



PACIFIC SOUTHWEST REGION

PACIFIC SOUTHWEST RECOVERY PERMIT PROGRAM GUIDE

JANUARY 1, 2026



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WHAT IS A RECOVERY PERMIT?

The mission of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) is working with others to conserve, protect, and enhance fish, wildlife, plants, and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. One of the tools available to the USFWS to accomplish this mission is to issue recovery permits for scientific purposes, enhancement of propagation, or enhancement of survival. The purpose of this document is to provide a resource for individuals, organizations, and businesses seeking a USFWS Recovery permit in [Region 8](#) (California, Nevada, and the Klamath Basin of Oregon). Other [Regions](#) may have different requirements and processes.

The USFWS issuance of recovery permits is authorized under Section 10(a)(1)(A) of the Endangered Species Act (Act), 16 U.S. Code § 1539 where it states: *“The Secretary may permit, under such terms and conditions as they shall prescribe— (A) any act otherwise prohibited by section 9 for scientific purposes or to enhance the propagation or survival of the affected species, including, but not limited to, acts necessary for the establishment and maintenance of experimental populations pursuant to subsection (j)”*.

Essentially, the purpose of a recovery permit is to permit activities that would result in “take” of a federally listed species but will ultimately benefit the recovery of that species. The term “take” means to harass, harm, pursue, hunt, shoot, wound, kill, trap, capture, or collect, or attempt to engage in any such conduct.

You can learn more about the Endangered Species Act [here](#).

DO I NEED A RECOVERY PERMIT?

Recovery permits or 10(a)(1)(A) permits, formally known as “Scientific purposes, enhancement of propagation, or enhancement of survival permits”, are just one of the many types of USFWS permits that exist. Refer to this guide, [Do I Need a Permit?](#), to learn about the type(s) of permit you may need. The guide provides an overview of USFWS-managed permits and links to other agencies, from which you may need additional permits. Beyond Federal permitting requirements, you may need a permit issued by your state wildlife agency, such as a scientific collecting permit. Contact your state wildlife agency for more information.

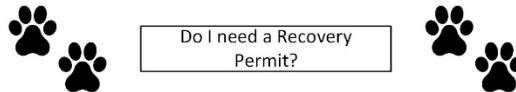
In what situations do you need a recovery permit? (see [Appendix E](#) for real life scenarios)

- Certain activities such as surveys that involve capture, handling, and/or harassment of federally listed species.
- Recovery actions that would result in purposeful [take](#) of a listed species and be otherwise prohibited under section 9 of the Act.
- Academic or professional research projects for scientific purposes or to enhance the propagation or survival of a listed species.
- Partnering with a State, Federal, or local agency for scientific purposes or to enhance the propagation or survival of a listed species.
- Remove or reducing to possession federally listed plants from Federal lands

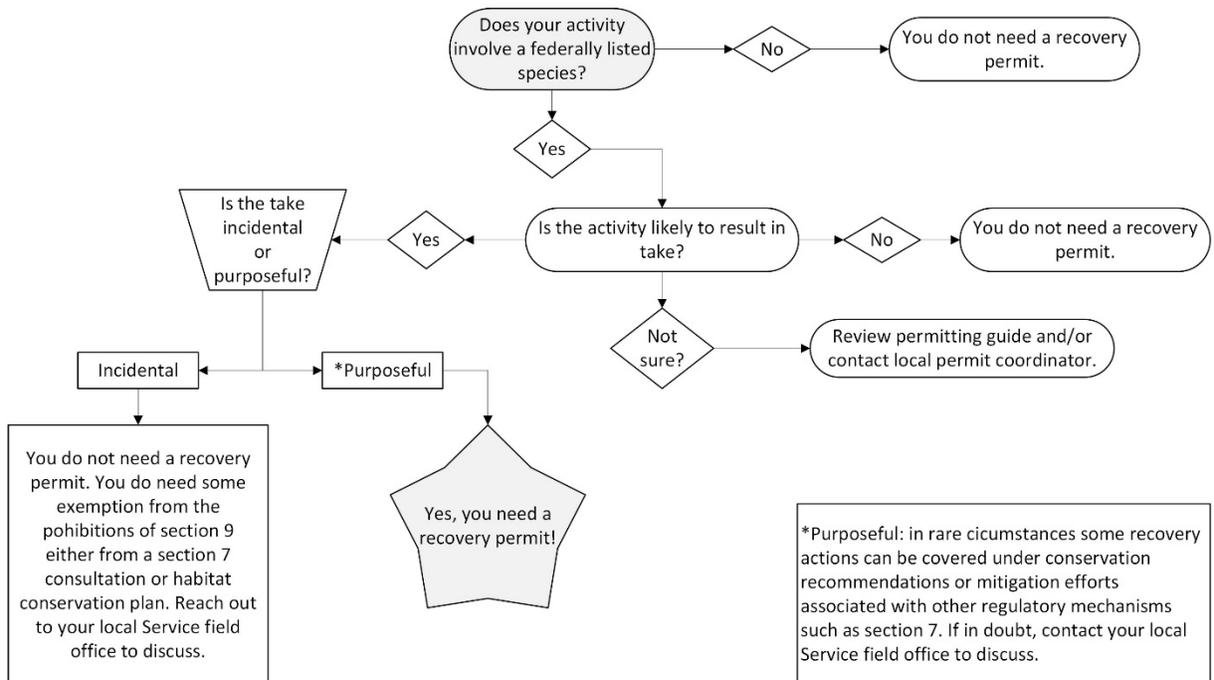
In what situations would you not need a recovery permit?

- Work involving a non-federally listed species, a species proposed for listing, a candidate for listing, or a species under review for listing.

- Activities that do not result in take including harassment.
- Activities that could result in *incidental* (i.e., not purposeful) take of a federally listed species (there are other ways to get coverage for this).
- Activities conducted as conservation or mitigation measures in an active Biological Opinion or Habitat Conservation Plan.
- When samples or data, which have already been collected, are available to use.
- Recovery actions for federally listed plants on non-Federal lands



Recovery 10(a)1(A) permits provide protections to individuals who are conducting activities that would otherwise be prohibited by section 9 of the Endangered Species Act for scientific purposes or to enhance the propagation or survival of the affected species. This flowchart is intended to help you identify if you need a recovery permit to conduct your activities. Please note, other state or Federal permits may be required depending on the activity and/or species.



HOW DO I GET A RECOVERY PERMIT?

BEFORE GETTING STARTED

1. You've identified that you need a recovery permit; great! You're in the right place.
2. Check to see if you meet the minimum qualifications to get a recovery permit for the species you intend to work with. Identify your species of interest and reach out to currently permitted individuals. You may find species information at [Find a Species | U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service](#) where you can refine your search to a species lead to find contact information. You can also email permitsR8ES@fws.gov to request a list of relevant permittees in your area.
 - You may be able to work individually or be supervised under someone else's permit.
 - Through supervision, you may be able to accrue experience with that species to bolster your permit application.
 - For some species, there are workshops available with a permitted individual who can provide experience and teach the skills necessary to be permitted.
3. Make sure you have funding for your project. There may be grants available for specific projects of interest to the Federal, State, or local governments. One resource is [grants.gov](#) which houses Federal funding opportunities. Additionally, you may contact the [relevant USFWS Field Offices](#) directly to learn about those opportunities.
4. All recovery permit applications are submitted online via ePermits. You must set up an ePermits account to submit and manage your application. Visit the [ePermits website](#) to get started and visit the [login guide page](#) for helpful videos. If you are having technical issues, please contact the [ePermits Help Center](#).
 - There are two types of accounts within ePermits: Individual (also known as Consumer) accounts and Business accounts.
 - **Individual accounts** are for if you want a permit for your own individual work, independent of the business you work for. You, as the applicant, would be the person legally responsible for the permit.
 - **Business accounts** are those associated with an organization and require identifying a "Principal Officer", the person that will be legally responsible for the permit. Business accounts also require having a primary contact (this person can be the same or different than the Principal Officer). The primary contact is the main point of contact for the account and permits associated with them. Always check to see if an account exists for your business before creating a new account.

REQUIREMENTS FOR CONSIDERATION OF A RECOVERY PERMIT

Many listed species have required [Minimum Qualifications](#) to demonstrate adequate species and field experience. In these cases, the Minimum Qualifications must be met by the permit applicant to receive a recovery permit. Not all species currently have published Minimum Qualification documents. You may email the applicable [Field Office Recovery Permit Coordinators](#) to inquire about qualifications for those species without published Minimum Qualification documents.

