

EXEMPTIONS PROMULGATED FOR THE SYSTEM:
None.

HISTORY:
None.

Dated: February 8, 2018.

John Bravacos,

Senior Agency Official for Privacy.

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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Fish and Wildlife Service

[FWS-R4-ES-2017-N004;
FXES11140400000-189-FF04E00000]

Endangered Species Recovery Permit Applications

AGENCY: Fish and Wildlife Service, Interior.

ACTION: Notice of receipt of permit applications; request for comment.

SUMMARY: We, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, invite the public to comment on the following applications to conduct certain activities with endangered species. With some exceptions, the Endangered Species Act (ESA) prohibits activities with listed species unless a Federal permit is issued that allows such activities. The ESA

requires that we invite public comment before issuing these permits.

DATES: We must receive written data or comments on the applications at the address given in **ADDRESSES** by March 22, 2018.

ADDRESSES:

Reviewing Documents: Documents and other information submitted with the applications are available for review, subject to the requirements of the Privacy Act and Freedom of Information Act, by any party who submits a written request for a copy of such documents to the following office within 30 days of the date of publication of this notice (see **DATES**): U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Regional Office, Ecological Services, 1875 Century Boulevard, Atlanta, GA 30345 (Attn: Karen Marlowe, Permit Coordinator).

Submitting Comments: If you wish to comment, you may submit comments by any one of the following methods:

- *U.S. mail or hand-delivery:* U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service’s Regional Office (see above).
- *Email:* permitsR4ES@fws.gov.

Please include your name and return address in your email message. If you do not receive a confirmation from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service that we have received your email message, contact us directly at the telephone number listed in **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT**.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Karen Marlowe, Permit Coordinator, 404-679-7097 (telephone) or 404-679-7081 (fax).

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: We invite review and comment from local, State, and Federal agencies and the public on applications we have received for permits to conduct certain activities with endangered and threatened species under section 10(a)(1)(A) of the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended (16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.*; ESA), and our regulations in the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) at 50 CFR part 17. With some exceptions, the ESA prohibits activities with listed species unless a Federal permit is issued that allows such activities. The ESA requires that we invite public comment before issuing these permits.

Public Availability of Comments

Before including your address, phone number, email address, or other personal identifying information in your comment, you should be aware that your entire comment—including your personal identifying information—may be made publicly available at any time. While you can ask us in your comment to withhold your personal identifying information from public review, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so.

PERMIT APPLICATIONS

Permit application No.	Applicant	Species/numbers	Location	Activity	Type of take	Permit action
TE 63577A-2 ...	Mammoth Cave National Park, Mammoth Cave, KY.	Gray bat (<i>Myotis grisescens</i>), Indiana bat (<i>M. sodalis</i>), northern long-eared bat (<i>M. septentrionalis</i>).	Alabama, Georgia, Kentucky, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, and Virginia.	Presence/absence surveys.	Enter hibernacula, salvage dead bats, capture with mist nets or harp traps, handle, identify, collect hair samples, band, radio-tag, PIT-tag, light tag, and wing-punch.	Renewal and Amendment.
TE 57873C-0 ...	Arkansas Natural Heritage Commission, Little Rock, AR.	Yellowcheek darter (<i>Etheostoma moorei</i>).	Arkansas	Presence/absence surveys.	Capture, handle, identify, weigh, measure, and release.	New.
TE 102292-13 ...	Jeremy L. Jackson, Richmond, KY.	Gray bat (<i>Myotis grisescens</i>), Indiana bat (<i>M. sodalis</i>), northern long-eared bat (<i>M. septentrionalis</i>), and Virginia big-eared bat (<i>Corynorhinus townsendii virginianus</i>).	Alabama, Arkansas, Connecticut, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maine, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, Vermont, Virginia, West Virginia, Wisconsin, and Wyoming.	Presence/absence surveys, studies to document habitat use, and population monitoring.	Enter hibernacula or maternity roost caves, salvage dead bats, capture with mist nets or harp traps, handle, identify, collect hair samples, band, radio-tag, light-tag, and wing-punch.	Renewal.

