



# DWR Staff Project Review Protocol

## Staff review of DWR projects Wildlife Information and Environmental Services

*Purpose: This document is to guide DWR staff who are performing on the ground projects resulting in natural habitat modifications about how to scope their projects for wildlife species and designated Adherence to this guidance ensures that any DWR project is consistent with state and federal Endangered Species acts and Virginia wildlife law and regulation.*

**Step 1:** Access the VA Fish and Wildlife Information Service (VAFWIS) from the VDWR website at: <https://services.dwr.virginia.gov/fwis/index.asp> Log in using the username and password provided. Also access the below bat data applications: Northern Long-eared Bat Regulatory Buffer Map: <https://dwr.virginia.gov/wildlife/bats/northern-long-eared-bat-application/> and the Little Brown and Tricolor Bat Hibernacula and Roosts: <https://www.DWR.virginia.gov/wildlife/bats/little-brown-bat-tri-colored-bat-winter-habitat-roosts-application/>

**Step 2:** Using the VAFWIS geographic search function, generate an Initial Project Assessment (IPA) report for the site using an at least 2 –mile buffer around project boundaries. See the “help” section for instructions.

**Step 3:** Review the below guidance regarding data returned by the VAFWIS and apply, as appropriate. Please contact your colleagues (list at end) regarding common wildlife species, the location of which may not be accurately depicted by VAFWIS which is most heavily populated by imperiled species and designated resource data.

### I. Special Status Species and Designated Wildlife Resources

**Species Observations (SppObs)** – The Species Observation dataset includes all verified species documentations maintained by DWR. If the IPA results indicate that a *listed species* has been documented from the project area, it is possible that the species is present on the project site, if suitable habitat exists. For those species for which DWR is listed as the Responsible Agency (see following table), contact the taxonomic expert listed below for information and guidance regarding protection of *listed species* as it relates to the proposed project.

DWR Nongame Taxonomic Experts:

<b>Reptiles/Amphibians:</b>	
John (JD) Kleopfer 804-829-6703 <a href="mailto:John.Kleopfer@DWR.virginia.gov">John.Kleopfer@DWR.virginia.gov</a>	
<b>Birds:</b>	
Jeff Cooper (raptors) 540-538-1021 <a href="mailto:Jeff.Cooper@DWR.virginia.gov">Jeff.Cooper@DWR.virginia.gov</a>	Sergio Harding 804-367-0143 <a href="mailto:Sergio.Harding@DWR.virginia.gov">Sergio.Harding@DWR.virginia.gov</a>
<b>Mollusks/Aquatic Invertebrates:</b>	
Brian Watson 434-525-7522 <a href="mailto:Brian.Watson@DWR.virginia.gov">Brian.Watson@DWR.virginia.gov</a>	
<b>Fishes:</b>	
Mike Pinder (except Atlantic sturgeon) 540-961-8387 <a href="mailto:Mike.Pinder@DWR.virginia.gov">Mike.Pinder@DWR.virginia.gov</a>	Clinton Morgeson (Atlantic sturgeon) 804-829-6580 <a href="mailto:Clinton.Morgeson@DWR.virginia.gov">Clinton.Morgeson@DWR.virginia.gov</a>
<b>Mammals/Terrestrial Invertebrates:</b>	
Rick Reynolds 540-248-9360 <a href="mailto:Rick.Reynolds@DWR.virginia.gov">Rick.Reynolds@DWR.virginia.gov</a>	
<b>Eastern Shore: (birds, sea turtles, sea mammals)</b>	
Ruth Boettcher 757-709-0766 <a href="mailto:Ruth.Boettcher@DWR.virginia.gov">Ruth.Boettcher@DWR.virginia.gov</a>	

