



United States Department of the Interior



FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
New Mexico Ecological Services Field Office
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In Reply Refer To:

August 23, 2022

Project Code: 2022-0007539

Project Name: Former Church Rock Uranium Mill Site Proposed License Amendment

Subject: List of threatened and endangered species that may occur in your proposed project location 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 as amended (16 USC 701-715), and the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act as amended (16 USC 668-668(c)). 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.

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

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

The purpose of the ESA is to provide a means whereby threatened and endangered species and

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

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

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

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:
<https://www.emnrd.nm.gov/sfd/rare-plants/>

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

In addition to responsibilities to protect threatened and endangered species under the ESA, there are additional responsibilities under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA) and the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act (BGEPA) to protect native birds from project-related impacts. Any activity, intentional or unintentional, resulting in take of migratory birds, including eagles, is prohibited unless otherwise permitted by the Service (50 CFR 10.12 and 16 USC 668(a)). For more information regarding these Acts see <https://www.fenws.gov/birds/policies-and-regulations.php>.

The MBTA has no provision for allowing take of migratory birds that may be unintentionally killed or injured by otherwise lawful activities. It is the responsibility of the project proponent to comply with these Acts by identifying potential impacts to migratory birds and eagles within applicable NEPA documents (when there is a Federal nexus) or a Bird/Eagle Conservation Plan (when there is no Federal nexus). Proponents should implement conservation measures to avoid or minimize the production of project-related stressors or minimize the exposure of birds and their resources to the project-related stressors. For more information on avian stressors and recommended conservation measures see <https://www.fws.gov/birds/bird-enthusiasts/threats-to-birds.php>. We also recommend review of the Birds of Conservation Concern list (<https://www.fws.gov/birds/management/managed-species/birds-of-conservation-concern.php>) to fully evaluate the effects to the birds at your site. This list identifies migratory and non-migratory bird species (beyond those already designated as federally threatened or endangered) that represent top conservation priorities for the Service, and are potentially threatened by disturbance, habitat impacts, or other project development activities.

In addition to MBTA and BGEPA, Executive Order 13186: *Responsibilities of Federal Agencies to Protect Migratory Birds*, obligates all Federal agencies that engage in or authorize activities that might affect migratory birds, to minimize those effects and encourage conservation measures that will improve bird populations. Executive Order 13186 thereby provides additional protection for both migratory birds and migratory bird habitat. Please visit <https://www.fws.gov/migratorybirds/pdf/management/executiveordertoprotectmigratorybirds.pdf> for information

regarding the implementation of Executive Order 13186.

We 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 protected and at-risk species fish, wildlife, and plants.

For further consultation with the Service we recommend submitting inquiries or assessments electronically to our incoming email box at nmesfo@fws.gov, where it will be more promptly routed to the appropriate biologist for review.

We appreciate your concern for threatened and endangered species. The Service encourages Federal agencies to include conservation of threatened and endangered species into their project planning to further the purposes of the Act. Please include the Consultation Code in the header of this letter with any request for consultation or correspondence about your project that you submit to our office.

Attachment(s):

- Official Species List
 - Migratory Birds
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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

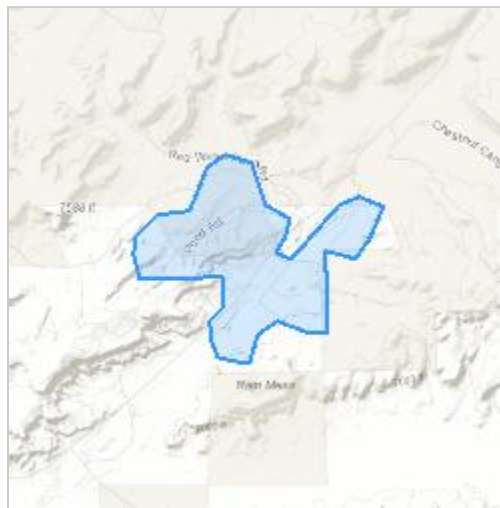
(505) 346-2525

Project Summary

Project Code: 2022-0007539
Project Name: Former Church Rock Uranium Mill Site Proposed License Amendment
Project Type: Disposal / Transfer
Project Description: The proposed action is to amend UNC's Source Material License SUA-1475 to allow for revisions to the NRC-approved tailings reclamation plan for the NRC-licensed mill tailings disposal area and revisions to the reclamation schedule at the UNC Mill Site in McKinley County, New Mexico. The requested revisions to the tailings reclamation plan, if approved, would allow UNC to (i) dispose of approximately 765,000 cubic meters [1,000,000 cubic yards (yd³)] of NECR mine waste at the proposed disposal site (ii) establish perimeter stormwater control features around the impoundment, (iii) construct an evapotranspirative (ET) cover over the final surface, (iv) restore and revegetate the area around the proposed disposal site following construction, and (v) identify and recommend to NRC for review any new institutional controls for long-term site management and license transfer of the NRC-licensed tailings impoundment. The proposed UNC schedule to complete the disposal of the NECR mine waste is approximately 4 years.

Project Location:

Approximate location of the project can be viewed in Google Maps: <https://www.google.com/maps/@35.652907386278486,-108.51185704676291,14z>



Counties: McKinley County, New Mexico

Endangered Species Act Species

There is a total of 6 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.

Birds

NAME	STATUS
Mexican Spotted Owl <i>Strix occidentalis lucida</i> There is final critical habitat for this species. The location of the critical habitat is not available. Species profile: https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/8196	Threatened
Southwestern Willow Flycatcher <i>Empidonax traillii extimus</i> There is final critical habitat for this species. The location of the critical habitat is not available. Species profile: https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/6749	Endangered
Yellow-billed Cuckoo <i>Coccyzus americanus</i> Population: Western U.S. DPS There is final critical habitat for this species. The location of the critical habitat is not available. Species profile: https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/3911	Threatened

Fishes

NAME	STATUS
Zuni Bluehead Sucker <i>Catostomus discobolus yarrowi</i> There is final critical habitat for this species. The location of the critical habitat is not available. Species profile: https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/3536	Endangered

Insects

NAME	STATUS
Monarch Butterfly <i>Danaus plexippus</i> No critical habitat has been designated for this species. Species profile: https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/9743	Candidate

Flowering Plants

NAME	STATUS
Zuni Fleabane <i>Erigeron rhizomatus</i> No critical habitat has been designated for this species. Species profile: https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/5700	Threatened

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)

THERE ARE NO FWS MIGRATORY BIRDS OF CONCERN WITHIN THE VICINITY OF YOUR PROJECT AREA.

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](#) 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 list of migratory birds that potentially occur 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 [Rapid Avian Information Locator \(RAIL\) 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 or migrating in my 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 query your location using the [RAIL Tool](#) and look at the range maps provided for birds in your area at the bottom of the profiles provided for each bird in your results. 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.

IPaC User Contact Information

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