PERMIT APPLICATIONS—Continued

Permit application No.	Applicant	Species/numbers	Location	Activity	Type of take	Permit action
TE 066980-5	J.W. Jones Ecological Research Center, Newton, GA.	Red-cockaded woodpecker (<i>Picoides borealis</i>).	Georgia	Population management and monitoring.	Capture, band, construct, and monitor artificial nest cavities and restrictors, translocate, and buccal swab.	Renewal.
TE 56749B-2	Patrick R. Moore, Harrison, AR.	Gray bat (<i>Myotis grisescens</i>), Indiana bat (<i>M. sodalis</i>), northern long-eared bat (<i>M. septentrionalis</i>), Ozark big-eared bats (<i>Corynorhinus townsendii ingens</i>), and Virginia big-eared bats (<i>C. t. virginianus</i>).	Alabama, Arkansas, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Vermont, Virginia, West Virginia, and Wisconsin.	Presence/absence surveys, studies to document habitat use, population monitoring, and to evaluate potential impacts of white-nose syndrome or other threats.	Enter hibernacula or maternity roost caves, salvage dead bats, capture with mist nets or harp traps, handle, identify, collect hair samples, band, radio tag, light-tag, swab, and wing-punch.	Renewal.
TE 206872-9	Joy M. O'Keefe, Indiana State University, Terre Haute, IN.	Gray bat (<i>Myotis grisescens</i>), Indiana bat (<i>M. sodalis</i>), northern long-eared bat (<i>M. septentrionalis</i>), and Virginia big-eared bat (<i>Corynorhinus townsendii virginianus</i>).	Alabama, Arkansas, Connecticut, Delaware, District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Vermont, Virginia, West Virginia, Wisconsin, and Wyoming.	Presence/absence surveys, studies to document habitat use, population monitoring, and to evaluate potential impacts of white-nose syndrome or other threats.	Enter hibernacula or maternity roost caves, salvage dead bats, capture with mist nets or harp traps, handle, identify, collect hair samples, band, radio tag, light-tag, swab, fungal lift tape, and wing-punch.	Renewal.
TE 61573C-0	University of Southern Mississippi, Hattiesburg, MS.	Louisiana quillwort (<i>Isoetes louisianensis</i>).	DeSoto National Forest, Mississippi.	Anatomic and genetic studies.	Collect leaf fragments, root tips, megaspores, and a whole individual voucher specimen.	New.
TE 64393C-0	Vanesse Hangen Brustlin, Inc., South Burlington, VT.	Florida bonneted bat (<i>Eumops floridanus</i>), gray bat (<i>Myotis grisescens</i>), Indiana bat (<i>M. sodalis</i>), northern long-eared bat (<i>M. septentrionalis</i>), Virginia big-eared bat (<i>Corynorhinus townsendii virginianus</i>).	Alabama, Arkansas, Connecticut, Delaware, District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Tennessee, Vermont, Virginia, West Virginia, and Wisconsin.	Presence/absence surveys.	Capture with mist nets, handle, identify, band, and radio-tag.	New.

