



UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS

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G-3/5 AVN
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From: Director, G-3/5 Aviation, Marine Corps Installations West, Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton
To: Operations Support Group Manager, Federal Aviation Administration Western Service Center,
2200 South 216th Street, Des Moines, WA 98198-6547 (Attn: Mr. Shawn Kozica)

Subj: 2019 SUPPLEMENTAL TECHNICAL EVALUATION, PLAYAS TRAINING AND
RESEARCH CENTER TEMPORARY MILITARY OPERATIONS AREA

Ref: (a) Playas Temporary Special Use Airspace Proposal, September 2019

Encl: (1) Playas TRAP CERTEX Supplemental Technical Analysis, May 2019

1. In May 2019 the U.S. Marine Corps (USMC) prepared a Supplemental Technical Analysis for activities proposed at Playas Temporary Military Operating Area (MOA) based on a June 2017 USMC Environmental Analysis (EA) for the Tactical Recovery of Aircraft and Personnel (TRAP) Certification Exercise (CERTEX) at Playas Training and Research Center, NM. The Supplemental Technical Analysis, provided as the Enclosure, is based largely on the USMC's Playas TRAP CERTEX EA (June 2017) and associated Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) (August 2017), and the USMC's Playas TRAP CERTEX Supplemental Analysis (SA) (July 2018) and associated FAA FONSI (July 2018). The FAA accepted Cooperating Agency status on 28 September 18.

2. The proposal to activate the Playas Temporary MOA is in support of a joint USMC-US Air Force (USAF) training and readiness certification exercise for the Tactical Recovery of Aircraft and Personnel (TRAP) mission. Visual Flight Rules operations would include transport, fighter jet, tilt-rotor, and rotary wing aircraft flight operations and parachute drops. Proposed aerial activities would consist of typical MOA flight operations, which include tactical combat maneuvering by fighter jet and tilt-rotor aircraft involving abrupt, unpredictable changes in altitude, attitude, and direction of flight. Details are provided in the Enclosure. Aircraft/sorties proposed for the August exercise are as follows:

AIRCRAFT TYPE	NUMBER OF AIRCRAFT
V-22 Osprey	2
F/A-18 Hornet/ F-16C Eagle / or F-35 JSF	2
A-10C Warthog	4
HH-60G Blackhawk	2
HC-130J Hercules	1

3. The Marine Corps has determined the environmental analysis presented in the USMC's 2017 EA and 2018 SA sufficiently addresses the activities proposed for the Playas Temporary MOA in the August 2019 exercise. The activities analyzed in the 2017 EA and 2018 SA are similar to the activities proposed for the August 2019 exercise. Due to the similarity of proposed activities, impacts from the proposed August 2019 exercise activities at Playas Temporary MOA would be

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very similar or less than the impacts described in previous NEPA documentation by both the USMC and USAF for each environmental impact category. The USMC's 2018 noise analysis results, presented in Ldnmr and DNL at the request of the FAA, are referenced in the Enclosure with no new inputs or data applied. Noise levels during the August 2019 exercise are anticipated to be 44 Ldnmr and 44 Ldn (aka DNL) and 54 Leg, or lower, which is less than the 65 DNL significant impact criteria established by the FAA. The USAF has also requested activation of the Playas Temporary MOA, the same area activated in the 2017 and 2018 pilot recovery exercises, from 10-24 August 2019.

4. Consultation with the New Mexico State Historic Preservation Office (NM-SHPO) was completed in May 2019 per the Enclosure. The NM-SHPO concurred with the USMC's determination the August 2019 Playas TRAP CERTEX has "no potential to effect" historic properties, which is consistent with similar determinations made by the NM-SHPO for similar military training exercises conducted in the past.

5. Should you or your staff have further questions, my point of contact for this action is Major Julio Gonzalez, Regional Airspace Coordinator, Marine Corps Installations-West, Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton, at julio.c.gonzalez@usmc.mil or Mr. Zachery Likins, Regional Environmental Planner, Marine Corps Installations-West, Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton, at zachery.likins@usmc.mil.

J. K. LAVINE

PLAYAS TEMPORARY MILITARY OPERATING AREA SUPPLEMENTAL TECHNICAL ANALYSIS

SUMMARY: This Supplemental Technical Analysis (STA), and its associated enclosures, outline the specifics regarding the United States Marine Corps' (Marine Corps or USMC) Proposed Action; implementation/establishment of Special Use Airspace (temporary Military Operating Area, or "tMOA") by the federal Aviation Administration (FAA) in support of a Special Purpose Marine Air Ground Task Force, Crisis Response - Central Command (SPMAGTF CR-CC) *Tactical Recovery of Aircraft and Personnel ("TRAP")* Certification Exercise (CERTEX) (20.1)(aka, August 2019 TRAP CERTEX).

The Proposed Action (August 2019 TRAP CERTEX), a pre-deployment military training exercise, will be conducted in the airspace above (and on the ground) at the Playas Training and Research Center (PTRC) in Playas, New Mexico. The Proposed Action described herein (establish a tMOA above/atop the PTRC) (aka, Playas tMOA) will host day and/or night recovery force insertion and extraction operations during a 5-hour exercise event window between 26 and 30 August 2019. The exact 5-hour event window will be determined not later than 1 July 2019.

As discussed below, the Marine Corps is proposing to conduct similar TRAP CERTEX pre-deployment military exercises twice annually over the next several years (2019-2024) at the PTRC, with the first of such events planned for 26-30 August 2019. The Marine Corps has incorporated by reference herein past NEPA documentation, including both the USMC most recent studies, as well as the USAF, as appropriate (Reference 9, USMC 2017 Playas TRAP CERTEX EA; Reference 10, 2018 TRAP CERTEX Supplemental Analysis, and; Reference 11, USAF Red Flag Rescue Supplemental Analysis (Red Flag Rescue SA) (February 2018) in support of their very similar pilot rescue/recovery operations to be conducted in August 2019 at the PTRC.

These three documents, in particular, form the basis our assessment of the potential environmental effects of the Proposed Action to all FAA required environmental impact (resource) categories, individually, as well as cumulatively. With each additional exercise conducted, a fresh, "hard look" (under NEPA) at the activities proposed reinforces existing analyses to ensure accuracy, consistency and completeness, in compliance with federal regulations, not only by the action proponent, but by the approving agency itself (i.e., FAA, in this instance). Each agency, independently, has reached similar conclusions when evaluating both current and past proposed actions (i.e., pilot rescue operations). At its essence, both the USMC and USAF pilot rescue/recovery operations are necessarily very similar, since both agency must coordinate its respective personnel, equipment and actions to ensure a safe and successful training exercise, both in the air and on the ground. Each activity, and the resulting

determinations/conclusions reached by the USMC, USAF, FAA, and supporting agencies like the New Mexico State Historic Preservation Office (NM-SHPO), has been consistent in its final determination on “no significant impact”. This is largely due to the similarity (type, scale, nature, purpose and intent) of the training proposed; pilot rescue/recovery.

As discussed later in this document (Pages 7-12), the Marine Corps has assessed the potential impacts of implementing the Playas tMOA and conducting pilot rescue/recovery operations on the ground at the PTRC and has determined there are no substantive changes to the Proposed Action, and therefore no changes to all previously analyzed environmental impact (resource) categories (Reference 9-11), including both cultural and biological resources, as mentioned below.

INTRODUCTION: On 28 September 2018, the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) accepted the USMCs request to participate as a Cooperating Agency (Reference 8) in the development of this Supplemental Technical Analysis (STA), in accordance with the guidelines set forth in Reference (1), (40 CFR Section 1501.6), the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the FAA and the Department of Defense (DoD) Concerning Special Use Airspace (SUA) Environmental Actions, dated 4 October 2005, and FAA Order 7400.2L, Chapter 32, Appendix 8 – FAA Special Use Airspace Environmental Processing Procedures (Reference 2), which outline the process by which the FAA works with the DOD as a cooperating agency on projects involving Special Use Airspace (SUA) issues.

This 2019 Playas TRAP CERTEX Supplemental Technical Analysis (STA), with supporting documentation (Enclosures a and b), have been developed in compliance with References 2-7 of this document. These references include, but are not limited to the: National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA) (Public Law 91-190, 42 United States Code (U.S.C.) Sections 4321 - 4347), as amended (42 United States Code (U.S.C.) § 4321, et seq.); the “Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) Regulations for Implementing the Procedural Provisions of the NEPA” (40 C.F.R. Parts 1500 -15080); the US Air Force “Environmental Impact Analysis Process” (EIAP) (32 C.F.R. Part 989), and; Marine Corps Order 5090.2 v12.

As a Cooperating Agency (Reference 8), the FAA previously reviewed all NEPA documentation (References 9-11), including the most recent Red Flag Rescue SA prepared by the USAF, for consistency, comparison and to ensure compliance with FAA Order 1050.1F. The August 2019 Playas *TRAP CERTEX* STA tiers-off of, and supplements the listed References (9-11) and Enclosures a and b, where appropriate, with particular focus on the noise and air quality analyses conducted by the USMC (Reference 10, July 2018 Noise and Air Quality Analysis) and USAF (Reference 11).

PROPOSED ACTION: The Marine Corps is requesting the FAA implement a temporary Military Operating Area (tMOA) above Playas, New Mexico (i.e., Playas tMOA), to separate

nonhazardous military exercise activities from Instrument Flight Rules (IFR) traffic and identify to Visual Flight Rules (VFR) traffic where this short-term exercise event will be conducted.

FAA implementation of Playas tMOA would be in support of the USMCs *Tactical Recovery of Aircraft and Personnel* ("TRAP") pre-deployment CERTEX (i.e., 20.1) that is typically conducted twice annually; typically in February and August of each year. This same pre-deployment training schedule is expected to continue (twice annually) each year through FY 2024, subject to funding availability/constraints, training scenario development, availability of military personnel and equipment, as well as the USMCs military operational tempo and FAA approval of the Playas tMOA. The August 2019 Playas TRAP CERTEX (20.1) is a Commanding General, I Marine Expeditionary Force (I MEF) directed, pre-deployment training exercise scheduled for 26-30 August 2019 at the PTRC military readiness training facility in Playas, New Mexico.

