

### 3.6 FEDERALLY LISTED ENDANGERED AND THREATENED SPECIES AND BLM SENSITIVE SPECIES

#### ***Federally Listed Endangered and Threatened Species***

Three federally listed, endangered, threatened and candidate species may occur within Churchill County, Nevada (USFWS 2005). These species include two threatened species (bald eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*) and Lahontan cutthroat trout (*Oncorhynchus clarki henshawi*)), and one candidate species (western yellow-billed cuckoo (*Coccyzus americanus occidentalis*)). The project area lacks the habitat necessary for any of these three species. Additionally, analysis of existing data shows no recorded occurrences of these three species within the project area.

#### ***BLM Sensitive Species***

BLM Manual 6840 defines sensitive species as "...those species not already included as BLM Special Status Species under (1) federal listed, proposed or candidate species; or (2) State of Nevada listed species. Native species may be listed as "sensitive" if it: (1) could become endangered or extirpated from a state or significant portion of its range; (2) is under review by the USFWS/NMFS; or (3) whose numbers or habitat capability are declining so rapidly that federal listing may become necessary, or (4) has typically small and widely dispersed populations; (5) inhabits ecological refugia, specialized or unique habitats; (6) is state-listed, but is better conserved through application of the BLM sensitive species status." It is BLM policy to provide sensitive species with the same level of protection that is given federal candidate species. The major objective of this protection is to preclude the need for federal listing (USDI-BLM 2003).

The special status species that may occur within the proposed drilling areas were identified through a search of the Nevada Natural Heritage Program (NNHP) database for Churchill County (NNHP 2004). Also included are species identified as special status species by the state of Nevada (NNHP 2004). These species are presented in Table 3-2. Species that require sand dune or wetland habitat have been excluded from consideration due to lack of these habitats within the proposed drilling areas.

There have been no documented occurrences of the species listed in Table 3-2 at the proposed well sites. Further, two reconnaissance-level surveys in 2006 did not observe any of the species listed in Table 3-2. However, baseline surveys conducted in 1987-1988 documented one burrowing owl on lands adjacent to the project location (WESTEC 1988).

Seven BLM sensitive bat species and one Nevada state special status bat species were identified as potentially occurring in Churchill County. A search of existing data shows that no site specific surveys have been conducted to determine the presence or absence of these bat species in the ROI. However, the habitat in the project area does not appear to contain any roosting habitat for these bat species. Although rocky outcrops in the Bunejug and Cocoon mountains may support roosting habitat for bats, there is no such habitat within the project area. Therefore, if present, bat species use of the project area would be limited to foraging for insects over vegetation.

**Table 3-2 Sensitive Species that May Occur in the Proposed Drilling Areas**

Common Name	Scientific Name
<b>Birds</b>	
Ferruginous hawk	<i>Buteo regalis</i>
Western burrowing owl	<i>Athene cunicularia hypugaea</i>
Swainson's hawk	<i>Buteo swainsoni</i>
Golden eagle	<i>Aquila chrysaetos</i>
Short-eared owl	<i>Asio flammeus</i>
Mountain plover	<i>Charadrius montanus</i>
Loggerhead shrike	<i>Lanius ludovicianus</i>
Black rosy-finch	<i>Leucosticte atrata</i>
Vesper sparrow	<i>Poocetes gramineus</i>
<b>Mammals</b>	
Pale Townsend's big-eared bat	<i>Corynorhinus townsendii</i>
Spotted bat	<i>Euderma maculatum</i>
Small-footed myotis	<i>Myotis ciliolabrum</i>
Fringed myotis	<i>Myotis thysanodes</i>
Little brown myotis	<i>Myotis lucifugus</i>
California myotis	<i>Myotis californicus</i>
Western red bat	<i>Lasiurus blossevillii</i>
Pallid bat	<i>Antrozous pallidus</i>
Silver-haired bat	<i>Lasionycteris noctivagans</i>
Hoary bat	<i>Lasiurus cinereus</i>
Long-eared myotis	<i>Myotis evotis</i>
Long-legged myotis	<i>Myotis volans</i>
Yuma myotis	<i>Myotis yumanensis</i>
Western pipistrelle	<i>Pipistrellus hesperus</i>
Brazilian free-tailed bat	<i>Tadarida brasiliensis</i>

Source : NNHP 2004 and BLM 2005

Notes:

<sup>1</sup>Nevada state status

S1 = Critically imperiled due to extreme rarity, imminent threats, and/or biological factors

S2 = Imperiled due to rarity and/or other demonstrable factors

S3 = Rare and local throughout its range, or with very restricted range, or otherwise vulnerable to extinction

S4 = Apparently secure, though frequently quite rare in parts of its range, especially at its periphery

S5 = Demonstrably secure, though frequently quite rare in parts of its range, especially at its periphery

SZ = Zero definable occurrences in the state, and therefore not of practical conservation concern, although native and regularly found there (usually long-distance migrants without regular and repeating breeding sites)

B = Breeding status within the state; rank for breeding occurrences only

N = Non-breeding status within the state; rank for non-breeding occurrences only

? = Not yet ranked at state scale

<sup>2</sup>BLM status

S = Nevada special status species – USFWS listed, proposed or candidate for listing, or protected by Nevada state law

N = Nevada special status species – designated sensitive by state office

P = Proposed Nevada special status species – designated proposed sensitive by state office

C = California special status species (see definitions S and N).