



**Humboldt
Redwood™**

Pacific Fisher Summary Report

2020

June 1, 2020



Bushnell

07-25-2015 11:54:59

Cover photo: Pacific Fisher at bait pack at Hely Creek.

Project Description

Title: Pacific Fisher Summary Report 2020

Purpose: Habitat conservation plan monitoring

Date Initiated: March 1999

Projected End Date: Ongoing

Managers: Sal Chinnici, Director, Forest Sciences, and Brad Mauney, Lead Wildlife Biologist

Executive Summary:

The Pacific fisher (*Pekania pennanti*) is a medium-sized carnivore in the weasel family. It is one of 17 covered species of the HRC Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP). The Pacific fisher is no longer a Federal or State Candidate for listing under the respective Endangered Species Acts. For California, the California Fish and Game Commission on August 5, 2015, made the finding that listing the Southern Sierra Nevada Evolutionarily Significant Unit (ESU) as threatened is warranted, and that listing the Northern California ESU is not warranted.

In November 2019, the Service published a revised proposed rule to list the West Coast DPS of fisher as threatened under the ESA. Based on the most recent data, the Service has now determined there are two distinct West Coast populations of fisher: the Southern Sierra Nevada DPS and the Northern California-Southern Oregon DPS. On 14 May 2020, the Service announced it will list the Southern Sierra Nevada DPS of fisher as endangered under the ESA. The Northern California-Southern Oregon DPS was not listed, as it is more widespread within its range, and has more diversity in ages, male to female ratios and breeding success. The fisher also remains a California Species of Special Concern.

The HCP conservation strategy for the Pacific fisher is a combination of a habitat-based approach with an additional structural component element. The management objective is to maintain enough suitable habitat to contribute to a sustainable population of the species in the northern California coastal province. Conservation measures include retention of late seral habitat, aquatic resource protection, measures to retain and recruit habitat structural components, and old growth habitat reserves (i.e., the Marbled Murrelet Conservation Areas or MMCAs).

Monitoring for this species has been through forest carnivore surveys to establish continued occupancy of HRC lands and tracking of seral stage distribution in Watershed Assessment Areas (WAAs) as discussed below. No surveys were conducted during the 2019-2020 period although there have continued to be incidental detections during that time. Here we are including the habitat summary information and the latest distribution map on HRC lands for your review.

Document Distribution List

Susan Sniado
CA Dept. of Fish & Wildlife
Northern California - North Coast Region
610 2nd Street
Eureka, CA 95501

John Peters
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Arcata Fish and Wildlife Office
1655 Heindon Rd.
Arcata, CA 95521

Clarence Hostler
NOAA Fisheries
1655 Heindon Rd.
Arcata, CA 95521

Ray Wedel
Cal Fire
118 Fortuna Blvd.
Fortuna, CA 95540

Dominik Scwhab
Cal Fire
135 Ridgway
Santa Rosa, CA 95401

Habitat Summary

Regarding maintenance of habitat for the Pacific fisher, the HCP states:

“Retention of late seral habitat on the ownership through the life of the permit is expected to provide sufficient habitat in terms of quantity, quality, and distribution to contribute to a viable population. Channel Migration Zones (CMZs) and Riparian Management Zones (RMZs) are expected to provide connectivity across the landscape. In many locations, CMZs and RMZs will intersect with other RMZs or be augmented by habitat subject to silvicultural restrictions (e.g. NSO activity sites, mass-wasting sites, or steep slopes adjacent to RMZs). These areas, MMCAs, and adjoining public lands will form an interconnecting network of habitat which is expected to provide opportunities for denning and resting sites in the Humboldt, Yager, and Van Duzen WAAs. HRC land within the Bear, Mattole, and Eel WAAs is not expected to provide blocks of late seral habitat through the life of the permit. Late seral and old growth habitat on public lands adjacent to HRC ownership in these two WAAs is expected to provide suitable habitat for the species.

The conservation measures to retain and recruit habitat structural components within and outside of RMZs across the ownership is expected to provide older forest legacies in younger stands when these stands reach a mid-successional seral stage. These legacy components are expected to provide suitable substrate for Pacific fisher denning and resting sites.”

The quantity and distribution of late seral habitat as of January 2020, according to the most recent stand inventory information as cross-walked to California Wildlife Habitat Relationships System (CWHR) types, and thus seral stage for the Watershed Assessment Areas (WAAs), is shown in Table . HRC’s HCP commitment is to maintain at least 10% late seral of forested lands by WAA (HCP 6.11). CMZs, RMZs, NSO activity sites, mass-wasting sites, and steep slope areas are tracked separately through other HCP programs and applied on each Timber Harvesting Plan (THP). In addition, the retention and recruitment of habitat structural components are tracked via individual THPs.

Pacific fisher habitat should also benefit over time as a result of the HRC conservation measure of retention of all old growth trees meeting the company’s policy, and use of uneven-aged silviculture, two additional measures not contemplated during the writing of the HCP and Biological Opinion. In addition, HRC continues to designate stands meeting the definition of High Conservation Value Forest (HCVF) according to the requirements of Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) certification, including an approximately 200 acre late seral forest on the north side of Long Ridge in the North Fork of the Mattole River watershed.

Table 1. Seral Types by Watershed Assessment Area (WAA), not including Mad River, as of January 2020.

WAA	Grass	Hardwood	Open	Young	Mid	Late	Totals	% Late Seral*
Humboldt Bay	0	386	194	12158	17266	8643	38647	22.4
Yager Creek	73	658	738	16957	10832	3928	33186	11.9
Van Duzen River	0	366	770	7645	11290	4060	24131	16.8
Eel River	561	5617	2153	28945	23812	13906	74994	18.7
Bear/Mattole River	3313	10389	551	7175	3106	10155	34689	32.4
Total	3947	17416	4406	72880	66306	40692	205647	

*Percent of forested lands (i.e., excluding grasslands, HCP 6.11.2.1)