ACTION PROPONENT/SPONSOR: The United States Marine Corps, 1st Marine Expeditionary Force (I MEF), Expeditionary Operations Training Group (EOTG) is responsible for the planning and execution of this exercise. Point of Contact: LtCol Thomas Kisch, I MEF Deputy Assistance Chief of Staff (AC/S) G-7, EOTG (Work – 760.725.9222) (Cell – 419.508.7744) (E-mail - thomas.kisch@usmc.mil).

The USMC, as an entity of the United States Government, is a self-insuring agency; therefore, if any service member during the scope of their employment causes either property damage or personal injury to a third party, the United States Government will compensate the injured third party through either the Military Claims Act or the Federal Tort Claims Act. The USMC will be responsible for processing any claims against the government.

PURPOSE OF AND NEED FOR THE PROPOSED ACTION: The purpose of the military exercise is to provide the Special Purpose Marine Air Ground Task Force, Crisis Response - Central Command (SPMAGTF CR-CC) an opportunity to conduct training in an unfamiliar environment during the final phase of its pre-deployment training program. During CERTEX 20.1, SPMAGTF CR-CC will be required to conduct a series of challenging and realistic training events to test its ability to conduct conventional and specialized missions, in cooperation with the USAF.

PROPOSED ACTION LOCATION (Action Area): The Playas MOA is a 20 NM X 20 NM box (airspace) from 300 feet above the surface up to but not including FL180 that sits atop the Playas Training and Research Center, in Playas, New Mexico. The proposed Playas tMOA boundary is N 32°10'43"/W 108°42'48" to N 32°09'20"/W 108°19'29" to N 31°49'32"/W 108°21'06" to N 31°50'49"/W 108°44'26" to the point of beginning. Reasonable and timely aerial access below 1,200' AGL to private and public land below the proposed Playas tMOA by general aviation aircraft will not be restricted.

The Playas tMOA is adjacent to and connects with the long established Tombstone A, B, and C MOAs (Tombstone MOA complex) in southeastern Arizona (AZ). The Tombstone MOA complex

scheduling unit is USAF 355 OSS/OSOS, who has concurred with the Marine Corps intended exercise period. The area below the proposed Playas TMOA is open, isolated and sparsely populated high desert range land, both public (Bureau of Land Management, or BLM) and private, with few settlements; residential or otherwise. Regardless of published Playas tMOA altitudes, FAR 91.119 minimum safe altitudes will be observed by all participating military aircraft. Additionally, the Playas airport, which is part of the PTRCs facilities, is located just north of the main PTRC complex of buildings and paved roadways (residential areas), and will be closed to all non-participating aircraft during the 5-hour exercise event window.

As stated previously, the Playas tMOA (as defined by the Marine Corps' Aeronautical Proposal (Reference 8) lies immediately above/atop the PTRC training facility, which is located approximately 20 miles (32 Km) south of Interstate-10, and approximately 60 miles (97 Km) north of the United States/Mexico border. The nearest small towns/communities are Animas (population 240 residents), located approximately 18 miles (29Km) miles west, and Hachita (population 50 residents) located approximately 14 miles (22.5 Km) east of PTRC (Figure 1, Page 2 of the 2017 Playas TRAP CERTEX EA; Reference 9).

PROPOSED ACTION DESCRIPTION:

The scheduled August 2019 TRAP CERTEX will require select members of the United States Marine Corps and United States Air Force to plan and execute Tactical Recovery of Aircraft and Personnel (*TRAP*) in order to recover downed pilot(s) located at a training site in/beneath Playas tMOA. The proposed scheduling times for this training event is a 5-hour block (event window) sometime between 1130AM and 2330PM Mountain Standard Time (MST) on 26 August 2019 and 30 August 2019. Two dates have been identified; the primary being 27 August, with 29 August 2019 selected as the back-up.

Proposed aerial activities will include tactical combat maneuvering (basic fighter maneuvers, simulated air-to-ground ordnance delivery, and tactical landing profiles) by fighter and transport category tiltrotor/rotary wing aircraft involving abrupt, unpredictable changes in altitude, attitude, and direction of flight. Non-standard formation flights are possible. There will be no supersonic flights, use of chaff/flares, surface-to-surface or surface-to-air weapons firing, or aerial refueling operations conducted within the proposed Playas temporary MOA.

Aircraft that may operate in the proposed Playas temporary MOA include up to: (2) MV-22 (tilt-rotor Osprey); (2) FA-18C/D (USMC Hornet, [Jet] Fighter), F-16C (USAF Eagle, [Jet] Fighter), or USAF/USMC F-35 (Joint Strike [Jet] Fighter); (4) A-10C (Warthog), (1) HC-130J USAF Super Hercules [Turboprop]) refueling aircraft, and (2) HH-60G (USAF Sikorsky, Black Hawk). The USMCs Aeronautical Proposal (Reference 8) lists all aircraft types potentially participating in the pilot rescue certification exercise. Although all aircraft listed herein, and in the USMCs Aeronautical Proposal (Reference 8) have been included in previous analyses from 2017 and

2018 (References 9 and 10), not all of the aircraft listed may be available for use during conduct of the August 2019 *TRAP CERTEX*.

The Marine Corps Proposed Action, the Tactical Recovery of Aircraft and Personnel Certification Exercise (i.e., August 2019 *TRAP CERTEX*) is a pre-deployment training exercise conducted twice annually. The August 2019 Proposed Action, as noted above, is very similar to previously approved (by the FAA) *TRAP CERTEX* activities that were analyzed in 2017 and 2018 (References 9 and 10). Conducting the August 2019 *TRAP CERTEX* would enable USMC and USAF combat air and ground forces to practice effective inter and intra-service integration of actions, which is critical to the success of real-world combat search and rescue missions. As with the USAF's *Red Flag-Rescue*, a USMC *TRAP CERTEX* is designed to provide personnel recovery training for U.S. combat aircrews, para-rescue teams, survival specialists, intelligence personnel, air battle managers, and medical personnel from the Joint Personnel Recovery Center.

This Supplemental Technical Analysis has re-assessed and re-confirmed the activities proposed for the August 2019 *TRAP CERTEX*, both on the ground within the PTRC and in the air within the Playas tMOA, to ensure they are similar to, and consistent with, past *TRAP CERTEX* activities, and that the potential effects of the activities and actions described herein are consistent with previously executed by the USMC in their 2017 and 2018 *TRAP CERTEX* (References 9 and 10), respectively) and the USAF Red Flag Rescue SA pilot rescue/recovery training actions (Reference 11) that were previously review, approved and adopted (by FONSI/ROD) by the FAA.

Maximum flight ceiling is up to 18,000 feet (FL180) above Mean Sea Level (MSL), and approximately 13,500 feet Above Ground Level (AGL) in the vicinity of (and above) the PTRC. The tMOA floor will be ≈300 feet AGL. Operations may include free-fall and static line parachute operations at all altitudes, non-standard formation flights; rescue escort maneuvering above participating rotary wing aircraft; and close air support.

This Proposed Action is planned for the PTRC because it offers the best and most realistic training scenario available as it most closely resembles an actual urban, residential community with houses, commercial facilities and other types of buildings to support a variety of training scenarios that can include combat rescue and urban warfare training, among other training scenarios, not otherwise available outside a fully populated urban setting. To conduct a *TRAP*, a temporary MOA is necessary to ensure a safe airspace environment, protecting both civil and military aircraft, during conduct of the exercise.

The Proposed Action to be conducted on the ground, within the PTRC, remains as previously described and analyzed in NEPA documentation referenced above (Reference 9, Pages 6-8). The *TRAP* force will consist of up to two (2) teams of combat loaded Marines tactically inserted into an approved (previously certified) Landing Zone (LZ) within the main body of the abandoned town (Figure 3, Page 6, 2018 *PLAYAS TRAP CERTEX* SA; Reference 10).

As mentioned above, and consistent with USMCs Aeronautical Proposal (Reference 9), the Playas tMOA will be needed for only one day between 26 and 30 August 2019. The preferred 5-hour event window is on 27 August 2019, between the hours of 1130AM (local time) and 2330PM (local time). An alternate 5-hour exercise event window has been scheduled for 29 August 2019 (same 5-hour event window), as a back-up. The Playas tMOA will be activated via a Notice to Airman (NOTAM). Only one day of use (both tMOA and the PTRC) is planned for the TRAP CERTEX, based on the training scenario, and will be executed within the established 5-hour exercise event window by some or all of the aircraft listed above. Typically, execution of a TRAP CERTEX, as described previously (references 9 and 10), is completed within 1-2 hours of entering the tMOA.

ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED: The USMC considered conducting the 2019 TRAP CERTEX within the Tombstone, Ruby, Fuzzy and Sells MOAs but these were eliminated from further consideration because realistic ground training infrastructure necessary to conduct required combat rescue training does not exist within them.

The I MEF-EOTG also explored the possibility of executing SPMAGTF-CR-CC 20.1 CERTEX operations within existing training facilities onboard established Marine Corps bases and ranges. While backup training locations and dates have been reserved within Marine Corps Air Station (MCAS) Yuma managed ranges, similar challenging, realistic amenities offered at the Playas Training and Research Center in Playas, NM do not exist on southwestern US Marine Corps installations. Consistent with Chief of Naval Operations guidance, exercise flight operations should be contained within special use airspace or via stationary altitude reservation.

The No Action Alternative reflects the conditions that would exist within the Playas tMOA and at the Playas Training and Research Center (PTRC) without the TRAP CERTEX being conducted. The Affected Environment described in the resource evaluation section of the previously prepared 2017 TRAP CERTEX EA (Reference 9), and reiterated in the 2018 Playas *TRAP CERTEX* SA (Reference 10), accurately reflects (discusses and analyzes) the conditions for the No-Action Alternative for/of this Supplemental Technical Analysis (Reference 9).

AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT: The Marine Corps reviewed previously approved NEPA documentation developed by the USMC and USAF (References 9-11), and their associated FAA Finding(s) of No Significant Impact (FONSIs), to validate the analyses previously conducted by the Marine Corps (Reference 10, Pg. 10-20) and Air Force (Reference 11, Pages 4-10). The USMC's 2017 Playas TRAP CERTEX EA (Reference 9, June 2017) previously evaluated the potential effects of the Proposed Action on 14 environmental impact (resource) categories, as identified in FAA Order 1050.1F. The FAA subsequently validated with the USMC conclusions in August 2017 and 2018 (References 9 and 10).

