



WASHINGTON DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE

Management Recommendations for Washington's Priority Species FOR USE TO GUIDE SITE SPECIFIC MANAGEMENT OF PRIORITY SPECIES

Burrowing Owl (*Athene cunicularia*)

Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife's (WDFW) *Management Recommendations for Washington's Priority Species* do not have regulatory authority. Therefore, the following are recommendations only. This abbreviated version of a chapter in *Management Recommendations for Washington's Priority Species: Volume IV* (see http://wdfw.wa.gov/hab/phs/vol4/phs_vol4_birds.pdf) has been streamlined for easier application. Where applicable, these recommendations should be put into practice consistently across a landscape to be most effective. The following recommendations are not site-specific. Where available, a professional in a relevant field (e.g., wildlife biologist) should evaluate the site and surrounding landscape when applying these recommendations.

Attach parcel map with species location indicated if available.

General Recommendations

- Conserve all native vegetation and plant communities (e.g., shrub-steppe) in known or potential owl nesting habitat (e.g., sites observed with nesting owls, designated PHS use areas).
- Do not remove or kill burrowing mammalian species near known or potential owl nesting habitat (e.g., ground squirrels, badgers). Nearby owls likely require the presence of these mammals to create nesting burrows.
- Nesting burrows and nearby alternate burrows should be protected from disturbance by:
 - ▶ placing visible markers near the burrows to ensure that farm and other machinery do not collapse burrows.
 - ▶ reducing stocking rates and/or changing the timing or duration of grazing. Burrows in areas with sandy soils are especially vulnerable to trampling by livestock.
 - ▶ restricting oil and gas exploration, development, and other human disturbances within 2625 ft of owl nests between 15 February and 25 September.
 - ▶ entirely avoiding direct destruction of burrows through chaining (dragging a heavy chain over an area to remove shrubs), cultivation, and urban, industrial, or agricultural development.
 - ▶ regularly maintaining irrigation troughs as burrows often flood as a result of leaking.

Pesticide & Herbicide Use

- Do not apply carbofuran pesticides within 820 ft of active burrowing owl nests.
- Do not directly spray active burrowing owl nests with any pesticide.
- Do not fumigate, use treated bait or other means of poisoning nuisance animals in areas where burrowing owls are known or suspected to occur (e.g., sites observed with nesting owls, designated PHS use areas).
- Thoroughly survey known or suspected nesting areas for burrowing owls during the nesting season (March through September) when there are no alternatives to controlling burrowing mammals with poisoned bait or fumigation. Identify and mark nesting and alternate burrows by observing sentry owls, owl droppings and tracks, pellets, and dry, shredded animal dung.
- Restrict the use of treated grain to poison mammals to the months of January and February.

Mitigation

- Artificial burrows can be constructed to help expand populations and for transplanting burrowing owls back to their former range. State or federal wildlife agencies should be consulted for additional guidance prior to using artificial nesting burrows.
- Artificial perches such as fence posts or stakes can be used in areas where vegetation is greater than 2' tall.

I have read and understand the above recommendations (s) placed on Parcel # _____ located in the _____ Quarter of _____ Quarter of Section _____, Township _____, Range _____ (East/West meridian) with actual street address of _____.