

**Route To:** 2670**Date:****Subject:** Updated Regional Forester's Special Status Species List**To:** Forest Supervisors

This letter officially updates the Regional Forester's Special Status Species (RFSSS) list, which includes federally threatened, endangered and proposed, and Region 6 sensitive species (Enclosure 1). In a change from previous versions of the RFSSS list, we are including the occurrence states (documented or suspected) for the Bureau of Land Management Oregon/Washington sensitive species so FS personnel fully understand the species distribution in Oregon and Washington on federal lands. Collectively, these species are referred to as "Special Status Species." The updated list reflects comments received from the forests in response to the April 26, 2021 email requesting review of the draft updated list.

The interagency special status and sensitive species program (ISSSSP) and development of the Special Status Species list are proactive approaches for meeting our obligations under the Endangered Species Act (ESA), the National Forest Management Act, and our National policy as stated in Forest Service Manual (FSM) 2670 and the U.S. Department of Agriculture Regulation 9500-4. The primary policy objectives are to recover federally listed and proposed species and, for sensitive species, to ensure that actions do not contribute to a loss of viability or cause a significant trend toward listing under the ESA. The effects of any action authorized, funded, or carried out by the Forest Service on a federally listed, federally proposed, or sensitive species will be analyzed in a Biological Evaluation or project NEPA analysis. The criteria for determining sensitive status for a species are enclosed (Enclosure 2).

All enclosures are available for download from the ISSSSP website at <http://www.fs.fed.us/r6/sfpnw/issssp/agency-policy/>. The list will remain static until the next update (normally about three years), except for changes relating to ESA status. You will be notified whenever ESA-related changes are made (for example, if a species becomes federally proposed or listed as threatened or endangered). These changes become effective as of the date in the Federal Register notice. Similarly, newly designated federal ESA candidate species are considered sensitive (if not already sensitive) throughout the region where the species is documented or suspected to occur effective as of the date in the Federal Register notice. For all federally listed, federally proposed and Region 6 sensitive species, each forest is responsible for tracking any changes in occurrence status (documented or suspected) on their unit and reporting those to RO staff. These changes become effective immediately for all relevant land management activities.

The updated RFSSS list included in Enclosure 1 will apply to all projects initiated on or after the date of this letter. Projects initiated prior to the date of this letter may use the updated RFSSS list transmitted in this letter or the RFSSS list that was in effect when the project was initiated. For the purpose of this letter, "initiated" means that a signed, dated document such as a project initiation letter, scoping letter, or Federal Register Notice has been completed for the project.



Field units are still required to utilize the process established for identification and vouchering of bryophytes, lichens, fungi, invertebrates, and vascular plants. This information helps to document the presence of these species so field units can support an analysis of them accordingly and supports conservation efforts. Specific information on how to package, label and mail vouchers is provided on the ISSSSP website at <http://www.fs.fed.us/r6/sfpnw/issssp/inventories/identification.shtml>.

If you have questions concerning information on the enclosed list or general questions about RFSSS, please contact John Chatel, john.chatel@usda.gov, or Clint Emerson, clint.emerson@usda.gov.

**GLENN
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Enclosure(s) 2

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