All Environmental (resource) impact categories were considered and evaluated per FAA orders, if they were applicable and relevant. The following environmental impact (resource) categories were considered by both the USMC and USAF, in accordance with CEQ and FAA regulations, and were determined to have negligible to no effect(s) on the human and/or natural environment, either individually and cumulatively: land use; DOT, Section 4(f); socioeconomics; environmental justice; climate change; coastal resources; farmlands; hazardous materials, hazardous waste and solid waste; natural resources/ energy supply; visual effects/light emissions (aesthetics), and; water resources/water quality/wetlands/wild and scenic rivers (References 9 and 10), and both cultural and biological resources (Enclosures a and b), and discussed below.

Cultural Resources. At the request of the FAA, the Marine Corps consulted with the New Mexico State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO). Consultation was initiated late April 2019 and concluded 7 May 2019 (Enclosure a). The NM-SHPO concurred with the Marine Corps determination that no historic properties would be affected by the Proposed Action, which is consistent with their determination that no historic properties would be affected by the USAFs Red-Flag Rescue (August 2019, Reference 11) activities also proposed for August 2019. Both these determinations are consistent with previous NM-SHPO determinations reached in 2017 and 2018 for this same type of training event at the PTRC ((References 9 and 10).

It should be noted, the New Mexico State Historic Preservation Office has consistently concurred with, not only the USMCs “no potential to effect” determinations (2017, 2018 and again in 2019) for its Playas TRAP CERTEX military training exercises (References 9 and 10) and with the USAFs’ “no potential to effect” determination for their August 2019 Red Flag Rescue pilot rescue training exercise (Reference 11).

Biological Resources. As with USMC and/or USAF planned activities in past years within the Playas tMOA and at the PTRC, the Marine Corps conducted an analysis of the Proposed Action (i.e., TRAP CERTEX requiring implementation of a tMOA) to determine if, and to what extent, Federally-listed species in the Playas area may be potentially affected, both within the Playas tMOA (action area) and on/in lands surrounding the PTRC. The Marine Corps determined no Federally-listed threatened and endangered species would be potentially affected by the Proposed Action discussed herein (Enclosure b). This is consistent with past conclusions reached by the Marine Corps in both 2017 and 2018 (References 9 and 10), as well as those determinations made by/between the USAF and FAA regarding the *Red Flag Rescue* training actions to be conducted at the PTRC (and within the Playas tMOA) (Reference 11) in August 2019.

Resource Areas Considered and Evaluated

The USMC reviewed the Playas TRAP CERTEX EA (June 2017) ((References 9), as well as the most recent USAF *Red Flag-Rescue Supplemental Analysis* (27 February 2018) (References 11) to re-assess and re-validate the analysis conducted previously for similar (type and scale) activities. As a result, this Supplemental Technical Analysis carries forward the following environmental (resource) impact categories, incorporating by reference, where appropriate: airspace, noise and air quality.

Airspace –

Affected Environment. In order for the Marine Corps to execute the activities described herein (i.e., August 2019 *TRAP CERTEX*), the Playas tMOA would be activated by the FAA via NOTAM above the PTRC, where the ground component of the pilot search and rescue training would take place. As noted in the 2017 *TRAP CERTEX EA* (Page 13), several Victor Routes (V66, V-16, V16-66 [T 306] and V198) traverse the Playas MOA (2017 Playas *TRAP CERTEX EA*, Figure 3, and Page 5) and discussed in the USAFs Red Flag Rescue Supplemental Analysis (Reference 10).

Environmental Consequences. Activation of the Playas tMOA by the FAA would be in effect by NOTAM during the time periods that aircraft operations in support of the pilot search and rescue (*TRAP*) training will take place. Activation of the Playas tMOA for one 5-hour exercise event window on a single day between 26 and 30 August 2019 would not measurably affect the above mentioned flight routes that are used by the general aviation community, nor general aviation use of the Playas airspace itself.

Noise –

Affected Environment. As described in the 2017 Playas *TRAP CERTEX EA* (Page 13) (References 9) and the 2018 Playas *TRAP CERTEX SA with Noise/Air Quality Study* (Reference 10), and as amplified subsequently by the USAF NEPA documentation approved and adopted by the FAA in March 2019 (Reference 11), normal aircraft activities that occur in the regional airspace are generally a mix of private (general aviation); local, state or other federal agency; or military aircraft. These existing sources of noise are consistent with known, FAA-approved flight routes and are typical for small, rural, and/or outlying airspace use, with resulting in aircraft noise being episodic in nature.

As previously noted (References 9-11), and mentioned again in the description of the Proposed Action herein (August 2019 *TRAP CERTEX*), there are no formally recognized towns lying under/within the proposed tMOA (action area). There are, however, scattered ranches and/or

agricultural activities in the region, but the vast majority of the area is undeveloped, open-space public lands managed by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM).

Table 1 below identifies typical background noise levels for various land use categories, per the American National Standards Institute (ANSI). The area beneath and surrounding the Playas tMOA is most similar to, and is best described as, a rural or remote area with an estimated ambient DNL of 49 dBA or less.

Environmental Consequences. As noted in previous NEPA documentation prepared by both the Marine Corps and USAF (References 9 - 11) military aircraft utilizing Special Use Airspace (SUA) such as MOAs, including and especially tMOAs, generate a noise environment very different from noise associated with typical airfield operations (e.g., an air base or air station). As opposed to the patterned or continuous noise environments associated with an airfields, flight activity in SUA is highly sporadic and often seasonal ranging from a few flights per hour to less than one per week. Individual military overflight events also differ from typical airfield noise events in that noise from a low-altitude, high-air-speed flyover can have a higher onset of noise, exhibiting a rate of increase in sound level.

The metric used for portraying noise levels for aircraft operations in Special Use Airspace, and used for analyzing their impacts, is the “Onset Rate-Adjusted Monthly Day-Night Sound Level”, depicted by the symbol L_{dnmr} . The Onset Rate-Adjusted Monthly Day-Night Sound Level metric is similar to the “day night level represented by the symbols L_{dn} , or DNL, used at military and civilian airfields, in that it includes the same 10 decibel (dB) penalty (i.e., adjustment) for aircraft operations occurring after 10 PM at night (References 9 and 10).

TABLE 1 – ESTIMATED BACKGROUND NOISE LEVELS

Example Land Use Category	Average Residential Intensity (people per acre)	DNL (dBA)
Rural or remote areas	<2	<49
Quiet suburban residential	2	49
	4	52
	4.5	52
Quiet urban residential	9	55
Quiet commercial, industrial, and normal urban residential	16	58
	20	59

Source: ANSI 2013. Quantities and Procedures for Description and Measurement of Environmental Sound.

However, because flight operations in MOAs may result in noise levels increasing rapidly for a short period of time, another adjustment may be incorporated to account for the high onset rate of aircraft noise (sometimes referred to as the “surprise” effect). Aircraft events exhibiting a high onset rate are assessed a penalty ranging from 0-11 dB. The Ldnmr is calculated from the month with the most aircraft operations because airspace activity varies more than airfield activity (Reference 10 and 11).

All noise metrics are weighted. Weighted sound levels have been shown to correlate moderately well with the human response to noise to emphasize the range of the frequency spectrum. When A- weighting is applied to noise levels, very high and very low sound frequencies that are outside the range of human hearing are screened out, thereby weighting the sound to reflect what people actually hear. All metrics (Ldn and Ldnmr) used for aircraft noise are A-weighted (References 10 and 11).

The modeling of aircraft operations for the USMCs 2018 *TRAP CERTEX*, and more recently, for the USAFs Red Flag-Rescue activities, was performed using Military Operating Area and Range Noise Model (MR_NMAP) modeling software, as described in the noise studies included within References 10 and 11. The modeling includes operations associated with both the Marine Corps TRAP CERTEXs and USAF Red Flag-Rescue training events occurring at the PTRC, thereby ensuring the cumulative noise impacts of both training exercises are captured.

Based on the modeling results of the USAF noise analysis conducted in February 2018 for their Red Flag-Rescue training events, in conjunction with the results of the noise analysis conducted in 2018 by the Marine Corps for its 2018 Playas TRAP CERTEX, and given the lack of noise sensitive receptors and existing land uses beneath the Playas tMOA, the Proposed Action described herein would not have a significant impact on the environment. See Table 3 of the USAFs noise analysis conducted for Red Flag-Rescue ((Reference 11), and in Table 2-3, Page 2-2 of the Marine Corps July 2018 Noise and Air Quality Study (Appendix c, Page 27 of Reference 10).

Mitigation for Noise. Public comments were received previously by the FAA pertained to low flying aircraft (overflights) transiting the region, perhaps even to and from the PTRC in previous training exercises. These comments addressed aircraft noise disturbing the natural peace of rural, remote settings, and in creating potential hazards when local ranchers work with live stock. Although these few comments came from a public located (e.g., Casabel Conservation Area) over ninety miles from the proposed Playas temporary MOA, the FAA previously considered such public comments when implementing the Playas tMOA in support of military training exercises at the PTRC. As a result, the FAA previously recommended a 500’ AGL

minimum altitude when transiting to and from the PRTC area, particularly in the Casabel Conservation and surrounding areas of Arizona, to provide adequate mitigation of their concerns. Both the Marine Corps and Air Force have acknowledged this potential noise effect and are voluntarily limiting its military aircraft participating in such exercises to remain above 500' AGL in this area.

Air Quality –

Affected Environment. As noted previously in (References 9 - 11), the EPA has designated eight (8) Air Quality Control Regions (AQCR) within the State of New Mexico. Playas and the PRTC are situated in the southwestern part of the New Mexico, within the Arizona-New Mexico Southern Border Intrastate Air Quality Control Region-012 (AQCR-012). AQCR-012 covers an area of approximately 10,374 square miles, and include Grant, Hidalgo and Luna counties. AQCR-012 is currently in full attainment status for all monitored criteria pollutants; both gaseous and particulate matter air contaminants. At present, only Particulate Matter-10 (PM-10) contaminants are being monitored during and after major storm and wind events.