**Threatened and Endangered Species Waters (TEWaters)** – The Threatened and Endangered Species Waters (TEWaters) dataset includes the locations of waters from which *listed species* have been documented and which agency biologists have determined are currently occupied by such species. If work in the TEWater or its tributaries is proposed, we recommend coordination with the DWR taxonomic expert listed above for conservation recommendations. Otherwise, we offer the below general guidance regarding protection of TEWaters:

a) If a waterbody is designated a TEWater due to the presence of listed fishes, mussels, snails, or crayfish, we recommend the following to best protect such listed aquatic species (and the resources upon which they depend) from harm that may result from nearby agriculture, silviculture, habitat management or restoration, and/or land development:

- We recommend protecting from impacts an undisturbed natively vegetated buffer of at least 100 ft on both sides of all intermittent tributaries to the designated water; and/or
- We recommend protecting from impacts a natively vegetated buffer of at least 200 ft on both sides of all perennial tributaries to designated waters; and/or
- We recommend protecting from impacts a natively vegetated buffer of at least 300 ft on both sides of all designated waters.

b) If a waterbody is designated a TE Water due to the presence of wood turtles, we recommend the following (in addition to the above), to best protect this listed semi-aquatic species (and the resources upon which it depends) from harm that may result from nearby silviculture, habitat management or restoration, and/or land development:

- Because wood turtles must have access to freshwater streams during hibernation as well as access to adjacent uplands, where they forage, mate, and nest, we recommend coordination with us not only for instream work, but also for any work in uplands adjacent to (within 900 feet of) the designated water.

**Anadromous Fish Use Areas** – The Anadromous Fish Use Areas (AnadFish Waters) dataset includes the locations of streams known to provide migratory and spawning habitats for anadromous fishes. We recommend 1) adherence to recommended Time of Year Restrictions (TOYRs; see end of document for access information); and 2) coordination with Alan Weaver anytime work in designated AnadFish Waters and/or their tributaries is proposed. Otherwise, we offer the below general guidance regarding protection of AnadFish Waters:

- We recommend protecting from impacts a undisturbed natively vegetated buffer of at least 100 ft on both sides of all perennial tributaries to the designated water; and/or
- We recommend protecting from impacts a natively vegetated buffer of at least 200 ft on both sides of designated waters.

Anadromous Fishes/Fish Passage Expert:

Alan Weaver  
804-367-6795 or [Alan.Weaver@DWR.virginia.gov](mailto:Alan.Weaver@DWR.virginia.gov)

**Northern Long-Eared Bat (NLEB) Regulatory Buffers** - This dataset includes regulatory buffers on NLEB hibernacula, NLEB roost trees, NLEB acoustic captures, and NLEB mist-net captures. If your project is located within these buffers and proposes tree clearing, timbering, or prescribed fire, of suitable habitat, coordinate with Rick Reynolds to determine if you need to adhere to any conservation measures. To determine if your project site is located within one of the regulatory buffers, access those data here:

- Northern Long-eared Bat (NLEB) Regulatory Buffers: <https://dwr.virginia.gov/wildlife/bats/northern-long-eared-bat-application/>

**Little Brown and Tri-color Bat hibs and Roosts** – This dataset includes documented bat hibernacula and roosts and regulatory buffers around those features. Any forestry activities (tree removal, timbering, prescribed fire) within a regulatory buffer on these features should be coordinated with Rick Reynolds.

- You must access these data at the following link: <https://www.DWR.virginia.gov/wildlife/bats/little-brown-bat-tri-colored-bat-winter-habitat-roosts-application/>

**Sea Turtle Nesting Beaches** – This dataset includes stretches of beach/shoreline in Virginia known to support nesting of sea turtles, all of which are federally- and state-listed. We recommend coordination with Ruth Boettcher regarding any activities proposed on these designated beaches/shorelines. Otherwise, we support protection of these areas and adjacent shorelines from land development and/or incompatible activities.