Below is a checklist to keep track of what materials may be required for a recovery permit application. This section contains descriptions of those materials. All recovery permit applications require the following:

- ❑ **3-200-59 Application form**
 - A completed 3-200-59: Scientific Purposes, Enhancement of Propagation, or Survival Permits form. This is where you will identify the species and activities requested under a recovery permit. [Download a complete blank application form](#). Please create a PDF and provide a response to each question. If a given question is not applicable, indicate N/A.
 - Note that as of May 2024, the 3-200-59 application form and Section E for ‘new’ applications only was fully digitized in ePermits. Therefore, a separate PDF Section E is not required for ‘new’ applications.
- ❑ **Application Fee**
 - Paid through ePermits on pay.gov
 - A fee of \$100 for new applications and renewals, and \$50 to amend an existing permit.
 - Fee exemptions may be granted to Federal, Tribal, State, or local government agencies or to any individual or institution acting on behalf of such agency. This also includes any individuals associated with public colleges or universities. [See the regulations here](#). Please submit evidence of your affiliation with any of the listed entities with your application if you apply fee exempt; a scan of your identification badge or using a .gov email is most often accepted.
- ❑ **Maps of Proposed Study Location**
 - Maps of the proposed area where requested activities will be carried out (refer to the [National Map Guide](#)).
- ❑ **1-2 Letters of Reference**
 - One to two letters of reference from already permitted individuals for the species requested. These letters must address the applicants’ level of experience with the requested species and activities. Many listed species with [Minimum Qualifications](#) also have further requirements for information to be provided in the letters of reference.
- ❑ **Resume/CV**
- ❑ **Experience tracking sheet**
 - Experience tracking spreadsheet that clearly identifies that the applicant has met the required minimum qualifications to work with the species (See [Appendix C](#)). Please note that the applicant needs to demonstrate that they have adequate experience with the activities they are requesting. For example, if an applicant is requesting to capture, handle, and release a listed species, their experience tracking spreadsheet needs to identify that they have done this activity (i.e., surveys would not count towards capture and handling experience).
- ❑ **Successful Passing of Exam for the below-mentioned species**
 - Proof of passing a practical identification exam is required when proposing to work with any of the following species which occur within the jurisdiction of the Pacific Southwest Region:
 - Casey's June beetle (*Dinacoma caseyi*)
 - Quino checkerspot butterfly (*Euphydryas editha quino*)
 - El Segundo blue butterfly (*Euphilotes battoides allyni*)
 - Laguna Mountains skipper (*Pyrgus ruralis lagunae*)
 - Delhi sands flower-loving fly (*Rhaphiomidas terminatus abdominalis*)
 - Palos Verdes blue butterfly (*Glaucoopsyche lygdamus palosverdesensis*)

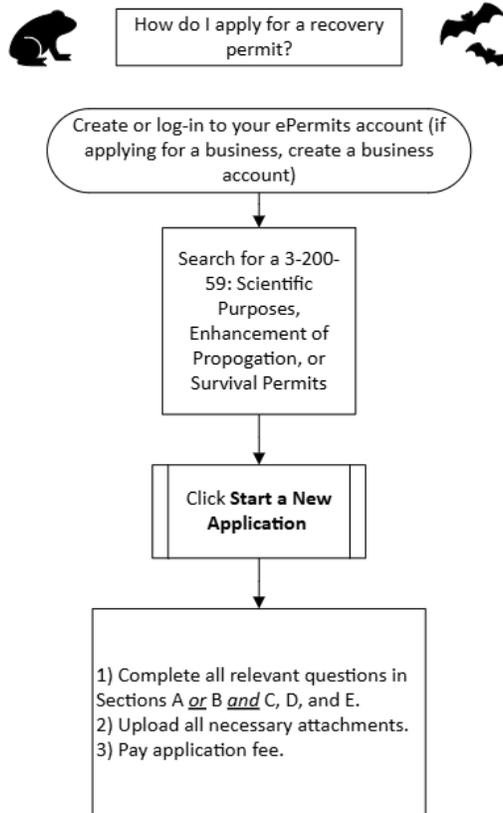
- Conservancy fairy shrimp (*Branchinecta conservatio*)
- Longhorn fairy shrimp (*Branchinecta longiantenna*)
- Riverside fairy shrimp (*Streptocephalus woottoni*)
- San Diego fairy shrimp (*Branchinecta sandiegonensis*)
- Vernal pool fairy shrimp (*Branchinecta lynchi*)
- Vernal pool tadpole shrimp (*Lepidurus packardi*)
- More information is available on our [Practical Exams and Study Guides for Recovery Permits in the Pacific Southwest Region](#) Page

Recovery permit applications requesting specialized activities other than presence/absence surveys will require the following documents in addition to the required information listed above:

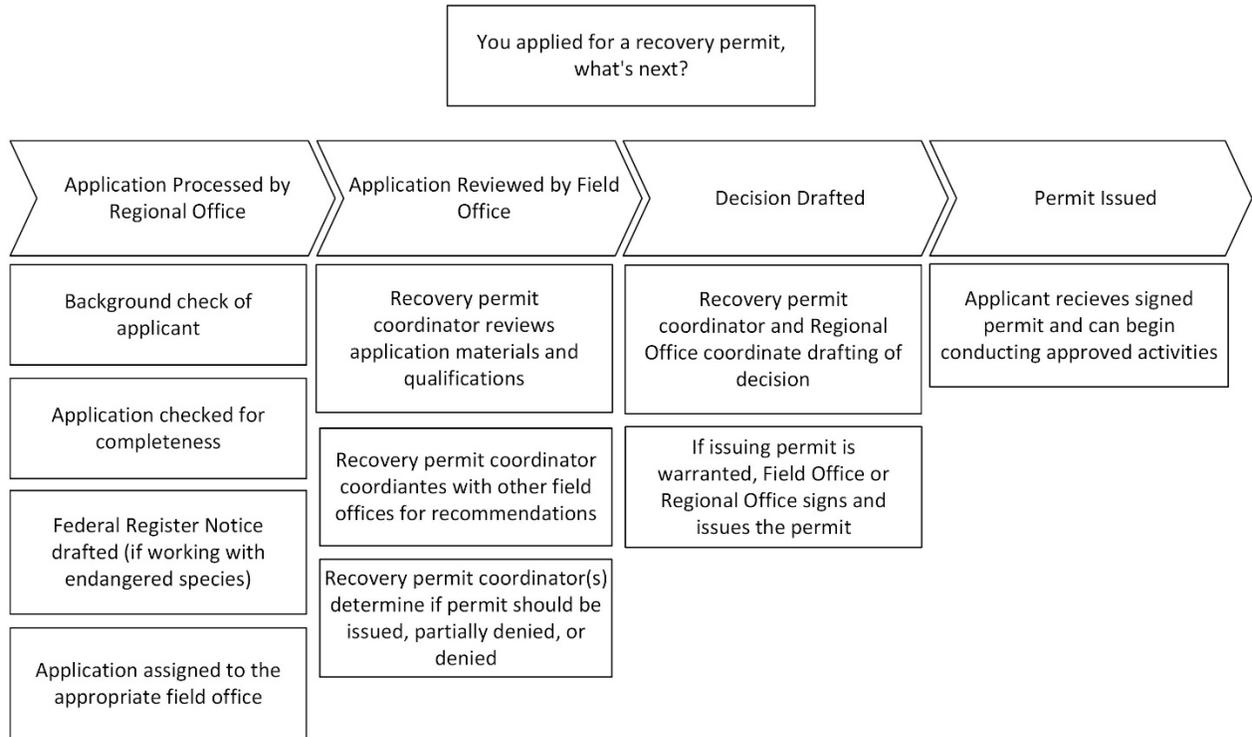
❑ **Research or Project Proposal**

- A research or project proposal (See example in [Appendix D](#)). The proposal should include a research or study plan that describes the purpose, objectives, methods, techniques, locations, durations, number of affected species, and rationale that the activity will support scientific purposes and/or will enhance the propagation or survival of the affected species.
 - For permit applications proposing protocol survey activities, refer to [Appendix D](#) for an example.
 - For permits applications proposing non-survey activities, refer to [Appendix D](#) for an example.

PERMITTING PROCESS



- If you have any questions regarding your application or the process to apply, renew, or amend please [contact](#) either the Regional Office or Field Office that will be reviewing your application (based on [jurisdiction](#) for where you'll be working).
- As your permit application processes, you may inquire about the status. If extenuating circumstances present themselves, a letter for expedited processes may be submitted by email to the Regional Office Recovery Permit inbox, permitsR8ES@fws.gov. Receipt of this letter does not guarantee that you will receive the issued permit by the requested timeline, but it may help increase the likelihood, if possible. In the letter, please provide justification for why the permit should be issued by the desired timeframe.



NOW THAT I HAVE A RECOVERY PERMIT, WHAT DO I NEED TO DO?

Once an applicant has been issued a signed recovery permit, that individual or business (organization) is now authorized to carry out the activities they are authorized to conduct. A copy of the permit must accompany anyone conducting activities under the permit.