Environmental Consequences. Both the Marine Corps and Air Force performed air quality analyses of their respective exercises to assess the potential for air quality impact(s) within the action area, in accordance with the their respective regulatory guidance (MCO 5090.2, Chapter 12, Environmental Planning and Review; Air Force Instruction 32-7040, Air Quality Compliance and Resource Management); and the General Conformity Rule (GCR, 40 CFR 93 Subpart B) (Reference 11).

Based on the attainment status of Hildago and Grant Counties, the requirements of the General Conformity Rule (GCR) are not applicable. None of the estimated emissions associated with the USAF aircraft packages for their Red Flag Rescue (Reference 11) or USMC TRAP CERTEX exercises (References 9 and 10) and the August 2019 Playas TRAP CERTEX, are above the GCR indicators, therefore there will be no significant impact to air quality. Detailed air quality analyses can be found in References 10 and 11.

CUMULATIVE EFFECTS: When taking into consideration the temporary nature of the USMCs planned activities, as well as those addressed in the USAFs Red Flag Rescue military training operations, the Proposed Action (i.e., implementation of the Playas tMOA ISO the USMC 2019 TRAP CERTEX) will not result in a significant cumulative impact (References 9 – 11).

Analysis of the Proposed Action, when considered cumulatively with past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions would not result in adverse and/or significant impacts to noise and/or air quality, nor would it adversely affect biological (fish, wildlife, and/or plants) or cultural resources in the action area.

Based on independent reviews by both the USMC and USAF, and as confirmed independently by the FAA, it has been determined no significant cumulative impacts to any environmental impact (resource) categories would result from the establishment of the Playas tMOA, either in the airspace (Playas tMOA) or on the ground at the PTRC.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT: As accomplished previously via FAA circularization for the Marine Corps' TRAP CERTEX EA (June 2017) and Supplemental Analysis (July 2018), as well as the previous Air Force Red Flag-Rescue aeronautical proposals (e.g., 2018 Red-Flag Rescue at Playas tMOA), circularization of the aeronautical proposal was performed (case number 18-AWP-21NR) from 13 February – 1 April 2019. No public comments were received.

Additionally, The Expeditionary Operations Training Group (EOTG) will coordinate with the I MEF Communication Strategy and Operations Officer (formally Public Affairs Officer) to develop a prepared press release, as necessary, to assist in notifying the public within the area of influence (e.g., Lordsburg, Deming, Animas, Hachita, etc.) within 30 days of the planned August 2019 *TRAP CERTEX* military training exercise(s) to alert the community(s) within and/or immediately adjacent to the Playas tMOA action area, and the PTRC itself.

For any questions pertaining to this USMC 2019 Playas TRAP CERTEX Supplemental Technical Analysis, please contact Mr. Zachery H. Likins by phone (760.763.7948) or email (zachery.likins@usmc.mil).

For any questions pertaining to the USMC 2019 Playas *TRAP CERTEX* Airspace Proposal, please contact Mr. Jeffrey Meeker by phone (760.763.6409) or email (jeffrey.l.meeker1@usmc.mil).

Please respond to this request no later than 30 June 2019. Your support and assistance with/in this exercise will serve a vital role in preparing United States Marines for service overseas.

REFERENCES

- 1) Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the FAA and the Department of Defense (DoD) Concerning Special Use Airspace (SUA) Environmental Actions, 40 CFR Section 1501.6 (4 October 2005).
- 2) Federal Aviation Administration Order JO 7400.2L (Changes 1 & 2), Procedures for Handling Airspace Matters (or Federal Aviation Administration Order JO 7400.2M - Procedures for Handling Airspace Matters).
- 3) National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (Public Law 91- 190, 42 United States Code (U.S.C.) Sections 4321-4370h), as amended (42 United States Code (U.S.C.) § 4321, et seq.)
- 4) Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) Regulations for Implementing the Procedural Provisions of the NEPA (40 C.F.R. Parts 1500 -1508).
- 5) Department of the Navy (DON) Procedures for Implementing National Environmental Policy Act (32 CFR Part 775).
- 6) Marine Corps Order (MCO) P5090.2A. Change 3, dated 26 August 2013, Environmental Compliance and Protection Manual.
- 7) Federal Aviation Administration Order 1050.IF, Ref (b) Environmental Impacts: Policies and Procedures Pursuant to Council on Environmental Quality Regulations.
- 8) USMC Airspace Proposal (Sept 2018), USMC Cooperating Agency Request (14 Sept 2018) and FAA Cooperating Agency Response (28 Sept 2018).
- 9) USMC Playas TRAP CERTX Environmental Assessment (June 2017), and associated Marine Corps (July 2017) and FAA FONSI and ROD (August 2017).
- 10) USMC Playas TRAP CERTX Supplemental Analysis (July 2018), and associated Noise and Air Quality Study, and FAA FONSI and ROD (July 2018).
- 11) USAF Red-Flag Rescue Supplemental Analysis (Feb 2018) and FAA FONSI/ROD (Mar 2019).

ENCLOSURES

- a) New Mexico SHPO Consultation Letter(s); May 2019 (USMC), March 2019 (USAF), and July 2018 (USMC)
- b) Biological Resource Evaluations – MCIWEST Memorandum(s) for Record (2017, 2018 and 2019)

From: [Estes, Bob, DCA](#)
To: [Berry CIV William H](#)
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] RE: USMC TRAP Exercise - Playas Training Site - August 2019
Date: Tuesday, May 7, 2019 8:21:49 AM

OFFICIAL RESPONSE OF THE NEW MEXICO STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER (SHPO)

Dear Mr. Berry,

On behalf of the SHPO, I have completed a review of the information you sent concerning CERTEX at the Playas TMOA.

The undertaking has no potential to affect historic properties, and no additional work is necessary to comply with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act.

If you have any questions or comments, please feel free to call me directly at 505-827-4225 or email me.

Sincerely,

Bob Estes Ph.D.
NM HPD Staff archaeologist
407 Galisteo St., Suite 236
Santa Fe, NM 87501
505-827-4225

-----Original Message-----

From: Berry CIV William H [<mailto:william.h.berry@usmc.mil>]
Sent: Tuesday, April 30, 2019 11:59 AM
To: Estes, Bob, DCA
Subject: [EXT] USMC TRAP Exercise - Playas Training Site - August 2019

Dr. Estes:

The United States Marine Corps is proposing to conduct a pilot rescue training operation at the Playas Training Site in SW New Mexico in late August 2019.

Attached is a description of the proposed action.

This exercise will be virtually identical to Marine Corps training operations at the same location conducted in August 2018 and August 2017.

You rendered a No Effects to Historic Properties for both the 2018 and 2017 exercises.

Your determination of No Effects to Historic Properties for the proposed 2019 operation will be greatly appreciated.

If you have any questions please don't hesitate to ask.

I am happy to provide copies of correspondence from the 2017 and 2018 exercises.

Very respectfully,

Bill Berry
Regional Conservation Program Manager
Marine Corps Installations West
760-763-7947

Enclosure 2, Attachment 2



United States Department of the Interior



FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
New Mexico Ecological Services Field Office
2105 Osuna Road Ne
Albuquerque, NM 87113-1001
Phone: (505) 346-2525 Fax: (505) 346-2542
<http://www.fws.gov/southwest/es/NewMexico/>
http://www.fws.gov/southwest/es/ES_Lists_Main2.html

In Reply Refer To:

April 30, 2019

Consultation Code: 02ENNM00-2018-SLI-0960

Event Code: 02ENNM00-2019-E-01510

Project Name: USMC IMEF CERTEX TRAP at Playas Training and Research Center

Subject: Updated 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:

Thank you for your recent request for information on federally listed species and important wildlife habitats that may occur in your project area. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) has responsibility for certain species of New Mexico wildlife under the Endangered Species Act (ESA) of 1973 as amended (16 USC 1531 et seq.), the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA) as amended (16 USC 701-715), and the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act (BGEPA) as amended (16 USC 668-668c). We are providing the following guidance to assist you in determining which federally imperiled species may or may not occur within your project area and to recommend some conservation measures that can be included in your project design.

FEDERALLY-LISTED SPECIES AND DESIGNATED CRITICAL HABITAT

Attached is a list of endangered, threatened, and proposed species that may occur in your project area. Your project area may not necessarily include all or any of these species. Under the ESA, it is the responsibility of the Federal action agency or its designated representative to determine if a proposed action "may affect" endangered, threatened, or proposed species, or designated critical habitat, and if so, to consult with the Service further. Similarly, it is the responsibility of the Federal action agency or project proponent, not the Service, to make "no effect" determinations. If you determine that your proposed action will have "no effect" on threatened or endangered species or their respective critical habitat, you do not need to seek concurrence with the Service. Nevertheless, it is a violation of Federal law to harm or harass any federally-listed threatened or endangered fish or wildlife species without the appropriate permit.

If you determine that your proposed action may affect federally-listed species, consultation with the Service will be necessary. Through the consultation process, we will analyze information contained in a biological assessment that you provide. If your proposed action is associated with Federal funding or permitting, consultation will occur with the Federal agency under section 7(a)(2) of the ESA. Otherwise, an incidental take permit pursuant to section 10(a)(1)(B) of the ESA (also known as a habitat conservation plan) is necessary to harm or harass federally listed threatened or endangered fish or wildlife species. In either case, there is no mechanism for authorizing incidental take "after-the-fact." For more information regarding formal consultation and HCPs, please see the Service's Consultation Handbook and Habitat Conservation Plans at www.fws.gov/endangered/esa-library/index.html#consultations.

The scope of federally listed species compliance not only includes direct effects, but also any interrelated or interdependent project activities (e.g., equipment staging areas, offsite borrow material areas, or utility relocations) and any indirect or cumulative effects that may occur in the action area. The action area includes all areas to be affected, not merely the immediate area involved in the action. Large projects may have effects outside the immediate area to species not listed here that should be addressed. If your action area has suitable habitat for any of the attached species, we recommend that species-specific surveys be conducted during the flowering season for plants and at the appropriate time for wildlife to evaluate any possible project-related impacts.

