

Minimum Qualifications
Obtaining a Section 10(a)(1)(A) Recovery Permit
for the Arroyo Toad (*Anaxyrus californicus*)
Effective Date: March 1, 2024

A. Introduction

This document identifies the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's (Service) recommended minimum qualifications for conducting non-protocol surveys involving the capture and handling of arroyo toad to aid in its recovery.

The arroyo toad was federally listed as an endangered species in 1994 (59 FR 64859). Surveys for documenting presence or probable absence (*i.e.*, "presence/absence surveys") for arroyo toads, in accordance to accepted protocols, do not require a recovery permit. Generally, nighttime surveys for arroyo toads include visual observation and aural detection of calling males, which does not necessitate any handling of toads ([Survey Protocol for the Arroyo Toad](#) [19 May 1999]).

A permit is required for any activity that requires handling of toads. Collection of arroyo toad is a form of "take" as defined under the Endangered Species Act (Act), as amended in 1973, and therefore is prohibited under section 9 of the Act unless a section 10(a)(1)(A) scientific permit is issued. The lawful collection (including capture or handling of arroyo toads of any life stage) requires a recovery permit and a valid study proposal, which must include enough information to allow accurate evaluation for recovery purposes. In limited cases, the capture, translocation, and monitoring of arroyo toads in conjunction with development and other construction projects has been authorized by the Service through other permitting mechanisms; this includes formal consultation under section 7 of the Act, or through a Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) under section 10(a)(1)(B) of the Act. A recovery permit is not required if coverage is authorized under these two instances.

Authorized surveys that involve capture for purposes other than presence/absence (*e.g.*, disease monitoring, demographics, or behavioral studies) will be determined on the merit of the research proposal and the qualifications of those requesting the activity, on a case-by-case basis. We anticipate researchers with expertise in herpetology and with demonstrable ability to distinguish the calls of anurans in California, to identify the life stages of arroyo toads and differentiate them from co-occurring species, and to safely capture, handle and release arroyo toads and their tadpoles will be most qualified to conduct targeted capture.

B. Minimum Qualifications for Capture and Handling of Arroyo Toad

A minimum of 20 hours of positive field surveys with handling of arroyo toads (adult, juvenile, and larval toads) under experienced researcher(s) with a valid recovery permit is required. We expect the applicant to demonstrate:

1. Competency in biosecurity, with an emphasis in disinfecting equipment and clothing before and after entering aquatic habitat;
2. Competency in capturing all life stages, regardless of method, without harm;

3. Familiarity with suitable habitats for the species;
4. Familiarity with and ability to differentiate vocalizing adult male arroyo toads from co-occurring species; and
5. Familiarity with and ability to differentiate all other life stages from co-occurring species.

C. Verifiable Documentation

The applicant must keep accurate records and document their field experiences acquired under permitted supervision. The following information must be submitted with their application for a recovery permit.

1. Experiences with arroyo toad should be presented in the [Service's Field Experience Tracking Table](#). The applicant may submit their own tracking document¹ in lieu of the Service's form. However, all information requested in the above table shall be provided, including:
 - a. The title of the report (identified on the official survey report submitted to the Carlsbad or Ventura Fish and Wildlife Office Recovery Permit Coordinator);
 - b. Dates and hours of field experience, and the type of activity conducted;
 - c. Specific location and county where the activity occurred;
 - d. Name of supervising permittee and their permit number; and
 - e. Number and age class of captured and handled arroyo toads and tadpoles.

¹Copies of field notes shall be retained and made available upon request.

2. Letters of recommendation from each supervising permittee describing the applicant's ability to independently conduct surveys for and capture arroyo toads and their tadpoles, verifying their field experience, and confirming their ability to diagnose arroyo toads and tadpoles from co-occurring species.

For additional recovery permitting information, please contact the applicable Fish and Wildlife Office Recovery Permit Coordinator. Contact information can be found [at the Pacific Southwest Region Recovery Permit Contacts webpage](#).

These Minimum Qualifications may be revised at any time.