The recovery permit describes terms and conditions that must be wholly followed as written in the permit. Some of these are standardized terms that require coordination with one or more USFWS field offices (see Survey Notifications and Reporting below). The permit will include specialized terms and conditions specific to the species and activities authorized. The permit will include a list of authorized individuals who can perform the activities covered in the permit (more information below).

The issued recovery permit will have a cover page where the expiration date of the permit is listed. It is the permittee's responsibility to apply for renewal prior to the expiration date. **If a renewal application is received at least 30 days before the expiration date, the permittee is authorized to perform the activities previously permitted after the expiration date and until a renewed permit is issued, per 50 CFR Part 13.** However, if a renewal application is received **less than 30 days before the expiration date, the permit will expire**, and activities will not be able to continue until a new permit is issued. If the applicant needs to amend a permit (to add a new species or activity), they can do so by applying in ePermits, but the expiration date of the permit will not change.

The table below provides an overview of the reporting requirements (before and after) conducting protocol surveys. Permits that include activities other than standard surveys— Refer to permit [Special Terms and Conditions](#). The sections following this table explain these requirements in more detail.

Prior to starting an authorized activity, such as a survey or multiple surveys, for a given project	Following completion of these activities	Annually on January 31 st
Plant 30-Day Pre-Activity Notification Wildlife 15-Day Pre-Activity Notification	45-Day Survey Reporting Guidelines 90-Day Survey Reporting Guidelines	Simple Annual Reporting Guidelines Specialized Annual Reporting Guidelines

SURVEY NOTIFICATIONS

Most recovery permits have a term requiring a 15-day notification to conduct authorized activities (e.g., for each field season or isolated survey), with the main exception of 30-day notification for permittees conducting activities with plant species. The conditions of the notification report will specify the details that must be sent to the applicable Field Office Recovery Permit Coordinator(s). The conditions for the required information can be found in the recovery permit and our [website](#).

The purpose of the notification is to give the recovery permit coordinator time to ensure the permittee is conducting activities authorized under the permit and to verify there are no extenuating circumstances that would warrant denying the permittee from carrying out the activity. Additionally, the notification allows USFWS to ensure some locations are not being overly surveyed.

REPORTING

All recovery permits have reporting requirements; however, the types of reporting can vary based on the activities and species covered in the permit. The different reports associated with recovery permits includes a 45- or 90-day survey report, an annual summary report, and a comprehensive project report. Your recovery permit will identify which reports must be submitted to comply with the reporting requirements.

The 45- or 90-day survey report consolidates relevant data obtained from surveys for authorized species and is submitted to the Field Office Recovery Permit Coordinator from the Field Office in the [jurisdiction](#) that activities are being conducted and the office that signed issued your permit. Most survey reports must be submitted within 45 days following completion of activities, except for activities with vernal pool brachiopods. Details for the required information that must be submitted with this report can be found in the recovery permit.

The Annual Summary Report is a requirement for all recovery permits. The purpose of this annual report is for the USFWS to track, document, and assess the activities conducted under recovery permits. Submitting this report is carried out by completing [FWS Form 3-2530](#) and uploading it to the reporting tab in the permittees ePermits account. If no activities occurred, the permittee will be able to acknowledge this in ePermits under the reporting feature. **Annual summary reports are due by January 31st for all permittees regardless of whether the permitted activities were completed or are ongoing.**

The Comprehensive Project Report is an annual requirement for permits involving any specialized activities that don't include, or are in addition to, presence/absence surveys. A Comprehensive Project Report is required for each project-specific activity and is submitted via ePermits to the appropriate

Field Office Recovery Permit Coordinator. Conditions detailing the required information for a complete report can be found in the recovery permit.

LIST OF AUTHORIZED INDIVIDUALS

The List of Authorized Individuals (LAI) is the list of personnel that are authorized to conduct the activities outlined in the permit for which they are qualified. LAIs are part of every recovery permit, and they are particularly important for permits held by organizations and businesses. This list should be updated any time there is someone to add or remove from the LAI. This list may be amended at any time by corresponding directly with the Field Office that issued the permit or when requesting a renewal or amendment.

If updating the LAI is the only action you need with no changes to the permit authorizations itself (species, activities, locations, etc.), you can request those LAI changes via email directly to the Field Office that issued the permit.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: GLOSSARY OF USEFUL TERMS AND ACRONYMS

Amendment - A permittee can amend their permit to add new species or activities. Amendment permit applications require a \$50 fee, unless the permittee is fee exempt (refer to fee-exempt definition below). Currently, personnel changes are not considered substantive amendments and are processed outside of ePermits.

California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) - The California State agency that manages California's fish, wildlife, and plant resources, and the habitats upon which they depend.

<https://wildlife.ca.gov/>

Denial - Following review of an application, the USFWS can recommend denial of application for several factors. Please review the [Appendix F](#) regarding modes and requirements for denial of an application.

Endangered Species Act – Federal Act passed in 1973 that establishes protections for fish, wildlife, and plants that are listed as threatened or endangered; provides for adding species to and removing them from the list of threatened and endangered species, and for preparing and implementing plans for their recovery; provides for interagency cooperation to avoid take of listed species and for issuing permits for otherwise prohibited activities; provides for cooperation with States, including authorization of financial assistance; and implements the provisions of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Flora and Fauna (CITES).

ePermits - The digital platform used for processing all permits and licenses issued by USFWS, which includes the four programs of Ecological Services, Migratory Birds, International Affairs, and Office of Law Enforcement.

Exams - To be permitted to conduct activities with vernal pool branchiopods (anywhere in the range) and specific insects located in the Carlsbad Field Office jurisdiction, the prospective permit applicant must pass an exam (either offered by a third party, or the Carlsbad and Sacramento Field Offices for branchiopods and Carlsbad for the insects) each time they apply and renew a previously issued permit. Exams must be passed within one year prior to the date of submitted application.

Fee Exemption - Some permit applicants are not required to pay a fee when applying for a permit, notably local, State, and Federal partners ([50 CFR 13.11\(d\)\(3\)](#)). This includes state universities and colleges.

Federal Register - The official Federal publication for rules, proposed rules, and notices of Federal agencies and organizations. Endangered species applications are required to be noticed in the Federal Register for public comment ([50 CFR 17.22](#) for endangered wildlife species and [50 CFR 17.62](#) for endangered plant species).

FWS Form 3-200-59 – Office of Management and Budget (OMB) approved Section 10(a)(1)(A) Recovery Permit Application [form](#).

Letter of Reference - Permit applicants must submit letters of reference from other Federal permittees who have supervised the applicant's ability to perform the requested activities when applying for a new species or activity. At least one letter of reference is expected per species for standard activities that address the applicant's competency; if specialized activities are requested, letters of recommendation must also be submitted for those that address each activity (capture, blood draw, *etc.*) requested.

List of Authorized Individuals - The list of qualified personnel who are authorized to conduct the activities outlined in the permit.

List of Authorized Individual changes - The permittee can request new individuals be added to their permit if those newly requested individuals are determined to be qualified. Currently, there is not a cost associated with these authorized staff changes, and these are coordinated by the permittee with the applicable Field Office directly.

Migratory Bird Treaty Act – Federal Act passed in 1918 that implements four international conservation treaties that the U.S. entered with Canada in 1916, Mexico in 1936, Japan in 1972, and Russia in 1976. It is intended to ensure the sustainability of populations of all protected migratory bird species.

Minimum Qualifications - USFWS has created public-facing [Minimum Qualification](#) which demonstrate to prospective permit applicants the experience that they should gain to demonstrate that they are qualified for a given activity. Minimum Qualifications describe the materials permit applicants must submit to have a complete permit application. Not all species have Minimum Qualifications.

Nevada Department of Wildlife (NDOW) - The Nevada state agency that manages Nevada's wildlife and their habitats. <https://www.ndow.org/>

New Permit - A new permit is created when an applicant applies for a recovery permit for the first time. New permit applications require a \$100 fee, unless fee exempt.

Part-Issue - Referred to as "Part Issuance" in ePermits. Following review of an application, USFWS can recommend both issuance and denial of application requests if it is believed the applicant is qualified for certain – but not all – activities requested in their application. A denial letter will be attached listing those particular activities.

Permittee Lists - The USFWS often receives requests for contact information for permittees who could conduct endangered and threatened species (e.g., presence/absence surveys) contract work. In accordance with the Privacy Act System of Records Notice, we may release the name, business address, business email address or business telephone number of those who wish to be contacted by third parties to do commercial survey activities. Such information is not normally released under the Freedom of Information Act unless a compelling need on the part of the public can be cited. Please be aware that provision of permittee contact information does not represent an

endorsement by the USFWS of any permittee. A referral is provided at the discretion of each U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Regional Office as time and workload allow.

Primary Contact – The individual that is the “go-to” contact for USFWS and the ePermits team to collect information from or ask questions regarding the permit and/or business account the contact is associated. This person can be the same as the Principal Officer (see below) or a different person.