Candidate Species and Other Sensitive Species

A list of candidate and other sensitive species in your area is also attached. Candidate species and other sensitive species are species that have no legal protection under the ESA, although we recommend that candidate and other sensitive species be included in your surveys and considered for planning purposes. The Service monitors the status of these species. If significant declines occur, these species could potentially be listed. Therefore, actions that may contribute to their decline should be avoided.

Lists of sensitive species including State-listed endangered and threatened species are compiled by New Mexico state agencies. These lists, along with species information, can be found at the following websites:

Biota Information System of New Mexico (BISON-M): www.bison-m.org

New Mexico State Forestry. The New Mexico Endangered Plant Program:
www.emnrd.state.nm.us/SFD/ForestMgt/Endangered.html

New Mexico Rare Plant Technical Council, New Mexico Rare Plants: nmrareplants.unm.edu

Natural Heritage New Mexico, online species database: nhnm.unm.edu

WETLANDS AND FLOODPLAINS

Under Executive Orders 11988 and 11990, Federal agencies are required to minimize the destruction, loss, or degradation of wetlands and floodplains, and preserve and enhance their natural and beneficial values. These habitats should be conserved through avoidance, or mitigated to ensure that there would be no net loss of wetlands function and value.

We encourage you to use the National Wetland Inventory (NWI) maps in conjunction with ground-truthing to identify wetlands occurring in your project area. The Service's NWI program website, www.fws.gov/wetlands/Data/Mapper.html integrates digital map data with other resource information. We also recommend you contact the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers for permitting requirements under section 404 of the Clean Water Act if your proposed action could impact floodplains or wetlands.

MIGRATORY BIRDS

The MBTA prohibits the taking of migratory birds, nests, and eggs, except as permitted by the Service's Migratory Bird Office. To minimize the likelihood of adverse impacts to migratory birds, we recommend construction activities occur outside the general bird nesting season from March through August, or that areas proposed for construction during the nesting season be surveyed, and when occupied, avoided until the young have fledged.

We recommend review of Birds of Conservation Concern at website www.fws.gov/migratorybirds/CurrentBirdIssues/Management/BCC.html to fully evaluate the effects to the birds at your site. This list identifies birds that are potentially threatened by disturbance and construction.

BALD AND GOLDEN EAGLES

The bald eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*) was delisted under the ESA on August 9, 2007. Both the bald eagle and golden eagle (*Aquila chrysaetos*) are still protected under the MBTA and BGEPA. The BGEPA affords both eagles protection in addition to that provided by the MBTA, in particular, by making it unlawful to "disturb" eagles. Under the BGEPA, the Service may issue limited permits to incidentally "take" eagles (e.g., injury, interfering with normal breeding, feeding, or sheltering behavior nest abandonment). For information on bald and golden eagle management guidelines, we recommend you review information provided at www.fws.gov/midwest/eagle/guidelines/bgepa.html.

On our web site www.fws.gov/southwest/es/NewMexico/SBC_intro.cfm, we have included conservation measures that can minimize impacts to federally listed and other sensitive species. These include measures for communication towers, power line safety for raptors, road and highway improvements, spring developments and livestock watering facilities, wastewater facilities, and trenching operations.

We also suggest you contact the New Mexico Department of Game and Fish, and the New Mexico Energy, Minerals, and Natural Resources Department, Forestry Division for information regarding State fish, wildlife, and plants.

Thank you for your concern for endangered and threatened species and New Mexico's wildlife habitats. We appreciate your efforts to identify and avoid impacts to listed and sensitive species in your project area. For further consultation on your proposed activity, please call 505-346-2525 or email nmesfo@fws.gov and reference your Service Consultation Tracking Number.

Attachment(s):

- Official Species List
 - Migratory Birds
-

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:

New Mexico Ecological Services Field Office

2105 Osuna Road Ne

Albuquerque, NM 87113-1001

(505) 346-2525

Project Summary

Consultation Code: 02ENNM00-2018-SLI-0960

Event Code: 02ENNM00-2019-E-01510

Project Name: USMC IMEF CERTEX TRAP at Playas Training and Research Center

Project Type: MILITARY OPERATIONS / MANEUVERS

Project Description: The overall Scheme of Maneuver for the Tactical Recovery of Aircraft and Personnel (TRAP) Certification Exercise (CERTEX) is to use the existing paved and unpaved road network within the complex to emplace a simulated downed pilot(s) for one night only inside the existing Playas Training and Research Center (PTRC) abandoned residential housing area. Once the pilot(s) contact the exercise force and relay their situation, up to two (2) squad-sized Marine Corps search and rescue teams (approximately 15 persons each) will be flown to, and tactically inserted into, the PTRC by tilt-rotor aircraft landing into the pre-approved landing zone(s) (LZ) on/near the intersection of Cholla and Lomitas streets. One or two LZ locations will be selected, surveyed and approved (certified) as safe for operations by the USMC 24-48 hours prior to conducting the exercise.

Upon insertion into the LZ(s), each military search team will secure the area, then search for, locate, treat (simulated), and extract the downed pilot(s).

No digging or other ground disturbing activities are planned or expected.

The following is a summary of the planned actions on the ground within the PTRC and in the proposed Playas Temporary Military Operations Area (an Air Space designation).

Aircraft Mix and Numbers - Aircraft to be used during the TRAP CERTEX include: two (2) MV-22; either two (2) AV-BB or two (2) F-35; four (4) A-10C; and one (1) HC-130J. All fixed wing aircraft are expected to operate at altitudes well above 2,000 ft at all times. The MV-22 tilt-rotor aircraft will remain above 2,000 feet until approximately 9 nautical miles from the PTRC when they will begin their descent to the LZ.

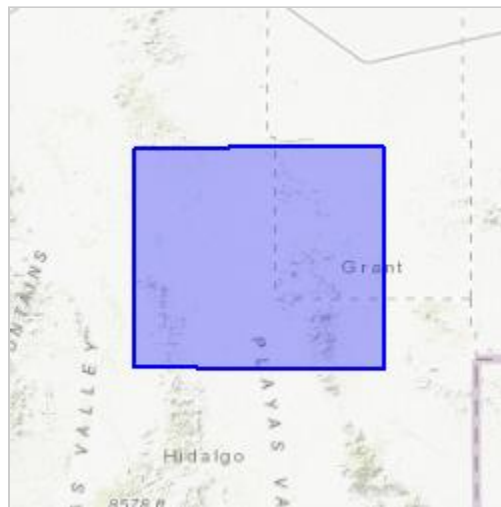
Exercise Execution and Timing (TMOA activation by FAA) -The Playas TMOA will be activated for a five (5) hour time block within a 48-hr. operational window between 27 and 31 AUG 2018.

The following is a notional timeline that is representative of how the CERTEX TRAP would proceed:

- 12:00 - Temporary MOA Activation (by FAA) goes into effect
- 12:15 - MAYDAY call goes out from downed pilot(s) located within the PTRC facility compound (housing area)
- 12:30 - TRAP exercise initiated, with aircraft leaving their respective air stations and responding to Playas Temporary MOA
- 15:00 - TRAP / CSAR teams inserted via two tilt-rotor aircraft
- 16:30 - TRAP/CSAR extraction [with pilot(s)] and all military rescue personnel via two tilt-rotor aircraft
- 17:00 - Temporary MOA de-activation (by FAA) goes into effect

Project Location:

Approximate location of the project can be viewed in Google Maps: <https://www.google.com/maps/place/31.918536344855177N108.54904107330543W>



Counties: Grant, NM | Hidalgo, NM

Endangered Species Act Species

There is a total of 19 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.

-
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.

Mammals

NAME	STATUS
Gray Wolf <i>Canis lupus</i> Population: Southwestern Distinct Population Segment No critical habitat has been designated for this species.	Proposed Endangered
Jaguar <i>Panthera onca</i> There is final critical habitat for this species. Your location is outside the critical habitat. Species profile: https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/3944	Endangered
Mexican Long-nosed Bat <i>Leptonycteris nivalis</i> No critical habitat has been designated for this species. Species profile: https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/8203	Endangered
Mexican Wolf <i>Canis lupus baileyi</i> Population: U.S.A. (portions of AZ and NM)see 17.84(k) No critical habitat has been designated for this species. Species profile: https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/3916	Experimental Population, Non- Essential

Birds

NAME	STATUS
<p>Mexican Spotted Owl <i>Strix occidentalis lucida</i></p> <p>There is final critical habitat for this species. Your location is outside the critical habitat. Species profile: https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/8196</p>	Threatened
<p>Northern Aplomado Falcon <i>Falco femoralis septentrionalis</i></p> <p>Population: U.S.A (AZ, NM) No critical habitat has been designated for this species. Species profile: https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/1923</p>	Experimental Population, Non- Essential
<p>Southwestern Willow Flycatcher <i>Empidonax traillii extimus</i></p> <p>There is final critical habitat for this species. Your location is outside the critical habitat. Species profile: https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/6749</p>	Endangered
<p>Yellow-billed Cuckoo <i>Coccyzus americanus</i></p> <p>Population: Western U.S. DPS There is proposed critical habitat for this species. Your location is outside the critical habitat. Species profile: https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/3911</p>	Threatened

Reptiles

NAME	STATUS
<p>Narrow-headed Gartersnake <i>Thamnophis rufipunctatus</i></p> <p>There is proposed critical habitat for this species. Your location is outside the critical habitat. Species profile: https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/2204</p>	Threatened
<p>New Mexican Ridge-nosed Rattlesnake <i>Crotalus willardi obscurus</i></p> <p>There is final critical habitat for this species. Your location is outside the critical habitat. Species profile: https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/3657</p>	Threatened
<p>Northern Mexican Gartersnake <i>Thamnophis eques megalops</i></p> <p>There is proposed critical habitat for this species. Your location is outside the critical habitat. Species profile: https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/7655</p>	Threatened

Amphibians

NAME	STATUS
<p>Chiricahua Leopard Frog <i>Rana chiricahuensis</i></p> <p>There is final critical habitat for this species. Your location is outside the critical habitat. Species profile: https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/1516</p>	Threatened

Fishes

NAME	STATUS
<p>Beautiful Shiner <i>Cyprinella formosa</i></p> <p>There is final critical habitat for this species. Your location is outside the critical habitat. Species profile: https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/7874</p>	Threatened
<p>Chihuahua Chub <i>Gila nigrescens</i></p> <p>There is proposed critical habitat for this species. The location of the critical habitat is not available. Species profile: https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/7156</p>	Threatened
<p>Gila Chub <i>Gila intermedia</i></p> <p>There is final critical habitat for this species. Your location is outside the critical habitat. Species profile: https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/51</p>	Endangered
<p>Gila Topminnow (incl. Yaqui) <i>Poeciliopsis occidentalis</i></p> <p>No critical habitat has been designated for this species. Species profile: https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/1116</p>	Endangered
<p>Gila Trout <i>Oncorhynchus gilae</i></p> <p>No critical habitat has been designated for this species. Species profile: https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/781</p>	Threatened
<p>Loach Minnow <i>Tiaroga cobitis</i></p> <p>There is final critical habitat for this species. Your location is outside the critical habitat. Species profile: https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/6922</p>	Endangered
<p>Spikedace <i>Meda fulgida</i></p> <p>There is final critical habitat for this species. Your location is outside the critical habitat. Species profile: https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/6493</p>	Endangered

Critical habitats

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

Migratory Birds

Certain birds are protected under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act¹ and the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act².