PERMIT APPLICATIONS—Continued

Permit application No.	Applicant	Species/numbers	Location	Activity	Type of take	Permit action
TE 94704A-2	Dorothy C. Brown, Woodstock, GA.	Gray bat (<i>Myotis grisescens</i>), Indiana bat (<i>M. sodalis</i>), northern long-eared bat (<i>M. septentrionalis</i>), Virginia big-eared bat (<i>Corynorhinus townsendii virginianus</i>), Carolina northern flying squirrel (<i>Glaucomys sabrinus coloratus</i>), and bog turtle (<i>Clemmys muhlenbergii</i>).	Alabama, Arkansas, Connecticut, Delaware, District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Vermont, Virginia, West Virginia, Wisconsin, and Wyoming.	Presence/absence surveys, white-nose syndrome and genetic research, studies to document habitat use, and population monitoring.	Bats: Enter hibernacula or maternity roost caves, salvage, capture with mist nets or harp traps, handle, identify, collect hair samples, band, pit-tag, radio-tag, light-tag, wing-punch, and swab for white-nose syndrome testing; Carolina northern flying squirrel: Capture, handle, ear-tag, pit-tag, radio-tag, collect fur and tissue samples, and conduct den surveys; Bog turtle: Capture, mark, pit-tag, and radio-tag.	Renewal.
TE 56746B-3	Joseph S. Johnson, Ohio University, Athens, OH.	Gray bat (<i>Myotis grisescens</i>), Indiana bat (<i>M. sodalis</i>), and northern long-eared bat (<i>M. septentrionalis</i>).	Alabama, Ohio, and Pennsylvania.	Presence/absence surveys, studies to examine the impact of fire management and forest thinning on these bat species, and fall migration studies.	Capture with mist nets, handle, identify, band, nano tag, radio-tag, and wing-punch.	Renewal and Amendment.
TE 64767C-0	John H. Collins, Columbia, SC.	Red-cockaded woodpecker (<i>Picoides borealis</i>).	Florida, Georgia, North Carolina, and South Carolina.	Population management and monitoring.	Capture, band, construct, install, and monitor artificial nest cavities and restrictors, and translocate.	New.
TE 37900B-1	Sarah A. Lauerman, Gainesville, FL.	Red-cockaded woodpecker (<i>Picoides borealis</i>).	Osceola National Forest, Florida.	Population management and monitoring.	Capture, band, monitor nest cavities, and translocate.	Renewal.
TE 94728A-1	Environmental Consulting Operations, Inc., Benton, AR.	American burying beetle (<i>Nicrophorus americanus</i>).	Arkansas	Presence/absence surveys.	Trap and release	Renewal.
TE 48579B-4	Ecological Solutions, Inc., Roswell, GA.	Gray bat (<i>Myotis grisescens</i>), Indiana bat (<i>M. sodalis</i>), and northern long-eared bat (<i>M. septentrionalis</i>).	Alabama, Arkansas, Connecticut, Delaware, District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Vermont, Virginia, West Virginia, Wisconsin, and Wyoming.	Presence/absence surveys, studies to document habitat use, population monitoring, and white-nose syndrome surveillance.	Enter hibernacula or maternity roost caves, salvage dead bats, capture with mist nets or harp traps, handle, identify, collect hair samples, band, radio-tag, light-tag, swab, and wing-punch.	Renewal.
TE 80381A-1	Department of Defense (Army), Fort Campbell, KY.	Gray bat (<i>Myotis grisescens</i>), Indiana bat (<i>M. sodalis</i>), and northern long-eared bat (<i>M. septentrionalis</i>).	Fort Campbell, Kentucky.	Presence/absence surveys, studies to document habitat use, and population monitoring.	Enter hibernacula or maternity roost caves, capture with mist nets, band, and radio-tag.	Renewal.

Authority

We provide this notice under section 10(c) of the Act.

Leopoldo Miranda,

Assistant Regional Director, Ecological Services, Southeast Region.

[FR Doc. 2018-03302 Filed 2-16-18; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4333-15-P

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR**Fish and Wildlife Service**

[FWS-RX-ES-2017-N167];

[FXES1114080000-178-FF08E00000]

Notice of Availability; City of San Diego Vernal Pool Habitat Conservation Plan and Final Environmental Impact Report/Statement; San Diego County, California

AGENCY: Fish and Wildlife Service, Interior.

ACTION: Notice of availability of final environmental impact report/ environmental impact statement and habitat conservation plan.

SUMMARY: The City of San Diego (applicant) has applied to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) for an incidental take permit under section 10(a)(1)(B) of the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended (Act). The Applicant is requesting a permit to incidentally take 2 animal species and seeking assurances for 5 plant species (all are federally listed species) during the term of the proposed 30-year permit. The permit is needed to authorize take of listed animal species (including harm, death, and injury) resulting from covered activities. The proposed Vernal Pool Habitat Conservation Plan (VPHCP) plan area encompasses 206,124 acres in the southwestern portion of San Diego County within the State of California.

Pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), we advise the public of the availability of the final Environmental Impact Report (EIR)/Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) analyzing the impacts of issuing an incidental take permit based on the City's proposed VPHCP. The EIR portion of the joint document was prepared by the City in compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

DATES: A record of decision will be signed no sooner than 30 days after the publication of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) notice of the final EIS in the **Federal Register**. We must receive any comments by 5 p.m. on March 22, 2018.

