



STATE-LISTED SPECIES HABITAT ASSESSMENT GUIDELINES: WILDLIFE

The Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program (NHESP) may request a State-listed Species Habitat Assessment for imperiled wildlife species. The assessment can be used by the applicant and the NHESP to minimize project or activity-related impacts to state-listed species and their habitats.

CONDUCTING THE ASSESSMENT

- The NHESP must pre-approve the biologist who will conduct the assessment. The biologist must demonstrate experience working with the species that is the subject of the habitat assessment.
- The assessment should address the entire project site, not just the portion within the proposed project "footprint". The habitat assessment must consider the landscape context of the project site, and identify and map off-site habitat features that may be of importance to the focal state-listed species.

REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

- The final document must include the following:
 - Cover Type Maps: Upland and wetland portions of the project site should be divided into land-use/land-cover types based upon dominant vegetation and existing development. Certified and potential Vernal Pools (see MassGIS) should be mapped, including all potential vernal pools observed in the field that do not appear on the MassGIS Potential Vernal Pools coverage.
 - Habitat Map/Existing Conditions: Each portion of the project site and adjacent land should be classified based upon its ability to provide habitat functions for the relevant species (e.g. feeding, breeding, nesting, etc.). A description should include important site features such as existing developed or disturbed areas, as well as a discussion of the quality of the habitat including calculations of acreages. Hydrology of wetlands and ponds should be described, as should the hydroperiod of any vernal pools. The map should be overlaid on an ortho-photo (see MassGIS) of the project site with an indication of the scale.
 - Representative photographs must be provided for all habitat types and key habitat features. Please indicate on a map photograph locations and the cardinal direction of view.
 - Impact Analysis: This section should include quantification of the impacts of the proposed project to state-listed species habitat, including calculations of acreages and a description of impacts to each specific habitat function (e.g., potential nesting, breeding, feeding, migratory, overwintering, estivating). Additionally, recommendations should be provided for protective measures, potential design changes that avoid and/or minimize impacts, and possible mitigation if applicable.
 - A list of references, experts, and any other resources used must also be included.
- If any state-listed species are observed, a Rare Animal or Plant Observation Form must be submitted to the NHESP within one month of the observation.
- Please submit one (1) paper copy and one (1) copy on CD of the final report to the NHESP.
 - Please note: If the full report is less than 4MB, you may email an electronic copy to the appropriate review biologist or assistant in lieu of sending a CD. Please be sure to include the NHESP Tracking Number in the email. A paper copy should still be mailed to the office.

Mail Report To:

Regulatory Review
Natural Heritage & Endangered Species Program
1 Rabbit Hill Road
Westborough, MA 01581