Any person or organization who plans or conducts activities that may result in impacts to migratory birds, eagles, and their habitats should follow appropriate regulations and consider implementing appropriate conservation measures, as described [below](#).

-
1. The [Migratory Birds Treaty Act](#) of 1918.
 2. The [Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act](#) of 1940.
 3. 50 C.F.R. Sec. 10.12 and 16 U.S.C. Sec. 668(a)

The birds listed below are birds of particular concern either because they occur on the [USFWS Birds of Conservation Concern](#) (BCC) list or warrant special attention in your project location. To learn more about the levels of concern for birds on your list and how this list is generated, see the FAQ [below](#). This is not a list of every bird you may find in this location, nor a guarantee that every bird on this list will be found in your project area. To see exact locations of where birders and the general public have sighted birds in and around your project area, visit the [E-bird data mapping tool](#) (Tip: enter your location, desired date range and a species on your list). For projects that occur off the Atlantic Coast, additional maps and models detailing the relative occurrence and abundance of bird species on your list are available. Links to additional information about Atlantic Coast birds, and other important information about your migratory bird list, including how to properly interpret and use your migratory bird report, can be found [below](#).

For guidance on when to schedule activities or implement avoidance and minimization measures to reduce impacts to migratory birds on your list, click on the PROBABILITY OF PRESENCE SUMMARY at the top of your list to see when these birds are most likely to be present and breeding in your project area.

NAME	BREEDING SEASON
Bendire's Thrasher <i>Toxostoma bendirei</i> This is a Bird of Conservation Concern (BCC) throughout its range in the continental USA and Alaska. https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/9435	Breeds Mar 15 to Jul 31
Black Throated Sparrow <i>Amphispiza bilineata</i> This is a Bird of Conservation Concern (BCC) only in particular Bird Conservation Regions (BCRs) in the continental USA	Breeds Mar 15 to Sep 5

NAME	BREEDING SEASON
Burrowing Owl <i>Athene cunicularia</i> This is a Bird of Conservation Concern (BCC) only in particular Bird Conservation Regions (BCRs) in the continental USA https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/9737	Breeds Mar 15 to Aug 31
Chestnut-collared Longspur <i>Calcarius ornatus</i> This is a Bird of Conservation Concern (BCC) throughout its range in the continental USA and Alaska.	Breeds elsewhere
Golden Eagle <i>Aquila chrysaetos</i> This is a Bird of Conservation Concern (BCC) only in particular Bird Conservation Regions (BCRs) in the continental USA https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/1680	Breeds Jan 1 to Aug 31
Grasshopper Sparrow <i>Ammodramus savannarum ammoregus</i> This is a Bird of Conservation Concern (BCC) only in particular Bird Conservation Regions (BCRs) in the continental USA	Breeds Jun 1 to Aug 20
Lark Bunting <i>Calamospiza melanocorys</i> This is a Bird of Conservation Concern (BCC) only in particular Bird Conservation Regions (BCRs) in the continental USA	Breeds elsewhere
Rufous Hummingbird <i>selasphorus rufus</i> This is a Bird of Conservation Concern (BCC) throughout its range in the continental USA and Alaska. https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/8002	Breeds elsewhere
Rufous-winged Sparrow <i>Aimophila carpalis</i> This is a Bird of Conservation Concern (BCC) throughout its range in the continental USA and Alaska.	Breeds Jun 15 to Sep 30

Probability Of Presence Summary

The graphs below provide our best understanding of when birds of concern are most likely to be present in your project area. This information can be used to tailor and schedule your project activities to avoid or minimize impacts to birds. Please make sure you read and understand the FAQ “Proper Interpretation and Use of Your Migratory Bird Report” before using or attempting to interpret this report.

Probability of Presence (■)

Each green bar represents the bird's relative probability of presence in the 10km grid cell(s) your project overlaps during a particular week of the year. (A year is represented as 12 4-week months.) A taller bar indicates a higher probability of species presence. The survey effort (see below) can be used to establish a level of confidence in the presence score. One can have higher confidence in the presence score if the corresponding survey effort is also high.

How is the probability of presence score calculated? The calculation is done in three steps:

1. The probability of presence for each week is calculated as the number of survey events in the week where the species was detected divided by the total number of survey events for that week. For example, if in week 12 there were 20 survey events and the Spotted Towhee was found in 5 of them, the probability of presence of the Spotted Towhee in week 12 is 0.25.
2. To properly present the pattern of presence across the year, the relative probability of presence is calculated. This is the probability of presence divided by the maximum probability of presence across all weeks. For example, imagine the probability of presence in week 20 for the Spotted Towhee is 0.05, and that the probability of presence at week 12 (0.25) is the maximum of any week of the year. The relative probability of presence on week 12 is $0.25/0.25 = 1$; at week 20 it is $0.05/0.25 = 0.2$.
3. The relative probability of presence calculated in the previous step undergoes a statistical conversion so that all possible values fall between 0 and 10, inclusive. This is the probability of presence score.

Breeding Season (■)

Yellow bars denote a very liberal estimate of the time-frame inside which the bird breeds across its entire range. If there are no yellow bars shown for a bird, it does not breed in your project area.

Survey Effort (|)

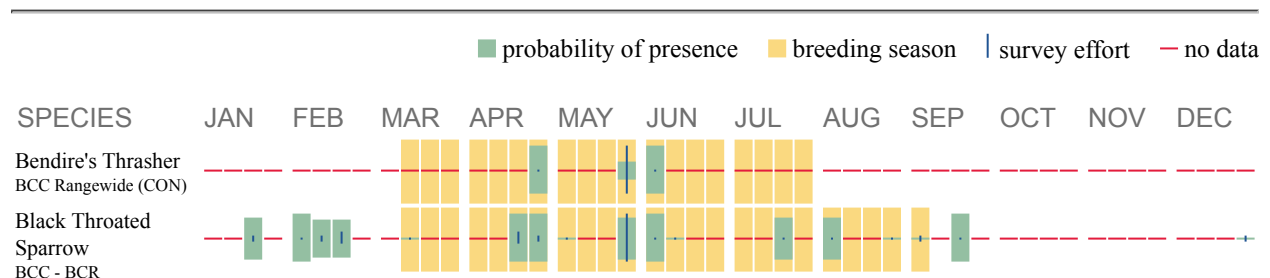
Vertical black lines superimposed on probability of presence bars indicate the number of surveys performed for that species in the 10km grid cell(s) your project area overlaps. The number of surveys is expressed as a range, for example, 33 to 64 surveys.

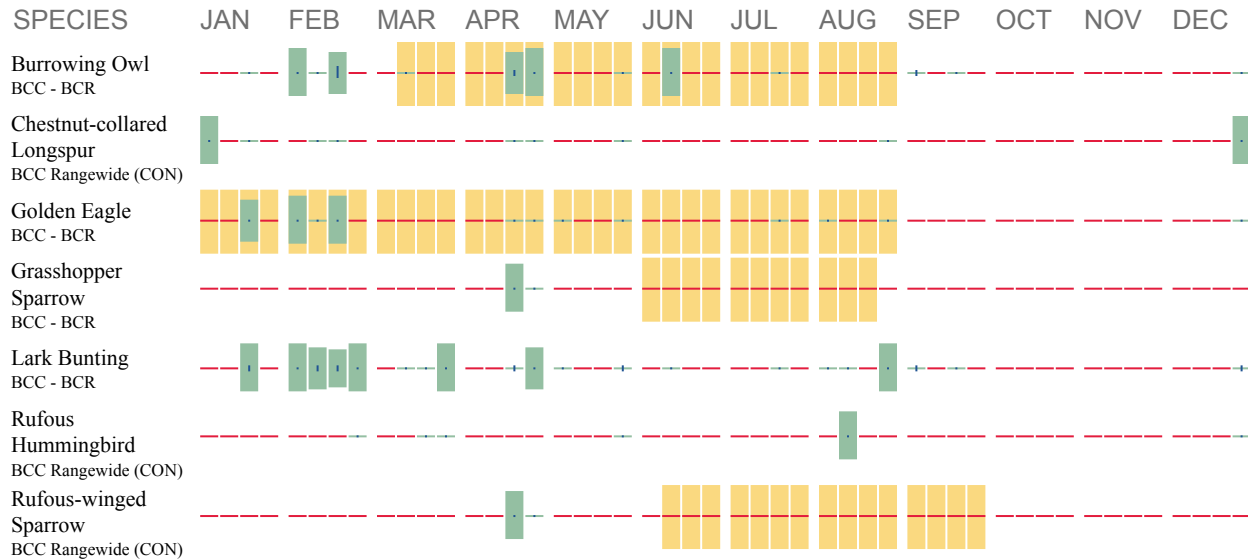
No Data (—)

A week is marked as having no data if there were no survey events for that week.

Survey Timeframe

Surveys from only the last 10 years are used in order to ensure delivery of currently relevant information. The exception to this is areas off the Atlantic coast, where bird returns are based on all years of available data, since data in these areas is currently much more sparse.