Principal Officer - The individual responsible for all activities performed under a recovery permit. This will typically be the individual who is the head of a business (organization) who would be the signatory for the permit application.

Principal Officer Change - Business permit holders who need to change their Principal Officer (only one principal officer per permit) must email the Regional Office Recovery Permit Coordinator with a letter to request the responsibility (title) be transferred. A template is available upon request.

Proposal - A proposal is required for all specialized activities. Standard activities do not require a proposal other than the answers to the questions in Section E. These proposals should go beyond the requested justification in Section E.

Recovery permit - Under section 10(a)(1)(A) of the ESA, USFWS may permit any act otherwise prohibited by section 9 for scientific purposes or to enhance the propagation or survival of the affected species.

Renew and Amend Permit - Also called “Renew with changes”. A permittee can amend and renew their permit simultaneously. Renew and Amend permit applications require a \$100 fee, unless fee exempt.

Renewal Permit - Also called “Renew without changes”. A permittee can renew their permit to continue authorization from previous issuances. Renewal permit applications require a \$100 fee, unless fee exempt.

Section E - Subsection of FWS Form 3-200-59 form, which has specific questions for Opt-in, application materials submitted, and permit justification. This form is digitized and therefore not required to attach for ‘New’ applications. ‘Renew’ and ‘Amend’ applications still require this form.

Specialized activities - Any activities that do not have a pre-determined standard protocol, as described above. Examples of specialized activities include all plant activities, bird capture and banding, mutilation marking schemes, radiotelemetry, and collecting genetic material.

Protocol Survey activities - Activities which follow ‘standard’ survey protocols approved/created by USFWS. Survey can mean different things to different taxa, including capturing and releasing, playing recorded vocalizations, pursuing, etc. Swabbing for chytrid fungus and snake fungal disease are considered standard for amphibians and snakes, respectively.

Take - to harass, harm, pursue, hunt, shoot, wound, kill, trap, capture, or collect, or attempt to engage in any such conduct.

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) - the agency within the Department of Interior that is responsible for conserving, protecting, and enhancing fish and wildlife and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people through Federal programs relating to migratory birds, endangered species, interjurisdictional fish and marine mammals, and inland sport fisheries.

APPENDIX B: HELPFUL LINKS

- ePermits Homepage: https://fwsepermits.servicenowservices.com/fws?id=fws_index
- ePermits Help Center: https://fwsepermits.servicenowservices.com/fws?id=fws_help_center
- ePermits Knowledge Base Article “How to Submit a Renewal or Amendment Application in ePermits”: https://fwsepermits.servicenowservices.com/fws/?id=fws_kb_article&sys_id=7f8f324e1b43d95048c5a7dbe54bcbf4
- USFWS webpage “3-200-59: Scientific Purposes, Enhancement of Propagation, or Survival Permits (Recovery Permits)”: <https://www.fws.gov/service/3-200-59-scientific-purposes-enhancement-propagation-or-survival-permits-recovery-permits>
- Pacific Southwest Recovery Permitting: <https://www.fws.gov/program/pacific-southwest-recovery-permitting>
- USGS National Map <https://apps.nationalmap.gov/viewer/>
- California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW): <https://wildlife.ca.gov/>
- Nevada Department of Wildlife (NDOW): <https://www.ndow.org/>

APPENDIX C: EXPERIENCE TRACKING SHEET

Refer to the [Recommended Guidance for Tracking Field Experience](#) to download this form. This may be submitted in your permit application.
 Example form below:

Field Experience Tracking Document

Name: Sal E. Mander **Species name (common & scientific):** California Tiger Salamander
(*Ambystoma californiense*/CTS).

For branchiopods and/or insects, has the required identification been exam taken? Yes/No/Date/Location: Yes - January 15, 2025 Branchiopod exam passed.

Has a confirmation letter from the training individual been provided? Yes X No

Date	Title of report	Location (Include county)	Permitted Individual (supervising) and permit number	Specific # of hours in field & total number of survey or activity hours	Survey or activity type	Number of individuals detected, handled, observed, released, other activity? Include life stage if applicable.	Other pertinent notes/details of activities and/or experience acquired under supervision for the target species. Please note that at minimum, the experience requirements in the minimum qualifications for the species must be met.
3/22/25	Annual preserve monitoring report. 2025.	Vernal Pool Preserve, Santa Rosa, Sonoma County	Sal E. Mander (TE-000000-0)	8:00 am - 4:00 pm 8 hrs. in the field	Protocol-level aquatic survey (dip-netting)	Handled 5 California tiger salamander larvae; observed 2 CTS adults	Measured length, clipped tails, and released. Five ponds were surveyed over the 8 hours.

APPENDIX D: EXAMPLE RECOVERY PERMIT APPLICATIONS

The following pages provide examples of standard and specialized recovery permit applications. The standard permit application offers illustrative examples of suitable responses for a 3-200-59 form, specifically for applications requesting activities related to presence and absence surveys. An example letter of reference is included that highlights the applicant's qualifications for the requested activity. The example for the specialized permit application includes more detailed responses to the 3-200-59 form, a project proposal, and letter of reference.

EXAMPLE OF A STANDARD RECOVERY PERMIT APPLICATION:

FEDERAL FISH AND WILDLIFE PERMIT APPLICATION FORM

Answers to Option 2, [FWS Form 3-200-59](#)

A) Identify species and activity:

- 1) *For a new Recovery Permit or Amendment of an Existing Permit* (I am applying for a New recovery permit).
 - a) California tiger Salamander (*Ambystoma californiense*), hereafter CTS
 - Central California Distinct Population Segment – Threatened
 - Santa Barbara County Distinct Population Segment - Endangered
 - Sonoma County Distinct Population Segment - Endangered
 - b) As a consultant, my work will be based on project contracts requiring surveys. As such, anywhere from 0 – 1,000 + CTS larvae, juveniles, and adults of both sexes may be caught and released during surveys. The minimum number necessary would be captured and released, following the established protocols for the species.
 - c) I am requesting two activities: Aquatic presence/absence surveys and terrestrial presence/absence surveys for egg masses, larvae, juveniles, and adults, following the established protocols for the species.
 - d) As a consultant, my work will be based on project contracts requiring surveys. No specific projects are known currently.
 - e) I do not hold a valid permit.
- 2) Not applicable; no plants species are requested in this application.

B) Identify location of the proposed activity:

- 1) The proposed activities include the State of California throughout the geographic range the three CTS Distinct Population Segments. Specific counties are not known currently.
- 2) As I plan to conduct surveys on a contract basis in the future, these maps will be provided once the specific area is known. As the counties are unknown, I am requesting

California statewide coverage.

- 3) CTS is an aquatic and terrestrial occupying species that may be found in vernal pools, wetlands, swales, ponds, and man-made aquatic features, among others, throughout much of the state of California. USFWS will be informed of specific aquatic features prior to survey initiation.
- 4) Not applicable; no plants species are requested in this application.

c) Describe the proposed activity:

- 1) *Describe how the activities or proposal would help recover the species:*
 - a) There is a Recovery Plan for each Distinct Population Segment of the California Tiger Salamander. The Recovery Plan for the Central California Distinct Population Segment of the California Tiger Salamander (*Ambystoma californiense*) (USFWS 2017) was specifically written to address the threats to the Central California distinct population segment California tiger salamander and lead to its eventual removal from the Endangered Species Act List of species. To meet the recovery goal, "Objective #2: Ameliorate or eliminate the current threats to the species," I will conduct pre-construction surveys at potential or suspected occupied sites. This will help prevent habitat destruction and provide a better understanding of the species' range. Although this criterion was written solely for the Central California distinct population segment, it is relevant and applicable to all three.
 - b) This permit is proposed for presence/absence surveys which will determine species occupancy. This work has been ongoing, as determined by information on CNDDDB. Any new detections would be reported into the California and federal natural heritage databases.
 - c) As fine-scale occupancy is not known throughout the entire species' range, my work will help answer this question.
 - d) By reporting information on presence/absence determinations, I will help with determining occupied habitat for future habitat preservation.
- 2) *Describe in detail the purpose(s) and objective(s) of the activities or project.*
 - a) My methods and designs will follow as stated in USFWS's protocol, Interim Guidance on Site Assessment and Field Surveys for Determining Presence or a Negative Finding of the California Tiger Salamander (USFWS 2003).
 - b) This permit application is not for a specific project.
 - c) No individuals are requested to be vouchered or sacrificed, however if dead individuals are found, they will be collected and stored as the USFWS directs disposition at a recommended repository.
- 3) *Can this activity or project result in the injury, death, or removal from the wild of any individuals of the species?*

- a) By conducting presence/absence surveys in accordance with USFWS's protocol, there should be lower injury or mortality risk. No individuals will be removed from the wild, except for carcass salvage.
 - b) Zero is expected, though incidental mortality or injury is unknown and will be immediately reported.
 - c) If CTS larvae, juveniles, or adults are encountered during surveys, the fewest number of individuals required would be captured and released.
 - d) Not applicable; activities are expected in habitats with unknown, uncertain, or unrecognized occupancy.
- 4) As a consultant, my work will be based on awarded project contracts requiring surveys, whether between private or public entities. No specific projects are known currently.
 - 5) No CTS will be held in captivity.
 - 6) When working within more than one site, I will thoroughly decontaminate my clothing and equipment following the latest USFWS protocols, including the guidelines set by the Declining Amphibian Task Force Fieldwork Code of Practice

D) Identify the persons who will conduct the proposed activity:

- 1) *Provide the full name of all individuals, including first name, middle initial, and last name, who you propose will conduct activities under this permit*
My full legal name is Sal E. Mander
 - a) Not applicable. Sal E. Mander is the only requested permittee.
 - b) Please find my resume and experience table attached to this application
 - c) Please find my letters of recommendation from supervisory recovery permittees for CTS attached to this application.

