

**United States
Department of
Agriculture
Forest Service**

**United States
Department of
Interior
Bureau of
Land Management**

**United States
Department of
Interior
Fish and
Wildlife Service**

Reply Refer To: 2670 FS/ 6840 BLM (OR931) P

Date: April 25, 2003

FS/ FWS-Memorandum

**EMS TRANSMISSION 04/28/2003
BLM-Instruction Memorandum No. OR-2003-063
Expires: 09/30/2004**

To: USDI Bureau of Land Management District Managers: Coos Bay, Eugene, Medford, Roseburg, Salem and Field Managers: Arcata, Ukiah, CA; USDA Forest Service Forest Supervisors: Olympic, Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie, Gifford Pinchot, Siuslaw, Rogue-Siskiyou, Klamath, Mendocino, Six Rivers, Shasta Trinity; and USDI Fish and Wildlife Service Project Managers Within the Range of the Marbled Murrelet in the Northwest Forest Plan Area

Subject: Marbled Murrelet Inland Survey Protocol Update

The attached 2003 Inland Survey Protocol, prepared by the Pacific Seabird Group, is an update and replacement of the 2000 version. The 2003 Protocol will be used as guidance for the survey of potential habitat for marbled murrelets on federal lands administered by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) in Oregon/Washington and California, and Regions 5 and 6 of the Forest Service (FS) subject to the clarifications contained in this memorandum. In some cases, the Northwest Forest Plan (NWFP) standards and guidelines supersede the Survey Protocol. The following clarifications should be brought to the attention of managers, wildlife biologists, and field surveyors.

Number of Survey Visits

The number of visits needed to determine presence or occupancy by marbled murrelets will follow the recommendations in the 2003 Inland Survey Protocol. This guidance on number of surveys replaces guidance issued in the interagency memorandum dated August 30, 2000. The recommended number of visits explained below will, in most cases, be a two-stage sampling approach that incorporates a minimum of five visits and the possibility of up to nine visits, in each of two years to estimate occupancy status at an individual site. The discussions regarding the number of survey visits on pages 2 and 12-16 describe the situations in which the proposed five and nine visits may be applicable.

Presence surveys will require a minimum of five survey visits in each of two consecutive years using the methods recommended by the 2003 Protocol for determining the number and location of survey stations. If in both year 1 and 2 there is no detection after five visits in each year, the survey can be stopped with 10 total survey visits for the two years. The site may be classified as probable absence.

Determination of marbled murrelet occupancy status for a project area will require additional visits once the presence of murrelets is established. If presence is established in the first year of survey, every reasonable effort should be made to attain nine survey visits in each of the two protocol survey years for a total of 18 visits unless occupancy is established in fewer visits.

There may be situations when attainment of the nine visits within the first year may not be possible (e.g., if presence is detected late in survey season). However, this should happen only rarely, as the *Distribution of Visits Throughout the Season* section of the Protocol (pages 17 and 18) requires a survey distribution which would normally allow for all

four remaining surveys to be completed prior to the end of the survey season. Agency managers may elect to discontinue surveys of a project area to determine occupancy if the proposed project is abandoned. In this case, no coordination with the Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) regarding additional surveys is necessary.

If agency managers have questions regarding the need for additional visits, or are precluded from conducting additional visits in a given year, they should seek technical assistance from the FWS.

Survey Validity Over Time

Refer to the discussion under “How Long Do Survey Results Apply” on pages 23-24 of the 2003 Protocol for information on survey validity over time, and use the guidance offered there to determine when additional surveys may be appropriate.

Circling Behavior Above the Canopy

The 2003 Inland Survey Protocol (page 22) states that birds flying in small or large radius circles above the canopy is defined as “presence” and additional survey effort is required to determine if the site is occupied. The Record of Decision (ROD) for the NWFP (page C-10) defines “birds flying in small or large radius circles above the canopy” as a behavior indicating marbled murrelet occupation. In keeping with the direction in the ROD, when circling is detected the stand will be considered occupied. Additional surveys may be conducted to provide more specific information about murrelet use of the stand, but the survey results, even if murrelets are not detected, would not change the occupied determination based on the previously confirmed circling behavior.

Survey Area Occupancy Status

Page 23 of the 2003 Inland Survey Protocol states: “Because the survey area, by definition, is contiguous potential habitat, the classification of probable absence, presence, or occupied determined at the site applies to the *survey area*. For example, if a large block of contiguous potential habitat is divided into three survey sites, and one of those three sites yields subcanopy detections, the entire survey area is considered occupied, not just that one site, because all the sites form one large piece of contiguous habitat.”

The delineation of a protected marbled murrelet site will follow the direction on page C-10 of the NFP ROD which states: “If behavior indicating occupation is documented, all contiguous existing and recruitment habitat for marbled murrelets within a 0.5 mile radius will be protected. The 0.5 mile radius circle should be centered on either the behavior indicating occupation... When occupied areas are close to each other, the 0.5 mile radius circles may overlap.”

Determining the Survey Area in Younger Forests

Refer to the “Location with Respect to Potential Habitat” section on page 10 of the Protocol for guidance on establishing survey areas in younger forest conditions where trees with platforms may be scattered across the stand.

If you have any questions regarding marbled murrelet surveys on FS or BLM-administered lands, please contact Sarah Madsen (FS Region 6, 503-808-2673); John Robinson (FS Region 5, 707-562-8929); Joe Lint (BLM Oregon/Washington, 541-464-3288); or Paul Roush (BLM California, 707-825-2313).

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/s/ David J. Worley for
DAVE ALLEN
Regional Director, Region 1
USDI Fish and Wildlife Service

Authenticated by
Mary O'Leary
Management Assistant

1 Attachment (under separate cover)

1 - Methods for Surveying Marbled Murrelets in Forests: A Revised Protocol For Land
Management and Research (76 pp)

BLM Distribution

WO-230 (Room 204 LS) - 1
CA-930 (Ed Lorentzen) - 1
CA-310 (Paul Roush) - 1
OR-931 (Joe Lint, Barb Hill) - 2
REO (Shawne Mohoric, Kathy Anderson,
Debbie Pietrzak) - 3

Forest Service cc:

R5-F&WL (John Robinson)
R6-NR (Sarah Madsen)

FWS cc:

Portland (Lee Folliard)
Lacey (John Grettenberger)
Arcata (Lynn Roberts)