

Identifying and protecting special status species

Desert Tortoise, Utah Prairie Dog and sage grouse have been identified

During the routing evaluation and development for the Zephyr project, several special status species have been identified. Special status species are those that are federally listed as threatened or endangered or are proposed or candidate species for listing under the Endangered Species Act of 1973, Bureau of Land Management sensitive species, U.S. Forest Service sensitive species, or species protected under laws such as the Migratory Bird Treaty Act and Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act. Species also can be listed by a state as threatened or endangered.



The Endangered Species Act seeks to protect the most critically endangered species and the ecosystems upon which they depend.



A more thorough analysis of the presence of special status ESA-listed species and their habitats along the proposed route will be conducted during the environmental review process. Based on that analysis, DATC will develop and implement avoidance and conservation measures to minimize potential impacts.



The following ESA-protected species are potentially present within the Zephyr study area:

Desert Tortoise (*Gopherus Agassizii*)

- 10 to 14 inches in length
- Have a high-domed shell and live about 30 to 50 years
- Inhabit areas of the Mojave Desert in California, Nevada, Arizona, New Mexico and Utah
- Spends at least 90 percent of their time underground in burrows
- Listed as threatened under the ESA on April 2, 1990



Utah Prairie Dog (*Cynomys Parvidens*)

- Found only in North America
- The western-most species of prairie dog
- Approximately 12 to 14 inches in length
- Inhabits three areas in southwestern Utah, including Awapa Plateau, Paunsaugunt and West Desert
- Found in elevations between 5,400 and 9,500 feet in mountain-type habitats
- Listed as threatened under the ESA on June 4, 1973



Greater Sage-grouse (*Centrocercus Urophasianus*)

- Largest grouse in North America weighing 4 to 5 pounds
- Dependent on sagebrush for cover and food
- Found in Washington, Oregon, Idaho, Montana, North Dakota, eastern California, Nevada, Utah, western Colorado, South Dakota and Wyoming
- Known for their elaborate courtship rituals; from late February to April, males congregate in leks and perform a "strutting display"
- A USFWS candidate species and BLM sensitive species

Gunnison Sage-grouse (*Centrocercus Minimus*)

- A distinct species of sage-grouse
- Differ from Greater Sage-grouse in size (about 2/3 smaller) and plumage; also produce different mating vocalizations
- Found only in eight small populations south of the Colorado River in southwestern Colorado and southeastern Utah
- Only about 4,000 breeding individuals remain
- A USFWS proposed endangered species

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