



United States Department of the Interior



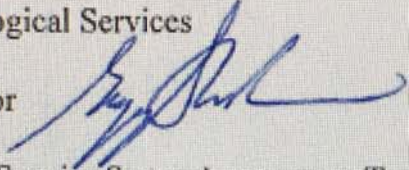
FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
Washington, D.C. 20240

OCT 13 2017

In Reply Refer To:
FWS/D/066708

Memorandum

To: Assistant Director, Ecological Services

From: Principal Deputy Director 

Subject: State Representation on Species Status Assessment Teams

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) developed the Species Status Assessment (SSA) framework as part of ongoing efforts to improve implementation of the Endangered Species Act (ESA). This assessment is based on the best available scientific and commercial information, which should include information from the states.

In addition, the Service's policy regarding the role of state fish and wildlife agencies in ESA activities requires the agency to coordinate, collaborate, and use the expertise of state agencies in developing the scientific foundation upon which the Service bases its determinations for listing actions. The input of states should include (but is not limited to) a solicitation of state data and research in addition to state personnel involvement in the development of SSAs.

To better implement these requirements, the Service will formally request at least two representatives from the state government on all SSA teams, subject to the affected states' willingness to participate. Each SSA team will request one member from the respective state fish and wildlife management agency(s) and one as designated by the respective Governor's office(s). This requirement is to be implemented in beginning with all new SSA's starting November 1, 2017.

Additionally, the Department of the Interior's Strategic Plan for Fiscal Years 2018-2022, as submitted to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), supports this requirement in the target set for an Agency Priority Goal related to ESA implementation.