map the location of Project communication and power lines and determine if they are consistent with APLIC Guidelines.

Osprey

- Conduct osprey nest surveys in conjunction with bald eagle surveys at the following locations:
 - French Meadows Reservoir,
 - Hell Hole Reservoir,
 - Middle Fork Interbay,
 - Ralston Afterbay,
 - Rubicon River from Hell Hole Reservoir to MFAR confluence,
 - MFAR and from French Meadows Reservoir to the confluence with North Fork American River (NFAR),
 - NFAR confluence to the OHWM of Folsom Reservoir, and
 - Rubicon River.
- Refer to the Bald Eagle Technical Study for the survey methodology.
- Develop a Geographic Information System (GIS) map of osprey occurrences and nests and overlay information on Project facilities, roads, trails, recreation facilities, Project-related dispersed concentrated use areas, and bypass and peaking reaches.
- Overlay osprey GIS information on potential Project betterments.

Northern Goshawk

- Obtain USDA-FS GIS data layers of northern goshawk land allocations (i.e., protected activity centers (PACs)) and detections in the study area.
- Develop a GIS map of northern goshawk land allocations and known occurrences and overlay information on Project facilities, roads, trails, recreation facilities, and Project-related dispersed concentrated use areas.
- Overlay northern goshawk GIS information on potential Project betterments.
- Determine if Project operations and maintenance activities are consistent with USDA-FS land allocation desired conditions.

California Spotted Owl

- Obtain USDA-FS GIS data layers of California spotted owl land allocations (i.e., PACs and Home Range Core Areas (HRCAs)) and detections in the study area.
- Develop a GIS map of California spotted owl land allocations and known occurrences and overlay information on Project facilities, roads, trails, recreation facilities, and Project-related dispersed concentrated use areas.
- Overlay California spotted owl GIS information on potential Project betterments.
- Determine if Project operations and maintenance activities are consistent with USDA-FS land allocation desired conditions.

Willow Flycatcher

- Obtain USDA-FS data layers documenting potential willow flycatcher nesting habitat, including riparian habitats and wet meadows in the study area.
- Develop a GIS map of potential willow flycatcher nesting habitat and overlay information on Project facilities, roads, trails, recreation facilities, Project-related dispersed concentrated use areas, and bypass and peaking reaches.
- Overlay willow flycatcher GIS information on potential Project betterments.

Mesocarnivores

- Obtain a GIS map of USDA-FS land allocations (forest carnivore den sites) and detections of American marten and Pacific fisher in the study area.
- Develop GIS map of USDA-FS mesocarnivore land allocations and known occurrences and overlay information on Project facilities, roads, trails, recreation facilities, and Project-related dispersed concentrated use areas.
- Overlay mesocarnivore GIS information on potential Project betterments.
- Determine if Project operations and maintenance activities are consistent with USDA-FS land allocation desired conditions.

SCHEDULE:

To be developed in early 2007.

REFERENCES:

Mayer, K.E., and W.F. Laudenslayer. 1988. A Guide to Wildlife Habitats of California. State of California, Department of Fish and Game. Sacramento, CA.

Placer County Water Agency (PCWA). 2006. Middle Fork American River Hydroelectric Project (FERC No. 2079) Draft Existing Resource Information Report, First Series. June 2006.