Additional information can be found using the following links:

- Birds of Conservation Concern <http://www.fws.gov/birds/management/managed-species/birds-of-conservation-concern.php>
- Measures for avoiding and minimizing impacts to birds <http://www.fws.gov/birds/management/project-assessment-tools-and-guidance/conservation-measures.php>
- Nationwide conservation measures for birds <http://www.fws.gov/migratorybirds/pdf/management/nationwidestandardconservationmeasures.pdf>

Migratory Birds FAQ

Tell me more about conservation measures I can implement to avoid or minimize impacts to migratory birds.

[Nationwide Conservation Measures](#) describes measures that can help avoid and minimize impacts to all birds at any location year round. Implementation of these measures is particularly important when birds are most likely to occur in the project area. When birds may be breeding in the area, identifying the locations of any active nests and avoiding their destruction is a very helpful impact minimization measure. To see when birds are most likely to occur and be breeding in your project area, view the Probability of Presence Summary. [Additional measures](#) and/or [permits](#) may be advisable depending on the type of activity you are conducting and the type of infrastructure or bird species present on your project site.

What does IPaC use to generate the migratory birds potentially occurring in my specified location?

The Migratory Bird Resource List is comprised of USFWS [Birds of Conservation Concern \(BCC\)](#) and other species that may warrant special attention in your project location.

The migratory bird list generated for your project is derived from data provided by the [Avian Knowledge Network \(AKN\)](#). The AKN data is based on a growing collection of [survey, banding, and citizen science datasets](#) and is queried and filtered to return a list of those birds reported as occurring in the 10km grid cell(s) which your project intersects, and that have been identified as warranting special attention because they are a BCC species in that area, an eagle ([Eagle Act](#) requirements may apply), or a species that has a particular vulnerability to offshore activities or development.

Again, the Migratory Bird Resource list includes only a subset of birds that may occur in your project area. It is not representative of all birds that may occur in your project area. To get a list of all birds potentially present in your project area, please visit the [AKN Phenology Tool](#).

What does IPaC use to generate the probability of presence graphs for the migratory birds potentially occurring in my specified location?

The probability of presence graphs associated with your migratory bird list are based on data provided by the [Avian Knowledge Network \(AKN\)](#). This data is derived from a growing collection of [survey, banding, and citizen science datasets](#).

Probability of presence data is continuously being updated as new and better information becomes available. To learn more about how the probability of presence graphs are produced and how to interpret them, go to the Probability of Presence Summary and then click on the "Tell me about these graphs" link.

How do I know if a bird is breeding, wintering, migrating or present year-round in my project area?

To see what part of a particular bird's range your project area falls within (i.e. breeding, wintering, migrating or year-round), you may refer to the following resources: [The Cornell Lab of Ornithology All About Birds Bird Guide](#), or (if you are unsuccessful in locating the bird of interest there), the [Cornell Lab of Ornithology Neotropical Birds guide](#). If a bird on your migratory bird species list has a breeding season associated with it, if that bird does occur in your project area, there may be nests present at some point within the timeframe specified. If "Breeds elsewhere" is indicated, then the bird likely does not breed in your project area.

What are the levels of concern for migratory birds?

Migratory birds delivered through IPaC fall into the following distinct categories of concern:

1. "BCC Rangewide" birds are [Birds of Conservation Concern](#) (BCC) that are of concern throughout their range anywhere within the USA (including Hawaii, the Pacific Islands, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands);
 2. "BCC - BCR" birds are BCCs that are of concern only in particular Bird Conservation Regions (BCRs) in the continental USA; and
 3. "Non-BCC - Vulnerable" birds are not BCC species in your project area, but appear on your list either because of the [Eagle Act](#) requirements (for eagles) or (for non-eagles) potential susceptibilities in offshore areas from certain types of development or activities (e.g. offshore energy development or longline fishing).
-

Although it is important to try to avoid and minimize impacts to all birds, efforts should be made, in particular, to avoid and minimize impacts to the birds on this list, especially eagles and BCC species of rangewide concern. For more information on conservation measures you can implement to help avoid and minimize migratory bird impacts and requirements for eagles, please see the FAQs for these topics.

Details about birds that are potentially affected by offshore projects

For additional details about the relative occurrence and abundance of both individual bird species and groups of bird species within your project area off the Atlantic Coast, please visit the [Northeast Ocean Data Portal](#). The Portal also offers data and information about other taxa besides birds that may be helpful to you in your project review. Alternately, you may download the bird model results files underlying the portal maps through the [NOAA NCCOS Integrative Statistical Modeling and Predictive Mapping of Marine Bird Distributions and Abundance on the Atlantic Outer Continental Shelf](#) project webpage.

Bird tracking data can also provide additional details about occurrence and habitat use throughout the year, including migration. Models relying on survey data may not include this information. For additional information on marine bird tracking data, see the [Diving Bird Study](#) and the [nanotag studies](#) or contact [Caleb Spiegel](#) or [Pam Loring](#).

What if I have eagles on my list?

If your project has the potential to disturb or kill eagles, you may need to [obtain a permit](#) to avoid violating the Eagle Act should such impacts occur.

Proper Interpretation and Use of Your Migratory Bird Report

The migratory bird list generated is not a list of all birds in your project area, only a subset of birds of priority concern. To learn more about how your list is generated, and see options for identifying what other birds may be in your project area, please see the FAQ “What does IPaC use to generate the migratory birds potentially occurring in my specified location?”. Please be aware this report provides the “probability of presence” of birds within the 10 km grid cell(s) that overlap your project; not your exact project footprint. On the graphs provided, please also look carefully at the survey effort (indicated by the black vertical bar) and for the existence of the “no data” indicator (a red horizontal bar). A high survey effort is the key component. If the survey effort is high, then the probability of presence score can be viewed as more dependable. In contrast, a low survey effort bar or no data bar means a lack of data and, therefore, a lack of certainty about presence of the species. This list is not perfect; it is simply a starting point for identifying what birds of concern have the potential to be in your project area, when they might be there, and if they might be breeding (which means nests might be present). The list helps you know what to look for to confirm presence, and helps guide you in knowing when to implement conservation measures to avoid or minimize potential impacts from your project activities, should presence be confirmed. To learn more about conservation measures, visit the FAQ “Tell me about conservation measures I can implement to avoid or minimize impacts to migratory birds” at the bottom of your migratory bird trust resources page.

Taxon	Name	Status	Crit Hab	Link	Notes/Determinations
Amphibians	Chiricahua Leopard Frog <i>Rana chiricahuensis</i>	Threatened	There is final critical habitat designated for this species. Project location is outside the designated critical habitat.	https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/1516	Riparian species. No riparian habitat in project area. No effect.
Birds	Mexican Spotted Owl <i>Strix occidentalis lucida</i>	Threatened	There is final critical habitat designated for this species. Project location is outside the designated critical habitat.	https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/8196	Forest species. No forest habitat in project area. No effect.
	Northern Aplomado Falcon <i>Falco femoralis septentrionalis</i>	Experimental Non-Essential	No critical habitat has been designated for this species.	https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/1923	No consultation requirement for Non-essential population. Highly unlikely this species occurs within project location. If present in area, much lower likelihood of being at exact exercise location during the 5-hour exercise window. No effect.
	Southwestern Willow Flycatcher <i>Empidonax traillii extimus</i>	Endangered	There is final critical habitat designated for this species. Project location is outside the designated critical habitat.	https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/6749	Riparian species. No riparian habitat in project area. No effect.
	Yellow-billed Cuckoo <i>Coccyzus americanus</i>	Threatened	There is proposed critical habitat for this species. Project location is outside the proposed critical habitat.	https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/3911	Riparian species. No riparian habitat in project area. No effect.
Fishes	Spikedace <i>Meda fulgida</i>	Endangered	There is final critical habitat designated for this species. Project location is outside the designated critical habitat.	https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/6493	Aquatic species. No aquatic habitat in project area. No affect.
	Beautiful Shiner <i>Cyprinella formosa</i>	Threatened	There is final critical habitat designated for this species. Project location is outside the designated critical habitat.	https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/7874	Aquatic species. No aquatic habitat in project area. No effect.
	Chihuahua Chub <i>Gila nigrescens</i>	Threatened	There is proposed critical habitat for this species. Project location is outside the proposed critical habitat.	https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/7156	Aquatic species. No aquatic habitat in project area. No effect.
	Gila Chub <i>Gila intermedia</i>	Endangered	There is final critical habitat designated for this species. Project location is outside the designated critical habitat.	https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/51	Aquatic species. No aquatic habitat in project area. No effect.
	Gila Topminnow (incl. Yaqui) <i>Poeciliopsis occidentalis</i>	Endangered	No critical habitat has been designated for this species.	https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/1116	Aquatic species. No aquatic habitat in project area. No effect.
	Gila Trout <i>Oncorhynchus gilae</i>	Threatened	No critical habitat has been designated for this species.	https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/781	Aquatic species. No aquatic habitat in project area. No effect.
	Loach Minnow <i>Tiaroga cobitis</i>	Endangered	There is final critical habitat designated for this species. Project location is outside the designated critical habitat.	https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/6922	Aquatic species. No aquatic habitat in project area. No effect.
Mammals	Mexican Wolf <i>Canis lupus baileyi</i>	Experimental Non-Essential	No critical habitat has been designated for this species.	https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/4488	This species currently inhabits National Forest lands well to the north of the project area. Likelihood of harm to individuals from this exercise is insignificant and discountable. No effect. Additionally: as an experimental, non-essential population, consultation is not required.
	Gray Wolf <i>Canis lupus</i> SW DPS	Proposed Endangered	No critical habitat has been designated for this species.		This species should not have been included on the IPaC list from USFWS. The animal this is referring to has been reclassified as the Mexican Wolf (addressed above).

