

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Guidance on Conservation Measures

Conservation Measures are the specific actions undertaken by the Incidental Take Permit holder (Permittee) to achieve biological objectives to support the biological goals of the Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP). There may be multiple Conservation Measures associated with each biological objective. Conservation Measures include avoidance, minimization, or mitigation actions.

Avoidance – avoiding impacts on Covered Species through project design and conditions on Covered Activities

General examples: seasonal restrictions on Covered Activities during biologically important periods, reduction of extent of Covered Activity to avoid species habitat



EAHCP example: The Texas Parks & Wildlife Department has established a 2-mile segment of the San Marcos River as a State Scientific Area. The State Scientific Area restricts recreation during flow conditions below 120 cubic feet per second, including excluding people from certain areas to protect Texas wild-rice.

Minimization – minimizing the impact of the Covered Activities through best management practices or by reducing or eliminating other threats

General examples: buffering biologically important areas (e.g., occupied habitat or important habitat elements), maintaining ecological connectivity/habitat linkages for populations



EAHCP example: The EAA administers the Voluntary Irrigation Suspension Program Option (VISPO) program. VISPO pays participants enrolled in the program to suspend their use of Edwards Aquifer groundwater for irrigation purposes during drought, thereby minimizing the effects of drought on springflow and Covered Species habitat.

Mitigation – offsetting impacts of Covered Activities based on the biological needs of the Covered Species

General examples: restoration, enhancement, or creation of habitat; land or water acquisition/preservation, species-specific measures such as population enhancement



EAHCP example: The City of San Marcos and the City of New Braunfels restore native submerged aquatic vegetation within key reaches of the Comal and San Marcos rivers by removing non-native vegetation, if present, and planting native vegetation.