**Wild Trout Waters** – The Cold Water Streams dataset includes the locations of waters designated as coldwater habitat.

Many of these streams represent wild trout streams. To best protect these waters and the species they are known to support, we recommend 1) adherence to the TOYR for instream work and 2) coordination with the Regional Aquatic Manager anytime work in designated Trout Waters and/or their tributaries is proposed. Otherwise, we offer the below general guidance regarding protection of Trout Waters:

- We recommend protecting from impacts a natively vegetated buffer of at least 100 ft on both sides of all perennial tributaries to the designated water; and/or
- We recommend protecting from impacts a naturally vegetated buffer of at least 200 ft on both sides of designated waters.

**Stockable Trout Waters** – The Cold Water Streams dataset also includes the locations of waters currently stocked with trout by DWR as well as those suitable for stocking, but perhaps not currently stocked. To best protect these waters and the species they are known to or capable of supporting, we recommend coordination with the Regional Aquatics Manager anytime work in Stockable Trout Waters is proposed. Otherwise, we offer the below general guidance regarding protection of Trout Waters:

- We recommend protecting from impacts a natively vegetated buffer of at least 100 ft on both sides of all perennial tributaries to the designated water; and/or
- We recommend protecting from impacts a naturally vegetated buffer of at least 200 ft on both sides of designated waters.

**Colonial Waterbird (CWB) colonies** – This DWR-maintained dataset includes documented locations of colonial waterbird colonies. To ensure protection of the colony and the species known to nest within it, we recommend 1) adherence to TOYRs, and 2) coordination with Ruth Boettcher or Sergio Harding for any land development or timbering activities proposed to occur within 0.5 miles of a documented colony. Otherwise, we offer the below general guidance regarding protection of colonial waterbird colonies:

- We recommend preserving, planting, or enhancing an undisturbed naturally vegetated buffer of at least 500 ft around the waterbird colony. This provides the colony with a line of sight and habitat buffer, providing nesting activity protection as well as habitat protection to ensure suitability for future nesting seasons.

**Bald Eagle Concentration Area and Roosts (BECAR)** - This dataset includes bald eagle concentration areas (defined as 660 feet landward or channelward of the shoreline) and roosting sites documented by DWR and/or our partners. Significant habitat alteration, location of water-dependent facilities or other recreational and commercial activities within certain distances of eagle nests, concentration zones, or roosts may result in adverse impacts upon eagles. Therefore, we recommend that 1) you comply with the Virginia [management guidelines for landowners](#); and 2) that you coordinate with Jeff Cooper and/or the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service regarding possible impacts upon bald eagles or the need for a federal bald eagle take permit associated with your project.

**DCRNH ConSites and EOs** - These are data shared with us by DCRNH for *our internal use only*. It represents conservation sites and elemental occurrences of species and resources they track. If any *listed plants or insects* are known from the project area, please coordinate your project with DWR's Environmental Services Section.

*\*Natural Heritage Data Explorer (NHDE) users: if your project site falls within an area called out by modeling of suitable habitat for a listed plant or insect, even if no EO or ConSite for such species is returned by VAFWIS or the NHDE, we encourage you to coordinate your project with DCRNH as indicated above, but such coordination is voluntary.*

**DWR Lands (boat ramps, WMA's, Fish Hatcheries, lakes)** – The DWR Lands dataset includes locations of all DWR facilities. We support development of easement restrictions protective of our facilities and access to them by the public and our staff; and the watersheds/drainages upstream of our hatcheries and fishing lakes. Please coordinate any projects at or near one of our facilities with the Regional Facilities Manager.

### **Additional Information**

Additional information, documents, and protocols including the Time of Year Restriction (TOYR) table are available on our website at: <https://www.DWR.virginia.gov/environmental-programs/environmental-services-section/>

**Common Wildlife Species and Resources:** Use the contact list below to identify a contact to answer any questions or provide information regarding common wildlife and/or wildlife-related recreation in your area.