EXAMPLE LETTER OF REFERENCE FOR STANDARD APPLICATION:

Dr. Jane Doe
California Herpetology Research Institute
1234 Salamander Lane
Sacramento, CA 95814

July 21, 2025

To Recovery Permit Coordinator,

I am writing to recommend Sal E. Mander for a permit to conduct terrestrial and aquatic surveys for the California Tiger Salamander (CTS). Sal has worked under my supervision for the past two years, during which time he has demonstrated exceptional skill and dedication in the field of herpetology.

Field Experience:

- Dates and Hours: January 2023 - June 2025, approximately 500 hours
- Activities Conducted: Protocol surveys, seining, dip netting, handling

CTS Observations:

- Number and Age Class: Approximately 150 CTS observed and handled, including larvae, juveniles, and adults. At least 15 egg masses were observed but they were not handled.
- Specific Locations:
 - Willow Creek Pond, Sacramento County
 - Sunset Mitigation Marsh, Sacramento County
 - Blue Heron Pond, Yolo County
 - Golden Meadow Mitigation Wetland, Yolo County
 - Eagle Nest Pond Mitigation Reserve, Solano County
 - Silver Lake Marsh, Solano County

Sal has consistently adhered to established protocols and demonstrated a thorough understanding of CTS habitat and behavior. His ability to independently conduct survey activities and accurately identify CTS habitat is commendable. Sal's meticulous approach and ethical handling of the species ensure that the data collected is both reliable and scientifically valuable.

I am confident in Sal's ability to conduct these surveys independently and believe he will make significant contributions to the conservation and study of the California Tiger Salamander. Please feel free to contact me if you require any further information.

Sincerely,

Dr. Jane Doe
Permit Number: 1234512345-2

EXAMPLE OF A SPECIALIZED RECOVERY PERMIT APPLICATION:

FEDERAL FISH AND WILDLIFE PERMIT APPLICATION FORM
Answers to Option 2, FWS Form 3-200-59

A) Identify species and activity:

- 1) *For a new Recovery Permit or Amendment of an Existing Permit (I am applying for a New recovery permit).*
 - a) California tiger Salamander (*Ambystoma californiense*), hereafter CTS
 - Central California Distinct Population Segment – Threatened
 - b) As a graduate student, my research will be centered around capturing and sampling 20-50 California Tiger Salamander (CTS) larvae, juveniles, and adults of both sexes per pond. The exact number of individuals captured and released will be determined by the minimum necessary to achieve the research objectives without jeopardizing health of a given population. This approach ensures that the data collected is both scientifically robust and ethically sound, contributing valuable insights to the field of herpetology.
 - c) I am requesting to collect tail clips from larval and adult salamanders, as I will be conducting a genomics study.
 - d) The actions described above are integral and directly support my thesis research. Conducting these California Tiger Salamander genetics project is essential for gathering the empirical data needed to address my research questions on population expansion in man-made vs natural ponds. Several ponds have been selected.
 - e) I do not hold a valid permit.
- 2) No plants species are requested in this application.

B) Identify location of the proposed activity:

- 1) The proposed activities will be conducted in several counties within the California Central Valley, specifically targeting the geographic range of the Central California Tiger Salamander (CTS) Distinct Population Segments. These activities will take place in Sacramento, Yolo, Solano, San Joaquin, and Stanislaus counties. This focused approach allows for a more detailed and region-specific study, ensuring that the research is both comprehensive and relevant to the local CTS populations.
- 2) Please see addendum for maps.
- 3) CTS is an aquatic and terrestrial occupying species that may be found in vernal pools, wetlands, swales, ponds, and man-made aquatic features, among others, throughout much of the state of California. In Sacramento County, the surveys will be conducted

at Willow Creek Pond and Sunset Mitigation Marsh. In Yolo County, the targeted sites are Blue Heron Pond and Golden Meadow Mitigation Wetland. For Solano County, the research will focus on Eagle Nest Pond Mitigation Reserve and Silver Lake Marsh. In San Joaquin County, the surveys will take place at Cedar Grove Pond Biological site and Maple Leaf Wetland. Finally, in Stanislaus County, the activities will be centered around Oak Ridge Cow Pond and Pine Valley Creek Rockery Vernal Wetlands. These specific locations have been chosen to provide a representative sample of the diverse habitats within each county.

4) No plants species are requested in this application.

c) Describe the proposed activity:

1) *Describe how the activities or proposal would help recover the species:*

a) There is a Recovery Plan for each Distinct Population Segment of the California Tiger Salamander. The Recovery Plan for the Central California Distinct Population Segment of the California Tiger Salamander (*Ambystoma californiense*) (USFWS 2017) was specifically written to address the threats to the Central California distinct population segment California tiger salamander and lead to its eventual removal from the Endangered Species Act List of species. To meet the recovery goal, "Objective #2: Ameliorate or eliminate the current threats to the species," I will conduct post-construction collections at man-made mitigation ponds and compare to natural pond with no history of conversion. Understanding the difference in species occupancy between man-made ponds and natural ponds is crucial for several reasons:

- Habitat Suitability.
- Biodiversity Assessment.
- Impact of Human Activities.
- Adaptation and Behavior.
- Water Quality and Ecosystem Services.

b) Genetic studies have been ongoing, such as at Dr. Emily Harper's lab at Redwood University and Dr. Michael Thompson's research group at Blue Ridge Institute.

c) My work will help answer the above questions. Refer to my proposal, attached, for further information.

d) By reporting information on genetics, I will help with determining occupied habitat for future habitat management.

2) *Describe in detail the purpose(s) and objective(s) of the activities or project.*

a) My methods and designs will follow as stated in the USFWS's protocol, Interim Guidance on Site Assessment and Field Surveys for Determining Presence or a Negative Finding of the California Tiger Salamander (USFWS 2003), as well as following the methods written by the National Herpetological Research Agency

"Collecting Tail Tissue from Salamanders and Other Herpetofauna: Methods and Implications." *NHRA Guidelines*, pp. 45-47, 2023.

- b) This permit application is for a specific project. Refer to my proposal, attached, for further information.
 - c) No individuals are requested to be vouchered or sacrificed, however if dead individuals are found, they will be collected and used for genetic processing (following approval from the USFWS and CDFW).
- 3) *Can this activity or project result in the injury, death, or removal from the wild of any individuals of the species?*
- a) By conducting activities in accordance with the USFWS's and NHRA protocol, there should be lower injury or mortality risk. No individuals will be removed from the wild, with the exception of carcass salvage.
 - b) Zero is expected, though incidental mortality or injury is unknown and will be immediately reported.
 - c) If CTS larvae, juveniles, or adults are encountered during surveys, around 10% of the population will be sampled, with the goal between 20-50 larvae, with at least 10 adults represented. Refer to my proposal, attached, for further information.
 - d) Activities are expected in habitat with occupancy unknown at this point, but this will be discussed with USFWS prior to activity initiation. Refer to my proposal, attached, for further information.
- 4) As a student, my work will be based on awarded project contracts requiring surveys, whether between private or public entities. Projects are mentioned above.
- 5) No CTS will be held in captivity.
- 6) When working within more than one site, I will thoroughly decontaminate my clothing and equipment following the latest USFWS protocols, including the guidelines set by the Declining Amphibian Task Force Fieldwork Code of Practice.
- D) Identify the persons who will conduct the proposed activity:**
- 1) *Provide the full name of all individuals, including first name, middle initial, and last name, who you propose will conduct activities under this permit*
My full legal name is Sal E. Mander.
 - a) Not applicable. Sal E. Mander is the only requested permittee.
 - b) Please find my resume and experience table attached to this application
 - c) Please find my letters of recommendation from a supervisory recovery permittee for CTS and my laboratory PI attached to this application.

