

What Changes to Covered Species Should the Permit Renewal Process Consider?



Covered Species

The USFWS has designated eight species that live in the Edwards Aquifer, the San Marcos Springs, and the Comal Springs aquatic ecosystems as either endangered or threatened. Three other species are petitioned for listing.

An **endangered** species is considered to be at immediate risk of extinction.

A **threatened** species is considered to be at risk of extinction in the foreseeable future.

A **petitioned** species has been brought to the attention of the USFWS through a listing petition.

Covered Species: How to Define?

Range: Is the species known to occur or is it expected to occur within the permit area based on species locality and range data, species literature, and professional expertise?

Listing Status: Is the species listed under the ESA as threatened or endangered, petitioned for listing, or does it have a strong likelihood of being listed during the permit term?

Impact: Will the species or its habitat be adversely affected by covered activities at a level that is likely to result in take as defined by the ESA?

Species Data: Does sufficient scientific data exist on the species’ life history, habitat requirements, and occurrence in the Permit Area to allow for adequate evaluation of impacts and development of conservation to mitigate those impacts?

Endangered

Texas Wild-Rice (*Zizania texana*)
Texas Blind Salamander (*Eurycea rathbuni*)
Fountain Darter (*Etheostoma fonticola*)
Comal Springs Dryopid Beetle (*Stygoparnus comalensis*)
Comal Springs Riffle Beetle (*Heterelmis comalensis*)
Peck’s Cave Amphipod (*Stygobromus pecki*)

Threatened

San Marcos Salamander (*Eurycea nana*)

Petitioned as Threatened or Endangered

Texas Troglobitic Water Slater (*Lirceolus smithii*)
Edwards Aquifer Diving Beetle (*Haideoporus texanus*)

Not Listed

Comal Springs Salamander (*Eurycea* sp.)

Proposed Delisting

San Marcos Gambusia (*Gambusia georgei*)¹

Example of Changes to Covered Species to Consider

Background

Add Covered Species occurring within the Permit Area that have a high likelihood of being listed during the permit term

Change to Consider

The USFWS is anticipated to publish listing decisions on the following species that occur in the EAHCP Permit Area:

Blanco Blind Salamander (*Eurycea robusta*)

Comal Blind Salamander (*Eurycea tridentifera*)

Texas Salamander (*Eurycea neotenes*)

Toothless Blindcat (*Trogloglanis pattersoni*)

Widemouth Blindcat (*Satan eurystomus*)

Rationale

Should any of these species become listed, and if they are likely to be taken by Covered Activities, take authorization would be needed

Adding species likely to be listed in the future and for which take authorization may be needed can be a valuable “insurance policy” for the Permittees

Questions to Consider

Are there species not already covered that should be considered for coverage in the renewal process for the EAHCP?

Is there information about EAHCP Covered Species that should be considered in the renewal process?

¹ The USFWS published a proposed rule on September 30, 2021, to delist the San Marcos gambusia due to extinction.