



# News Release

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**Southwest Region (Arizona • New Mexico • Oklahoma • Texas)** <http://southwest.fws.gov>

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## **Service to Evaluate the Environmental Impact of the Lower Colorado River Authority Transmission Services Corporation Electric's Operations on Six Federally Listed Species**

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) announced in the Federal Register today that it intends to prepare a draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) to evaluate the impacts of, and alternatives to, the proposed issuance of an Endangered Species Act permit to the Lower Colorado River Authority Transmission Services Corporation (LCRA TSC; Applicant) for incidental take of six federally-listed or candidate species.

The permit would allow incidental take associated with construction, maintenance, operation, and repair of four Competitive Renewable Energy Zone (CREZ) "priority" transmission lines and related facilities (e.g., substations, substation upgrades, and access roads) that are required to be constructed by the Public Utility Commission of Texas (PUC) (collectively, the LCRA TSC CREZ transmission lines). The Service also announced plans for a series of public scoping meetings and began a 90 day public comment period today.

Species proposed to be covered under the requested incidental take permit include: the golden-cheeked warbler, black-capped vireo, least tern, whooping crane, bald eagle, and black-tailed prairie dog. Counties in the proposed permit area include portions of Tom Green, Schleicher, Sutton, Mason, Menard, Kimble, Kerr, Kendall, Irion, Gillespie, Llano, Burnet, San Saba, and Lampasas counties.

Species not covered by the proposed incidental take permit will also be addressed in the draft HCP as evaluation or additional species. These species include the ocelot, Concho water snake, Clear Creek gambusia, sharpnose shiner, smalleye shiner, Bee Creek Cave harvestman, Texas hornshell, Tobusch fishhook cactus, and Texas snowbells. The Applicant does not anticipate that covered activities will result in take of the evaluation species.

If the permit is approved, the Service would authorize incidental take of the six federally listed species for a period of 30 years.

Written comments on alternatives and issues to be addressed in the draft EIS must be received by close of business on June 17, 2010. Public scoping meetings will be held at locations throughout LCRA's proposed 14-county permit area. LCRA will place ads in local newspapers announcing the various locations, dates, and times at least two weeks in advance, and place the information on their website: <http://www.LCRA.org>.

For further information or to send written comments by mail:

Field Supervisor, Austin Ecological Services Field Office, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 10711 Burnett Road, Suite 200, Austin, TX 78758-4460; 512/490-0057 (phone); 512/490-0974 (fax); or [Luella\\_Roberts@fws.gov](mailto:Luella_Roberts@fws.gov) (email). Note that your information request or comments concern the LCRA TSC draft EIS/HCP.

The mission of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is working with others to conserve, protect and enhance fish, wildlife, plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. We are both a leader and trusted partner in fish and wildlife conservation, known for our scientific excellence, stewardship of lands and natural resources, dedicated professionals and commitment to public service. For more information on our work and the people who make it happen, visit [www.fws.gov](http://www.fws.gov).

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