EXAMPLE OF A PROJECT PROPOSAL FOR A SPECIALIZED PERMIT APPLICATION:

Our research aims to understand the genetic diversity, disease-carrying prevalence, and population dynamics of the California tiger salamander (CTS) using various methodologies. This document outlines: I. specific methodologies, II. the rationale for site selection, and III. potential challenges in genetic analysis.

I. Proposed Research Methods

We will conduct genetic collections at each site, focusing on tail and toe clips, as well as swabbing for chytrid fungus (Bd). We will sample 20 – 50 CTS from each of the below sites (refer to Rational for Site Selection section below) across Sacramento, Yolo, Solano, San Joaquin, and Stanislaus counties. Collections will occur over a 1–2-year period, and collections will only occur once at each site.

At each site, we will:

- Conduct visual encounter surveys.
- Capture CTS with clean gloves, rinse with DI water, and place in clean Whirlpak bags.
- Measure SVL and weight in the bags, to prevent pathogen transmission.
- Keep bags cool during processing.
- Swab each CTS with clean swabs, storing samples in ethanol and RNALater.
- Clip 2mm of the fourth toe, storing samples for genetic sequencing and Bd isolation. Toe clips will only be taken from adults \geq to a specific length or snout-vent length.

We will sterilize scissors between animals and monitor CTS health, releasing any distressed individuals immediately. This procedure ensures the health and survival of CTS populations while collecting necessary genetic data.

Genetic Analysis Methods:

- **DNA Extraction and Amplification:** We will extract DNA from toe clips using standard protocols. The extracted DNA will be amplified using polymerase chain reaction (PCR) to target specific genetic markers.
- **Microsatellite Analysis:** Microsatellites, or short tandem repeats, will be used to assess genetic diversity and population structure. These markers are highly polymorphic and provide detailed insights into genetic variation.

- **Mitochondrial DNA Sequencing:** Sequencing of mitochondrial DNA (mtDNA) will help trace maternal lineages and understand the evolutionary history of CTS populations.
- **Next-Generation Sequencing (NGS):** NGS technologies will be employed to obtain comprehensive genomic data, allowing for the identification of adaptive genetic variations and potential resistance to diseases like chytrid fungus.
- **Quantitative PCR (qPCR):** qPCR will be used to quantify Bd infection loads in collected samples, providing data on pathogen prevalence and virulence.

II. Rationale for Site Selection

The selected sites represent a range of habitats and environmental conditions within the California Central Valley. This diversity allows us to study the genetic variation and adaptability of CTS across different landscapes. By including both natural and man-made habitats, we can assess the impact of habitat modifications on CTS populations. Additionally, the presence of other amphibian species at these sites provides an opportunity to study interspecies interactions and their influence on CTS genetic diversity.

Willow Creek Pond, Sacramento County: Chosen for its diverse amphibian population.

Sunset Mitigation Marsh, Sacramento County: Man-made site isolated in a large area of residential development.

Blue Heron Pond, Yolo County: Known for its stable CTS population and accessibility for long-term monitoring.

Golden Meadow Mitigation Wetland, Yolo County: Features a mix of natural and man-made habitats, providing a comparative study environment.

Eagle Nest Pond Mitigation Reserve, Solano County: Offers a controlled environment to study the impact of habitat modifications on CTS.

Silver Lake Marsh, Solano County: Selected for its high biodiversity and presence of both CTS and Western Toad.

Cedar Grove Biological Site, San Joaquin County: Chosen for its historical data on CTS and Western Toad populations.

Maple Leaf Wetland, San Joaquin County: Provides a diverse habitat with a mix of native and invasive species.

Oak Ridge Cow Pond, Stanislaus County: Known for its consistent CTS sightings and varied aquatic habitats in human-made cow watering holes.

Pine Valley Creek Vernal Wetlands, **Stanislaus County**: Selected for its pristine condition and minimal human disturbance.

Conservation Implications:

1. **Genetic Diversity Preservation:** Understanding the genetic diversity within and between CTS populations is crucial for maintaining their long-term viability. High genetic diversity enhances the species' ability to adapt to environmental changes and resist diseases.
2. **Informed Management Strategies:** Genetic data can inform conservation strategies, such as identifying critical populations and their habitats for protection and designing effective captive breeding programs to prevent inbreeding and genetic bottlenecks.
3. **Disease Resistance:** By identifying genetic markers associated with disease resistance, conservationists can develop targeted interventions to mitigate the impact of pathogens like Bd on CTS populations.

III. Potential Challenges in Genetic Analysis

1. **Large Genome Size:** Amphibians, including CTS, often have large and complex genomes, which can be challenging to sequence and analyze due to their size and repetitive elements.
2. **Sample Degradation:** Genetic material can degrade quickly if not properly preserved, especially in field conditions. Ensuring the integrity of samples from collection to analysis is critical.
3. **Technical Limitations:** Despite advances in sequencing technologies, technical limitations such as sequencing errors and incomplete genome assemblies can hinder the accuracy of genetic analyses.
4. **Environmental Contamination:** Contamination from environmental DNA (eDNA) can complicate the analysis, requiring stringent protocols to ensure sample purity and accuracy.

This research will contribute valuable insights into the conservation and management of CTS, ensuring the long-term survival of this species in its native habitat. By integrating genetic analysis with field surveys, we aim to develop a comprehensive understanding of CTS population dynamics and inform effective conservation practices.

Citations:

- [1] Johnson, Sarah. 2021. Genetic Analysis Techniques for Amphibian Conservation. Animal Conservation Society. Volume 5. pp. 34-56.

[2] Harper et al. 2022. Advancing Genetic Research. The North American Amphibian Genomics Consortium. Volume 3. pp. 78-102.

EXAMPLE OF A LETTER OF REFERENCE FOR SPECIALIZED PERMIT APPLICATION:

Dr. Jane Doe
California Herpetology Research Institute
1234 Salamander Lane
Sacramento, CA 95814

July 21, 2025

To Recovery Permit Coordinator,

I am writing to recommend Sal E. Mander for a permit to conduct genetic material collections for the California Tiger Salamander (CTS). Richie has been under my supervision for the past two years, during which he has shown exceptional proficiency and dedication in herpetological research.

Field Experience:

- Dates and Hours: January 2023 - June 2025, approximately 500 hours
- Activities Conducted: Genetic material collection (tail and toe clips, swabbing for chytrid)

Genetic Collections and Observations:

- Willow Creek Pond, Sacramento County: CTS and Western Toad
- Sunset Mitigation Marsh, Sacramento County: Pacific Tree Frog and Western Toad
- Blue Heron Pond, Yolo County: CTS and Bullfrog
- Golden Meadow Mitigation Wetland, Yolo County: Pacific Tree Frog and Bullfrog
- Eagle Nest Mitigation Pond, Solano County: CTS and Western Toad
- Silver Lake Marsh, Solano County: Bullfrog and Pacific Tree Frog
- Cedar Grove Pond Biological site, San Joaquin County: CTS and Western Toad
- Maple Leaf Wetland, San Joaquin County: Bullfrog and Pacific Tree Frog
- Oak Ridge Cow Pond, Stanislaus County: CTS and Western Toad
- Pine Valley Creek Vernal Wetlands, Stanislaus County: Pacific Tree Frog and Bullfrog

Sal has successfully collected genetic material from various amphibian species. His meticulous approach ensures minimal harm to the individuals while obtaining valuable genetic data. Notably, CTS was found at one-third of the sites, highlighting the importance of these genetic studies for conservation efforts.

Sal's ability to independently conduct genetic material collection and his thorough understanding of amphibian habitats and behavior are commendable. His work is both scientifically robust and ethically sound, making significant contributions to the field of herpetology.

I am confident in Sal's capabilities to conduct these genetic collections independently and believe he will continue to make valuable contributions to the study and conservation of the California Tiger Salamander. Please feel free to contact me if you require any further information.

Sincerely,

Dr. Jane Doe
Permit Number: 1234512345-2

Appendix E: SCENARIOS

To better understand different scenarios that require a recovery permit, the table below provides various types of situations that USFWS has received and provide if a permit is necessary for the situation and an explanation as to why a permit is or is not needed.

1. Grad student studying tidewater goby survey methodologies – Yes.
2. Federal employee conducting northern spotted owl mousing surveys – No.
3. County employee conducting breeding season surveys for western snowy plover – Yes.
4. Consultant conducting California tiger salamander pre-construction capture surveys – Yes.
5. Federal botanists collecting seeds of a listed plant on federal lands - Yes.
6. Water agency botanists collecting vouchers of a listed plant on private lands – No.
7. Consultant surveying for proposed threatened species – No.
8. State habitat restoration project – No.
9. The activity is a conservation measure in an active biological opinion – No.