ADDRESSES: Please send written comments to Mr. Mendel Stewart, Field Supervisor, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Carlsbad Fish and Wildlife Office, 2177 Salk Avenue, Suite 250, Carlsbad, California 92008. You may also submit comments by facsimile to (760) 431-5901.

Information and comments related specifically to the final EIR and the California Environmental Quality Act should be submitted to Myra Herrmann, Senior Environmental Planner, City of San Diego Planning Department, 1010 Second Avenue, East Tower, Suite 1200, MS 413, San Diego, CA 92101. You may also submit comments by email to PlanningCEQA@sandiego.gov.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: G. Mendel Stewart, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 2177 Salk Avenue, Suite 250, Carlsbad, California 92008; or by phone at (760) 431-9440.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:**Availability of Documents**

Documents available for public review include the final EIR/EIS with response to public comments received on the draft EIR/EIS, VPHCP, and the Implementing Agreement.

- For copies of the documents, please contact the Service by telephone at (760) 431-9440, or by letter to the Carlsbad Fish and Wildlife Office (see **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT**). Copies of the final EIR/EIS, VPHCP also are available for public review, by appointment, during regular business hours, at the Carlsbad Fish and Wildlife Office or at the City of San Diego. Copies are also on the City's website at <https://www.sandiego.gov/planning/programs/mscp/vphcp>.

Background

Section 9 of the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended (Act; 16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.*), and Federal regulations prohibit the "take" of fish and wildlife species federally listed as endangered or threatened. Take of federally listed fish or wildlife is defined under the Act as to harass, harm, pursue, hunt, shoot, wound, kill, trap, capture, or collect listed species, or attempt to engage in such conduct (16 U.S.C. 1538). "Harm" includes significant habitat modification or degradation that actually kills or injures listed wildlife by significantly impairing essential behavioral patterns, including breeding, feeding, and sheltering (50 CFR 17.3). Under limited circumstances, we may issue permits to authorize incidental take, which is defined under the Act as take that is incidental to, and not the purpose of, otherwise lawful activities. "Take"

under the ESA does not apply to plant species, and is therefore not prohibited under the ESA; however, the plant species identified in the VPHCP are listed on the Federal Permit as Covered Species in recognition of the conservation measures provided for them under the Plan and receive "No Surprises" regulatory assurances under the Federal Permit.

The Applicant seeks incidental take authorization for 2 animal species and assurances for 5 plant species. Collectively the 7 listed species are referred to as "Covered Species" by the VPHCP and include 2 crustaceans and 5 plant species (all listed). The permit would provide take authorization for both animal species and assurances for all plant species identified by the VPHCP as "Covered Species." Take authorized for listed covered animal species would be effective upon permit issuance.

The proposed permit would include the following 2 federally listed animal species: San Diego fairy shrimp (*Branchinecta sandiegonensis*; endangered) and Riverside fairy shrimp (*Streptocephalus woottoni*; endangered). The proposed permit would include assurances for the following 5 plant species included in the VPHCP: Otay Mesa mint (*Pogogyne nudiuscula*; endangered), San Diego mesa mint (*Pogogyne abramsii*; endangered), spreading navarretia (*Navarretia fossalis*; threatened), San Diego button-celery (*Eryngium aristulatum* var. *parishii*; endangered), and California Orcutt grass (*Orcuttia californica*; endangered).

The VPHCP Plan Area encompasses 206,124 acres and is intended to protect and sustain viable populations of native plant and animal species and their habitats in perpetuity through avoidance, minimization, and mitigation measures. It includes measures necessary to minimize and mitigate the impacts, to the maximum extent practicable, of potential proposed taking of federally listed species to be covered by the VPHCP, and the habitats upon which they depend, resulting from residential, commercial, and other development activities within the proposed plan area. The covered activities under the VPHCP are expected to include residential, commercial, and industrial development; airport operation; road and utility maintenance and construction; trail use; and vernal pool restoration and enhancement.

The VPHCP is a conservation plan for vernal pools and seven threatened and endangered vernal pool species that do not currently have federal coverage under the section 10(a)(1)(B) permit