DWR Region	Terrestrial Species	Aquatic Species	Lands/Facilities
I	David Norris 804-829-6580 <a href="mailto:David.Norris@dwr.virginia.gov">David.Norris@dwr.virginia.gov</a>	Clinton Morgeson 804-829-6580 <a href="mailto:Clinton.Morgeson@dwr.virginia.gov">Clinton.Morgeson@dwr.virginia.gov</a>	Jennifer Allen 804-367-1000 <a href="mailto:Jenn.Allen@dwr.virginia.gov">Jenn.Allen@dwr.virginia.gov</a>
II	Matthew Overstreet 434-525-7522 <a href="mailto:Matthew.Overstreet@dwr.virginia.gov">Matthew.Overstreet@dwr.virginia.gov</a>	Scott Smith 434-525-7522 <a href="mailto:Scott.Smith@dwr.virginia.gov">Scott.Smith@dwr.virginia.gov</a>	Pete Schula 434-252-7522 <a href="mailto:Pete.Schula@dwr.virginia.gov">Pete.Schula@dwr.virginia.gov</a>
III	Lisa Sztukowski 246-783-4860 <a href="mailto:Lisa.Sztukowski@dwr.virginia.gov">Lisa.Sztukowski@dwr.virginia.gov</a>	Jeff Williams 276-783-4860 <a href="mailto:Jeff.Williams@dwr.virginia.gov">Jeff.Williams@dwr.virginia.gov</a>	Tom Hampton 276-783-4860 <a href="mailto:Tom.Hampton@dwr.virginia.gov">Tom.Hampton@dwr.virginia.gov</a>
IV	Jaime Sajecki 540-248-9360 <a href="mailto:Jaime.Sajecki@dwr.virginia.gov">Jaime.Sajecki@dwr.virginia.gov</a>	Stephen Reeser 540-248-9360 <a href="mailto:Steve.Reeser@dwr.virginia.gov">Steve.Reeser@dwr.virginia.gov</a>	Matt Kline 540-248-9360 <a href="mailto:Matt.Kline@dwr.virginia.gov">Matt.Kline@dwr.virginia.gov</a>

Private Lands Wildlife Biologist Point of Contact:

Marc Puckett  
434-392-8328  
[Marc.Puckett@DWR.virginia.gov](mailto:Marc.Puckett@DWR.virginia.gov)

**Species Special Status Table:**

Species Status and Type	Responsible Agency
Federal Endangered (FE) <i>Animals</i> <i>Plants and insects</i>	USFWS (or NOAA) and DWR USFWS and VDCR-DNH
Federal Threatened (FT) <i>Animals</i> <i>Plants and insects</i>	USFWS (or NOAA) and DWR USFWS and DCR-DNH
Federal Candidate (FC) <i>Animals</i> <i>Plants and insects</i>	USFWS USFWS and DCR-DNH
Federal Proposed (FP)	USFWS (at applicant's discretion)
Federal Species of Concern (FS)	USFWS (at applicant's discretion)
State Endangered (SE) <i>Animals</i> <i>Plants and insects</i>	DWR DCR-DNH
State Threatened (ST) <i>Animals</i> <i>Plants and insects</i>	DCR-DNH
Wildlife Action Plan (WAP) Species of Greatest Conservation Need (SGCN)^	DWR (at applicant's discretion)

*Table Notes:*

NOAA Fisheries Service has jurisdictional authority over protection of sea turtles in Virginia's waters (not nesting sites) and for Atlantic sturgeon.

The VA Dept. of Agriculture and Consumer Services (VDACS) retains legal authority for the protection of all plants and listed insects. However, through a memorandum of agreement with VDCR-DNH, coordination regarding these resources should be initiated with VDCR-DNH

See [www.bewildvirginia.org](http://www.bewildvirginia.org) for more information about the Virginia Wildlife Action Plan

Access TOYR table and other documents from <https://dwr.virginia.gov/wies/>