Scenario 1. Graduate student studying tidewater goby survey methodologies	
A graduate student is developing a new survey protocol for the federally endangered northern tidewater goby (<i>Eucyclogobius newberryi</i> ; goby). The new survey protocol will use eDNA to better assess the presence or absence of the goby in aquatic habitat. To test the effectiveness of the eDNA sampling, the graduate student will be capturing and handling gobies with a dip or seine net in suitable habitat to compare results. The fieldwork is expected to take three years to be completed.	
Do they need a recovery Permit?	Yes.
Reasoning:	Capturing gobies with a dip or seine net is a method of surveying that results in take. This project is benefitting the recovery of the species because this graduate student is developing a non-invasive sampling protocol that could result in less invasive surveys in the future. While certain non-invasive surveys, like eDNA sampling, typically don't require a recovery permit, more invasive sampling methods such as capturing with a dip net or seine net do require a recovery permit.

Scenario 2. Federal employee conducting northern spotted owl mousing surveys

A federal biologist working for a land management agency is interested in conducting protocol-level presence/absence surveys for the federally threatened northern spotted owl (*Strix occidentalis caurina*) on three parcels of federally owned land. The biologist intends to only conduct call-back and mousing surveys. The biologist will not handle or perform other activities.

Do they need a recovery Permit?

No.

Reasoning:

While many presence/absence surveys for listed bird species do require a recovery permit, it is not required for all bird species. In the case of northern spotted owls, the recovery permit biological opinion for northern spotted owl specifies that a recovery permit is not required for call-back surveys or mousing. Other listed bird species require a permit to conduct call-back (including least Bell's vireo, southwestern willow flycatcher, coastal California gnatcatcher, and yellow-billed cuckoo).

Scenario 3. County employee surveying for snowy plover

A biologist, working for the local county, is interested in conducting winter and breeding season surveys for the federally threatened Pacific Coast population distinct population segment of the western snowy plover (*Charadrius nivosus nivosus*; snowy plover). The biologist intends to survey the local county owned beach for plover throughout the breeding and winter seasons. The biologist will perform no other activities with the species.

Do they need a recovery Permit?

Yes.

Reasoning:

A recovery permit is required for breeding surveys for the plover, but a recovery permit is not required for winter surveys or surveys outside the known nesting season for this species. Monitoring snowy plover activity throughout the breeding season benefits the recovery of the species. Appendix J in the [recovery plan](#) for snowy plovers expands on the types of activities that require a recovery permit.

Scenario 4. Consultant conducting pre-construction capture surveys	
A consultant was hired to perform upland, also referred to as terrestrial, capture surveys for a private development project in the range of the federally threatened Central California distinct population segment of the California tiger salamander (<i>Ambystoma californiense</i> ; salamander). The biologist will be performing these surveys within suitable salamander habitat.	
Do they need a recovery Permit?	Yes.
Reasoning:	This biologist will need a recovery permit to conduct purposeful capture surveys within the range of this species, as take via harassment will result.

Scenario 5. Federal botanists wanting to collect seed of listed plant on federal lands	
A botanist with a federal agency wants to collect seed for the federally endangered Lassics lupine (<i>Lupinus constancei</i>) on Forest Service lands. The seed collected would be used to establish and maintain a seed bank.	
Do they need a recovery Permit?	Yes.
Reasoning:	Unlike wildlife, there is no “take” of federally listed plants. As defined under the ESA Section 9(a)(2), a recovery permit is required for individuals who intend to “remove or reduce to possession plants – and their parts – from lands under Federal possession”. Thus, a recovery permit is not required to remove or reduce to possession federally listed plants on non-federal lands. Since the botanist will be collecting seeds of a federally endangered plant on federal lands, a recovery permit is required. The collection of seed and establishment of a seed bank can benefit the recovery of a species by preserving genetic material and creating the opportunity to propagate or establish new populations in the future (which requires further authorizations via a recovery permit).

Scenario 6. Water agency botanists collecting vouchers of listed plant on private lands	
A botanist with a water district agency wants to collect voucher specimens for the federally threatened San Joaquin adobe sunburst (<i>Pseudobahia peirsonii</i>) on private lands, wherein whole plants will be collected. The vouchers collected will be used to document a new occurrence.	
Do they need a recovery Permit?	No.
Reasoning:	As mentioned above, a recovery permit is not required to remove or reduce to possession federally listed plants on non-federal lands. Since the botanist will be collecting entire specimens of a federally threatened plant off federal lands, a recovery permit is not required. State permits may still be required and possession is the responsibility of the biologist. The USFWS requests your involvement with our Field Offices regarding new information on plant species off Federal lands, to manage and guide the recovery of these species.

Scenario 7. Consultant surveying for proposed threatened species	
A biologist who works with a research non-profit company wants to study the nesting habitat of the proposed threatened northwestern pond turtle (<i>Actinemys marmorata</i> ; pond turtle). The research will involve capturing 10 female pond turtles and attaching radio transmitters to the carapace. Pond turtles will be monitored at nesting locations, and their nests will be uncovered to count the number of eggs and then covered again.	
Do they need a recovery Permit?	No.
Reasoning:	A recovery permit is not required for work involving proposed species, whether threatened or endangered. Once the proposed species becomes listed, the biologist would have to apply for a recovery permit to conduct the activities described above. State permits may still be required and possession is the responsibility of the biologist.

Scenario 8. State habitat restoration project

A biologist who works for a state agency is proposing to restore 120 acres of newly acquired state lands into giant kangaroo rat (*Dipodomys ingens*; kangaroo rat) habitat. The newly acquired state lands occur in the range of the kangaroo rat but do not contain suitable habitat. The kangaroo rat is known to occupy habitat near the newly acquired state lands but does not occur on the property. Habitat restoration will involve removing invasive plant species and replanting native plants and known food resources for the kangaroo rat. No translocations of the kangaroo rat are proposed.

Do they need a recovery Permit?

No

Reasoning:

A recovery permit is not required for general habitat restoration activities since the action may result in the incidental take of federally listed species (purposeful harassment or harm is not the goal of the action). For projects with habitat management in mind, other mechanisms such as a Conservation Benefit Agreement, Habitat Conservation Plans, or ESA Section 7 consultations are the best path for activity coverage.

Scenario 9. The activity is a conservation measure in an active biological opinion

An action agency with a federal nexus has been issued a biological opinion that includes conservation measures to salvage and relocate an endangered species from the action area. The conservation measure will fulfill a recovery action in a published recovery plan for this species by taking genetic material that is used to understand the status and distribution of this species.

Do they need a recovery Permit?

No

Reasoning:

The conservation measure is considered a part of the proposed action in the Section 7 consultation. The 'take' associated with this activity has already been considered in the effects analysis and is reported according to terms and conditions in the biological opinion.

APPENDIX F: PERMIT DENIALS

To better understand different potential reasons the Service may deny a permit, the table below describes various types of situations that may occur and cause a permit to be denied.

Applicant	Rationale	Example	Response
Applicant submitted an incomplete application.	A completed or properly executed application is required.	Applicants do not include resumes or qualifications.	Applicant given 45 days to complete application as specified in 50 CFR 13.21 or will be denied.
Applicants have been assessed with a civil penalty or convicted of any criminal provision of any statute or regulation relating to the activity for which the application is filed, if such assessment or conviction evidences a lack of responsibility.	Applicants working with listed species must be responsible and accountable for crimes or any actions they commit.	Applicant was convicted of trafficking listed species yet applies to capture and handle listed species.	Permit denied on the basis of 50 CFR 13.21(b)(1) .
Applicant has failed to disclose material information required or has made false statements as to any material fact, in connection with his application.	Applications must be complete, and qualifications must meet minimum requirements.	Applicant fabricated experience to meet minimum qualifications.	Permit denied on the basis of 50 CFR 13.21(b)(2) .
Applicant has failed to demonstrate valid justification for the permit and a showing of responsibility.	A proposal demonstrating the requested activities benefit the recovery of the species is required unless the activities are surveys that do not result in take.	Applicant requests to capture and sample Pacific marten but fails to provide a proposal.	Permit denied on the basis of 50 CFR 13.21(b)(3) .
Authorization requested potentially threatens a wildlife or plant population.	The benefits of recovery activities must benefit the species and not cause irrevocable harm.	Applicants requested to collect all seed from a plant population.	Permit denied on the basis of 50 CFR 13.21(b)(4) .
Applicants are deemed not qualified.	Applicants must be qualified to perform the activities requested to minimize risk to species.	Applicants do not have enough field hours to meet minimum qualifications to survey.	Permit denied on the basis of 50 CFR 13.21(b)(5) .

