

Washington State Department of Transportation Wildlife Discipline Report Template

Project Name

Prepared for:

Washington State Department of Transportation
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Executive Summary

Description of Alternatives

Methodology

Affected Environment

Environmental Consequences

Effects of Build Alternative(s)

Effects of No-Build Alternative

Significant Unavoidable Adverse Effects

Acronyms and Abbreviations

Glossary of Technical Terms

Wildlife Discipline Report

1 Introduction

Describe the overall purpose of the project, and provide a brief summary of the project objectives. Describe any changes in operations that will occur.

Describe the general location of the project, and provide a vicinity map showing its location.

This section can be standardized and repeated in multiple reports.

2 Description of Alternatives

Provide a project description. For each alternative, describe the primary and secondary project features, construction sequencing and equipment, timing of construction, phasing of construction, earthwork, best management practices, stormwater treatment, in-water work, over-water work, and work windows. Quantify by habitat type the areas in which permanent and temporary clearing will occur.

The description of alternatives should be the same for all reports, with only minor modifications as needed to address the specific topic of the discipline report.

3 Methodology

Methods of Analysis

Describe the general methods of analysis (in-office research/preliminary analysis and field verification). Include descriptions of background data research, field verification, the use of geographic information system (GIS) data, and the preparation of base maps.

Provide the date(s) of the site visit(s), describe the conditions at the time of the site visit(s), and indicate the protocols and field methods used for surveys. Unless otherwise directed, use the protocol recommended by the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) for evaluating wildlife habitat on WSDOT projects. For any surveys completed, specify the area of the survey and clearly state the results. Include simple plan sheets providing an overview of the alignment relative to sensitive areas and habitat (clearly depict the existing conditions and proposed design). Include resource-

specific maps and aerial photographs as appropriate. Include on-the-ground photographs of the project study area as appropriate.

Studies and Coordination

Consult local critical areas maps and state database resources. Download species lists or information for the appropriate area from the National Marine Fisheries Service website and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service website, as well as the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife or Washington Department of Natural Resources websites. Communicate with local, state, tribal, and federal experts to learn more about the project area and the resources and habitats in the vicinity of the project. Consult other data and resources (reports, studies, and academic research) as appropriate. Coordinate with the authors of other discipline reports and ensure consistency with the data and terminology included in those reports.

4 Affected Environment

General Habitat Characteristics

Describe the project setting, including the physiographic region, general topography, dominant habitat and vegetation types, nearby water resources, wetlands, mapped soils, and land use types. Ensure consistency with the habitat descriptions in other discipline reports. Provide the name and number of the water resource inventory area and the hydrologic unit code. Provide the specific location of areas (section, township, and range) affected by the project alternatives.

This section could be the same for the fisheries resources, vegetation, and wildlife discipline reports, with minor additions to address the resources of interest.

Wildlife Study Area

Define the project study area. Describe the environmental baseline conditions (focusing on wildlife habitat) within the project study area. Coordinate with the authors of other discipline reports and ensure consistency with the data and terminology included in those reports.

Wildlife Species in Study Area

Presence of Species in Study Area

Based on existing data sources and field observations as well as the habitat types present, identify all species of wildlife that are known to occur or have the potential to occur in the project study area. Generally describe the habitat requirements and ecology of these species. Provide enough information to support the impact analysis. Discuss the local status of the species as appropriate.

Use of Wildlife Habitats in Study Area

Describe potential suitable habitat in the project study area and how local populations use it. It is important to note that many species of wildlife have large ranges; therefore, the study area may include a migration corridor or habitat connectivity area for various species, as well as suitable foraging or reproductive habitat.

Special Status Wildlife Species in Study Area

Presence of Species in Study Area

Based on existing data sources and field observations, identify any state or federally listed species, proposed species, candidate species, or species of concern, and designated or proposed critical habitat that is known to occur or has the potential to occur in the project study area. Identify bird species of concern that are also protected by the Migratory Bird Treaty Act. Generally describe the habitat requirements and ecology of these species. Provide enough information to support any conclusions related to impacts on the habitat, ecology, or populations of these species. Discuss the local status of the species as appropriate.

Use of Wildlife Habitats in Study Area

Describe potential suitable habitat in the project study area and how local wildlife populations use it.

5 Environmental Consequences

The level of analysis should be commensurate with the level of impact. An analysis should be provided for each project alternative. Characterize by habitat type the areas in which temporary or permanent clearing will occur, and discuss whether species are likely to be affected.

Build Alternative(s)

Information regarding the effects during construction and the effects during operation should be provided for each project alternative. Identify the specific build alternative in the section heading, followed by the applicable information. Provide as many build alternative sections as necessary to address all the project alternatives.

Effects during Construction

Direct Effects

Describe and analyze the potential direct effects of construction on the species, its suitable habitat, and food resources. Quantify both temporary and permanent impacts if possible. Describe how the environmental baseline conditions will be affected.

Impact Minimization Measures

Identify measures that will be implemented to minimize specific anticipated impacts. As appropriate, provide recommendations for reducing or preventing adverse environmental effects. Ensure that measures included in the report have been discussed and approved by the WSDOT project team.

Mitigation

If impacts are unavoidable, describe in detail how these impacts will be mitigated or offset. Ensure that measures included in the report have been discussed and approved by the WSDOT project team. Monitoring requirements should be clearly stated so they can be incorporated into the project designs or contracts as appropriate.

Indirect Effects

Describe and analyze the potential indirect effects (those that would occur later in time) such as impacts on future food resources or habitat or impacts due to increased human access or project-induced growth.

Impact Minimization Measures (if applicable)

Mitigation (if applicable)

Effects during Operation

See guidance provided above for construction impacts.

Direct Effects

Impact Minimization Measures

Mitigation

Indirect Effects

Impact Minimization Measures

Mitigation

Cumulative Effects

Identify species or populations within the project study area that are vulnerable to cumulative effects of past, present, and future actions that are reasonably certain to occur, including the proposed project. Analyze the incremental effects on wildlife and habitat.

The NEPA regulations (40 CFR 1508.7) define cumulative impact as “the impact on the environment which results from the incremental impact of the action when added to other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions regardless of what agency (Federal or non-Federal) or person undertakes such other actions. Cumulative impacts can result from individually minor but collectively significant actions taking place over a period of time.” Note that this definition differs from that in the Endangered Species Act.

No-Build Alternative

Summarize impacts associated with the no-build alternative.

6 Significant Unavoidable Adverse Effects

Define what constitutes a significant impact for each unavoidable adverse impact.

Significant Effects of Build Alternative(s)

In a separate section for each build alternative, identify and describe the significant effects of the particular alternative.

7 References

For every reference cited in the text and the appendices of the discipline report, provide a complete reference list entry.

Attachment A
Habitat Data Sheets

Attachment A: Habitat Data Sheets

Include all data sheets used to characterize habitat within the project study area.

Attachment B
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Species List

Attachment B: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Species List

Include a summary or list of wildlife identified in the project study area.

Attachment C

**National Marine Fisheries Service
Species List**

Attachment C: National Marine Fisheries Service Species List

Include a summary or list of species identified in the project study area. Include marine mammals and turtles, if applicable.

Attachment D

Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife Priority Habitats and Species Database

Attachment D: Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife Priority Habitats and Species Database

Include a summary or list of priority habitats and species identified in the project study area. DO NOT include information that would identify the specific location of these sensitive areas.

Exhibits

Exhibits