



United States Department of the Interior



BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
Alaska State Office
222 West Seventh Avenue, #13
Anchorage, Alaska 99513-7504
<http://www.blm.gov/ak>

In Reply Refer To:
6840 (931) P

May 18, 2010

Instruction Memorandum No. AK-2010-018
Expires: 9/30/2011

To: District Managers, AFS Manager, DSD - Division of Lands,
Office of Pipeline Monitoring

From: State Director

Subject: BLM-Alaska Revised Sensitive Species Lists

Program Area: Special Status Species

Purpose: This Instruction Memorandum transmits the revised sensitive animal and plant lists for BLM-Alaska, and discloses the process used to develop the lists.

Policy/Action: Attachment 1 identifies 24 animals and 50 plants for sensitive species designation. As directed by BLM Manual 6840, the lists encompass federal candidate and proposed species, species that have been de-listed from the Endangered Species Act (ESA) during the past five years, and other species or distinct population segments that meet specific manual criteria. The 6840 Manual eligibility criteria and the locally-developed process to apply the criteria are consolidated in Attachment 2.

Data to inform the designations were obtained from both external and internal sources. External sources included several agencies and organizations responsible for identifying, tracking or managing species of concern, such as the Alaska Natural Heritage Program (ANHP), the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and Boreal Partners in Flight. Internal sources were primarily biologists and other resource specialists at the state and field levels. Spatial data on species occurrences were used when available to determine species overlap with BLM lands; when such data were incomplete or not available, inferences were made based on both general distribution patterns and habitat availability.

Bureau sensitive species and their habitats must be addressed during the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) planning process. This includes both land use and implementation-level planning efforts. Where appropriate, land use plans shall be sufficiently detailed to identify and resolve conflicts without deferring to implementation-level planning. Where that has not been achieved, project-level planning should consider site-specific management practices that would mitigate negative effects and promote species conservation. The intent is to minimize or

eliminate threats to the species, and improve habitat conditions such that sensitive status is no longer necessary. All BLM-Alaska offices should work cooperatively with other agencies, organizations, and interested parties to promote conservation of these species, and to develop effective inventory and monitoring strategies.

Timeframe: The sensitive species lists identified here are effective immediately, and will remain in place until another revision is completed and a new IM is issued. Revision should be initiated whenever sufficient new information supports adding or removing species, but shall not exceed five years from the effective date of this IM.

Changes in federal ESA status may trigger automatic updates to the Bureau sensitive lists irrespective of a completed formal revision process. This includes immediate adoption of newly announced candidate, proposed, and de-listed species, and immediate removal of designated threatened or endangered species.

Additional Information (Watch Lists): The sensitive species selection process identified several species for which data were insufficient to satisfy the 6840 Manual eligibility criteria, but otherwise indicated reason to re-evaluate their status in the future. See Attachment 3 for lists of these species. These species are hereby termed “watch species,” as they may warrant additional data collection to more accurately determine their status. The watch species are not sensitive species, they are not subject to sensitive species policy, and they have no implied relevance to the NEPA process. Instead, these species should be emphasized for additional inventory, monitoring, or research efforts, as funding and time allow. Furthermore, they should be re-evaluated during subsequent sensitive species revision efforts to determine whether inclusion may be warranted at that time.

Background: Bureau sensitive species are plants and animals identified in accordance with BLM Manual 6840 as needing special management attention to reduce the likelihood and need for future listing under the Endangered Species Act (ESA). The manual was updated in December 2008 with new eligibility criteria, necessitating list revision by all BLM State Directors.

Manual/Handbook Sections Affected: No manual or handbook sections are affected by this memorandum. However, manual section 6840 Special Status Species Management informed it.

Coordination: Please direct questions to the appropriate State Office program lead. These are Cara Staab (Wildlife; 907-271-3128), Matthew Varner (Fisheries; 907-271-3348), and Paul Krabacher (Plants; 907-271-3266).

Signed by:
Ted Murphy
State Director (Acting)

Authenticated by:
Anita R. Jette
Records Specialist

3 Attachments

- 1 – [BLM-Alaska Sensitive Animal and Plant Lists \(2 pp\)](#)
- 2 – [Criteria and Process for Designating Sensitive Species in Alaska \(2 pp\)](#)
- 3 – [BLM-Alaska Watch Lists \(2 pp\)](#)