Applicant	Rationale	Example	Response
Applicant submitted an incomplete application.	A completed or properly executed application is required.	Applicants do not include resumes or qualifications.	Applicant given 45 days to complete application as specified in 50 CFR 13.21 or will be denied.
Applicants have been assessed with a civil penalty or convicted of any criminal provision of any statute or regulation relating to the activity for which the application is filed, if such assessment or conviction evidences a lack of responsibility.	Applicants working with listed species must be responsible and accountable for crimes or any actions they commit.	Applicant was convicted of trafficking listed species yet applies to capture and handle listed species.	Permit denied on the basis of 50 CFR 13.21(b)(1) .
Applicants requested a permit for a non-listed species.	Recovery permits only cover activities for listed species.	Applicants apply to work with a federally proposed threatened species.	Permit denied because a recovery permit is only required for federally listed species (other permits may be required).
Applicants are working with a listed species where take is incidental.	Take should be covered by another section in the act (7 or 10(a)1(B)).	Applicants requested activity to capture and handle a listed species for relocation during construction monitoring.	Permit denied because only purposeful take is covered under 10(a)1(A) permits.
Applicant has been convicted, or entered a plea of guilty or nolo contendere, for a felony violation of the Lacey Act, the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, or the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act.	Violating federal laws protecting wildlife is a disqualifying factor in receiving a recovery permit.	Applicants received a conviction for poaching raptors under Migratory Bird Treaty Act and is applying to conduct snowy plover breeding surveys.	Permit denied on the basis of 50 CFR 13.21(c)(1) .
The applicant previously had a permit revoked for violating § 13.28 (a)(1) or (a)(2) .	Revocation of a permit is a disqualifying factor to receive a recovery permit for 5 years after the final revocation date.	Applicants' previous permits were suspended, and deficiencies were not corrected in 60 days.	Permit denied on the basis of 50 CFR 13.21(c)(2) .
Applicants have failed to pay required fees or assessed costs and penalties.	Failure to pay fees, costs, or penalties associated with a permit is a disqualifying factor to receive a recovery permit.	Applicants refuse to pay the renewal fee.	Permit denied on the basis of 50 CFR 13.21(c)(3) .

Applicant	Rationale	Example	Response
Applicant submitted an incomplete application.	A completed or properly executed application is required.	Applicants do not include resumes or qualifications.	Applicant given 45 days to complete application as specified in 50 CFR 13.21 or will be denied.
Applicants have been assessed with a civil penalty or convicted of any criminal provision of any statute or regulation relating to the activity for which the application is filed, if such assessment or conviction evidences a lack of responsibility.	Applicants working with listed species must be responsible and accountable for crimes or any actions they commit.	Applicant was convicted of trafficking listed species yet applies to capture and handle listed species.	Permit denied on the basis of 50 CFR 13.21(b)(1) .
Applicant has failed to submit timely, accurate, or valid reports as required by permits terms and conditions.	Failure to comply with reporting requirements is a disqualifying factor to receive a recovery permit.	Applicant failed to submit annual summary reporting form 5 years in a row.	Permit denied on the basis of 50 CFR 13.21(c)(4) .

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q: Do I need a recovery permit?

A: If you are looking to conduct activities for scientific purposes, enhancement of propagation, or survival that may result in “take” (such as presence/absence surveys, collection, handling, tagging, releasing, etc.) for a species that currently listed as ‘Threatened’ or ‘Endangered’ under the Endangered Species Act, then, yes, you need a recovery permit.

The term “take” means to harass, harm, pursue, hunt, shoot, wound, kill, trap, capture, or collect, or attempt to engage in any such conduct. Activities that need a permit also include collecting plant vouchers and seeds of listed plants from lands under Federal jurisdiction. Permits are not needed if the species is a candidate or proposed for listing.

Q: What should be included in my application package to be considered complete?

A: There are four types of recovery permit applications: New, Renewal without changes, Renewal with changes, and Amendment. Listed below are the required documents and actions for each application type to be considered complete and allow further processing of your application. Please refer to the [minimum qualifications library](#) for specific species requirements.

New, Renewal with Changes, and Amendment Applications Require:*

- Successful payment (New/Renewals are \$100 and Amendments are \$50).
- Completed ‘FWS Form 3-200-59’ form. For all new applications, this form is currently available digitally when you begin your application on ePermits. For renewals and amendments, please continue to use the PDF version of the form.
 - All three of these require a supplemental document describing which activities are being sought for authorization, which locations the activities will be conducted in, personnel to be added to the permit list of authorized individuals, and more (pages 6-10 of PDF).
- Resume or CV that provides the details of your educational and biological background, projects, research, and/or publications.
- A separate experience document that includes your verifiable field experience with specified listed species and/or similar or sympatric species. Experience should be as presented in the [USFWS's Field Experience Tracking Table](#) as a PDF. You may submit your own tracking document in lieu of the USFWS’s form. However, all information requested in the above table shall be provided.
- Letter(s) of recommendation by the permitted individual(s) from whom you acquired the field experience/training. This person can verify the experience that you’ve received, discuss details of your field experience and expertise, and can attest to your ability to independently perform each permitted activity.
- A study plan or statement that provides justification for how the proposed permitted action will support the specified listed species recovery. This can be done by identifying which activity is being accomplished in the species-specific recovery plan.

*Please note that the ePermits application form asks for these required documents in order to submit the application, however these documents do not need to be submitted separately. You may compile the app into one PDF and mark the corresponding labels that the document fulfills.

Renewal without Changes Applications Require:

- Successful payment (Renewals are \$100).
- Completed 'FWS Form 3-200-59' form. For renewals and amendments, please continue to use the PDF version of the form.

Q: What are "Minimum Qualifications"?

A: If you are pursuing a Section 10(a)(1)(A) recovery permit, you must have adequate field experience and qualifications to independently conduct the requested activity with the specified listed species. You can find the library of detailed guidance documents and information on minimum qualifications developed for listed species in California, Nevada, and the Klamath basin of Oregon [here](#). Not every species has a prepared minimum qualifications document. You may email the applicable Field Office Recovery Permit Coordinators to inquire about qualifications for those species without published Minimum Qualification documents.

Q: What is the Federal Register? Why does my application need to be listed on it?

A: The Federal Register is the official publication for rules, proposed rules, and notices of Federal agencies and organizations. If you have applied for or renewed a permit with an 'Endangered' listed species, then your application is required to be noticed to the Federal Register to allow for comment. The comment period lasts for 30 days. After the comment period closes, we will make decisions regarding permit issuance.

Our regulations implementing section 10(a)(1)(A) for these permits are found in the Code of Federal Regulations at [50 CFR 17.22](#) for endangered wildlife species, [50 CFR 17.32](#) for threatened wildlife species, [50 CFR 17.62](#) for endangered plant species, and [50 CFR 17.72](#) for threatened plant species.

Q: My permit is close to expiring; how do I renew it?

A: If your permit is close to expiring, you should submit a renewal application via ePermits. You can do this by clicking this [link](#) and clicking on the "Renew/Amend Permit" button. You will likely be redirected to your permits list to choose the permit that needs to be renewed. Follow all the steps and provide all the necessary documents. You can also use this [link](#) for more information from ePermits.

**Please note, your complete application must be received at least 30 days prior to the expiration of the current valid permit ([50 CFR 13.22](#)) to avoid a lapse in permit coverage (continuation of authorized activities). **

Q: Can I keep conducting the work authorized by my recovery permit while the renewal is being processed?

A: If your complete application (all required documents are provided with a successful payment), is received at least 30 days prior to the expiration of the current valid permit, you will be allowed to continue activities that were authorized under the most current version of the permit ([50 CFR 13.22](#)). If the application is submitted less than 30 days prior to the expiration of the current valid permit, continuation of activities is not authorized.

Q: I am having problems with my ePermits account, what do I do?

A: If you are having issues accessing your ePermits account, please refer to the “Technical Support & Troubleshooting” section on the [ePermits FAQ](#) for further guidance. If you think the issue with accessing your account will impact your ability to submit a renewal application prior to the expiration of your current permit, please email the Regional Permit Coordinator at permitsr8es@fws.gov.

Q: Do I qualify for a fee exemption?

A: Fee exemptions may be granted to Federal, Tribal, State, or local government agencies or to any individual or institution acting on behalf of such agency. This also includes any individuals associated with public colleges or universities. Please submit evidence of your affiliation with any of the listed entities with your application if you apply as fee exempt; a scan of your identification badge or using a .gov email is most often accepted (see [50 CFR 13.11\(d\)\(3\)](#)).

Q: How long does it take to process my recovery permit application?

A: The time it takes to review and process an application for a recovery permit varies depending upon the request. Typically, the more complicated the request, the longer it may take (i.e., activities outside of presence/absence surveys, more than one species, or requests for activities in States outside of California, Nevada and the Klamath Basin in Oregon). Applications that include ‘Endangered’ species require being noticed in the Federal Register for public comment which can extend processing times. We recommend that you ensure to provide all the required documents at the time you submit the application and provide prompt responses to communications from the USFWS. Doing so can help keep the process moving. You can always contact us to inquire about the status of your application.