	Jaguar Panthera onca	Endangered	There is a final critical habitat designated for this species. Project location is outside the designated critical habitat.	https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/3944	This species may occur in this portion of the state at extremely low densities. Species primarily associated with riparian corridors. The project area is not near any significant riparian corridor. Likelihood of harm to individuals from this exercise is insignificant and discountable. No effect.
	Mexican Long-nosed Bat Leptonycteris nivalis	Endangered	No critical habitat has been designated for this species.	https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/8203	Exercise would not affect any bat roosts, maternity sites, or hibernaculum. Likelihood of harm to individual bats from this exercise is insignificant and discountable. No effect.
Reptiles	Narrow-headed Gartersnake Thamnophis rufipunctatus	Threatened	There is proposed critical habitat designated for this species. Project location is outside the proposed critical habitat.	https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/2204	Aquatic species. No aquatic habitat in project area. No affect.
	New Mexican Ridge-nosed Rattlesnake Crotalus willardi obscurus	Threatened	There is a final critical habitat designated for this species. Project location is outside the designated critical habitat.	https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/3657	Occurs in forest habitat at elevations above 5,600 feet. Playas training center is at 4,500 feet and is not forested. No affect.
	Northern Mexican Gartersnake Thamnophis eques megalops	Threatened	There is proposed critical habitat designated for this species. Project location is outside the proposed critical habitat.	https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/7655	Aquatic species. No aquatic habitat in project area. No effect.
Prepared by Bill Berry, MCI WEST Regional Conservation Program Manager Prepared on May 1, 2019.					

1 May 2019

Memorandum for Record

Subject: Determination of No Effects to Federally Listed Species from the IMEF CERTEX at the Playas Training and Research Center (PTRC), New Mexico August 2019

References:

- a. Revised Final Air Force Playas Temporary MOA Supplemental Analysis 27 Feb 2018
- b. Email from USMC, MCI WEST (Mr. Bill Berry) to New Mexico State Historic Preservation Office submitted April 30, 2019
- c. IMEF Playas CERTEX Supplemental Analysis (2019). Prepared by USMC, MCI WEST for FAA
- d. IMEF Playas CERTEX Supplemental Analysis (2018). Prepared by USMC, MCI WEST for FAA
- e. IMEF Playas CERTEX Environmental Assessment (2017). Prepared by USMC, MCI WEST for FAA
- f. Playas Training Center Environmental Assessment (2006)

Enclosures:

1. USFWS Species List for Playas CERTEX project dated April 30, 2019
2. Species Effects Analysis Matrix 2019
3. Email from USFWS (Tracy Melbihess) to MCI WEST (Bill Berry), May 1, 2019.

The town of Playas was purchased by New Mexico Tech and converted to a security and counterterrorism training center that is used by numerous security, law enforcement and military units throughout the year. As described in the IMEF Playas CERTEX Environmental Assessment (EA), Marine Corps and Air Force personnel are planning to conduct a Tactical Recovery of Aircraft and Pilot (TRAP) exercise at the PTRC in August 2019. The exercise will take place during a 5-hour period within a larger 48-hour block. The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) has required the preparation of a supplemental EA prior to establishing a temporary Military Operations Area (MOA) for the 5-hour exercise. The TRAP scenario exercise is wholly consistent with the types of activities that occur routinely at PTRC. So the subject exercise does not present new or novel stimuli to the existing environmental conditions of the PTRC. Similar exercises were conducted in August 2017 and August 2018.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's (USFWS) Information for Planning and Consultation (IPaC) online tool was used to request a species list for the project area. The USFWS species list included 18 listed species that may occur within the greater boot heel region of New Mexico. Of the 18 species, 13 are primarily associated with aquatic or riparian habitat. There is no riparian or aquatic habitat at the project location. Three of the 18 species are primarily associated with forest habitat. There is no forest habitat at the project location. One of the species is a bat and the project site is not expected to support any roosts, maternity sites, or hibernaculum for listed bats. Likelihood of harm to individual bats from this exercise is insignificant and discountable. The final species is listed as experimental, non-essential and consultation under Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act is not required. Additionally, the Mexican wolf (*Canis lupus baileyi*), primarily associated with forested habitat is also designated an experimental, non-essential population in the project action area.

The southwestern distinct population segment of gray wolf was included on the USFWS species list this year. My understanding was this population segment was reclassified as a subspecies called the Mexican Wolf and therefore the same animal was on the list twice under two different names. The USFWS confirmed this via email

Subject: Determination of No Effects to Federally Listed Species from the IMEF CERTEX at the Playas Training and Research Center (PTRC), New Mexico August 2019

from Tracy Melbiness of the USFWS Mexican Wolf Recovery Program. Only the Mexican Wolf (not the Gray Wolf DPS) was addressed in this effects determination.

During the review process for the August 2018 event, I spoke with Dr. George D. Dennis III, Collaborative Conservation Services Branch Chief in the USFWS's New Mexico Ecological Services Field Office. We discussed the proximity of the PTRC to closest know breeding locations for southwestern willow flycatcher and yellow-billed cuckoo (two of the reviewed bird species). The closest know breeding sites are at the middle fork of the Rio Grande River and the Gila River. Both of these riparian systems are more than 20 miles from the PTRC. Because the MV-22 and other aircraft would only operate above 9,000 feet until within 9 nautical miles of the PTRC, Dr. Dennis felt the proposed action would not disturb southwestern willow flycatcher and yellow-billed cuckoo. This remains applicable to the 2019 operation.

Critical habitat has been proposed or designated for 13 of the 18 species. There is no designated or proposed critical habitat at or adjacent to the project location.

Ground activities during the Playas CERTEX will be confined to the Playas urban training facility within the PTRC. The urban facility does not support native habitats and therefore would not support foraging, breeding or juvenile rearing by any federally listed species. The likelihood of encountering a dispersing or migrating individual on the ground or in the air at the project location during the extremely brief exercise time window is so low as to be insignificant and discountable.

It is the determination of Marine Corps Installations West that the IMEF Playas CERTEX, as described in the EA and supplements prepared for the FAA, and scheduled for August 2019, will have no effect on any species listed or proposed for listing under the Endangered Species Act. Additionally, the CERTEX will have no effect on any designated or proposed critical habitat.

Bill Berry
Regional Conservation Program Manager
Environmental Security Office
Marine Corps Installations West

From: [Melbihess, Tracy](#)
To: [Berry CIV William H](#)
Cc: [Brady McGee](#); [Maggie Dwire](#); [Allison Arnold](#)
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] Fwd: [EXTERNAL] RE: wolf information in IPAC
Date: Wednesday, May 1, 2019 11:55:36 AM
Attachments: [Mexican Wolf ECOS map.pptx](#)

Hi Bill,

You are correct that the listed wolf in AZ and NM is the Mexican (gray) wolf. The southwestern DPS entry that you see dates back to a change we were going to make to the way gray wolves were listed back in the early 2000's - I'm surprised that is showing up in ECOS as it is. At any rate, the orange polygon you see is the experimental population area for the Mexican wolf. The darker orange may be a previous delineation of occupied range, I'm not entirely sure, but it is part of the experimental population. Let me know if you have any other questions or need certainty on the dark orange.

Thank you,
Tracy

----- Forwarded message -----

From: McGee, Brady <brady_mcgee@fws.gov <mailto:brady_mcgee@fws.gov> >
Date: Tue, Apr 30, 2019 at 2:23 PM
Subject: Fwd: [EXTERNAL] RE: wolf information in IPAC
To: Melbihess, Tracy <tracy_melbihess@fws.gov <mailto:tracy_melbihess@fws.gov> >
Cc: Maggie Dwire <maggie_dwire@fws.gov <mailto:maggie_dwire@fws.gov> >

Hi Tracy,

Can you help me out with this and provide a response to Bill Berry while cc'ing me, Maggie, and Alison Arnold? I'm still pretty far under the water right now. Much appreciated!

Thanks,

Brady

Brady McGee, Ph.D.

Mexican Wolf Recovery Coordinator

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

2105 Osuna Road NE
Albuquerque, NM 87113

Office: 505-761-4748
Cell: 505-908-8491

----- Forwarded message -----

From: Berry CIV William H <william.h.berry@usmc.mil <<mailto:william.h.berry@usmc.mil>> >

Date: Tue, Apr 30, 2019 at 12:44 PM
Subject: [EXTERNAL] RE: wolf information in IPAC
To: Brady McGee <Brady_McGee@fws.gov <mailto:Brady_McGee@fws.gov> >
Cc: Arnold, Allison <allison_arnold@fws.gov <mailto:allison_arnold@fws.gov> >

Brady:

The Marine Corps plans to conduct a pilot rescue training operation in August 2019 at the Playas Training and Research Center (PTRC) near Playas, New Mexico, down in the boot-heel region of the State. We conducted a nearly identical exercise last year and I used the USFWS IPaC system to complete a no effect determination for listed species and received concurrence from George Dennis that no additional consultation was required.

As part of my due diligence for this year's exercise I returned to IPaC and asked for an updated species list. The system gave me the same species list as last year (which included Mexican Wolf) except for one new species:

Gray Wolf
Population: Southwestern Distinct Population Segment
Status: Proposed Endangered

I believe the USFWS reclassified the SW DPS into a subspecies that is now the Mexican Wolf, but I wanted to confirm this with someone who really knows the answer.

The ECOS database appears to confirm that the *C. lupus* critter in AZ and NM is the Mexican Wolf.
However, I had another question about the map in ECOS (see attached). I could not discern what the darker orange polygon represents. Is the darker orange part of the Experimental Non-Essential Population?

Thanks for any clarification you can provide.

Bill Berry
Regional Conservation Program Manager
Marine Corps Installations West
760-763-7947

-----Original Message-----

From: Arnold, Allison [mailto:allison_arnold@fws.gov <mailto:allison_arnold@fws.gov>]
Sent: Tuesday, April 30, 2019 11:22 AM
To: Brady McGee <Brady_McGee@fws.gov <mailto:Brady_McGee@fws.gov> >
Cc: Berry CIV William H <william.h.berry@usmc.mil <<mailto:william.h.berry@usmc.mil>> >
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] wolf information in IPAC

Hi Brady

I am cc'ing Bill Berry from the US Marine Corps out in Arizona who has a question about some data from an IPAC report that has Mexican wolves in it but also has a DPS for gray wolves that appears to be new information. They are preparing for a training exercise and want to make sure they have correct species information for the area used for training.

So, can you help him out here ? Bill, maybe clarify what you're seeing in IPAC if I missed something ?

Thanks

Allison

--

Allison Arnold
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Sikes Act Coordinator / DoD Liaison

Southwest Region (AZ, NM, TX, OK)
(512) 203-5145 (cell)

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Classification and Recovery Branch Chief
Idaho Fish and Wildlife Office (IFWO), Region 1
US Fish and Wildlife Service
#208-378-5287 (office)