# United States Department of the Interior

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
Washington, D.C. 20240
SEP 21 2016

In Reply Refer To:
FWS/ES/DRR/059162

Memorandum

To: Regional Directors, Regions 1-8

From: Deputy Director

Subject: Recovery Plan Development and Implementation

As part of our ongoing effort to improve implementation of the Endangered Species Act, we revised our approach to recovery plan development and implementation. The new process will result in streamlined recovery plans that are completed faster and provide more flexibility to adapt to new information and changing conditions. The changes outlined in the attached Operational Plan supersede the Interim Recovery Planning Guidance (USFWS and NOAA 2010), where applicable.

Key components include:

1. A Species Status Assessment (SSA) that will inform and complement the Recovery Plan.
2. The Recovery Plan, which will include an introduction summarizing the recovery strategy and referencing the SSA and the three statutorily required elements: recovery criteria, recovery actions, and the time and costs to achieve recovery.
3. A Recovery Implementation Strategy, which is stepped down from the higher level recovery actions into individual implementable recovery activities. The Recovery Implementation Strategy focuses on near-term activities and will be revised as needed. The Recovery Implementation Strategy will be developed in collaboration with partners where applicable, and will facilitate more flexible strategic implementation.

As integrated pieces of a comprehensive conservation strategy for a species, the SSA, Recovery Plan, and Recovery Implementation Strategy will provide a rationale for and vision of the recovery goals and an actionable plan for achieving those goals for each species within the broader context of the landscapes in which it resides. This approach provides more flexibility to keep planning documents up-to-date, and allows for the identification of additional recovery activities as necessary. This approach also allows for more targeted use of recovery teams.

We recognize that there may be some period of transition for species that do not have SSAs. During this transition, all new recovery planning efforts will consist of the streamlined Recovery Plan, a biological report (including the biological background and threats analysis) and an implementation strategy. The streamlined Recovery Plan will contain only the three statutory elements and a short introduction, including a summary of the recovery vision (what recovery looks like for the species) and the recovery strategy (how we plan to achieve the vision).

Documents expanding on Recovery Planning and Implementation are available on the Google site at https://sites.google.com/a/fws.gov/recovery-planning-and-implementation/. If you have questions about the development of Recovery Plans, please contact Mr. Jeff Newman, Chief, Division of Restoration and Recovery at 703-358-2555.

Attachment