Overall Report Objectives

SSA Report Writing Guidance
Quick Reference

Report Objectives

- ☐ Summarize the SSA analysis.
- ☐ Keep the reader focused on viability.
- ☐ Clearly connect all parts of the analysis into a logical narrative about species risk, expressed in terms of viability.
- ☐ Identify uncertainties.
- ☐ Provide a partial repository of information about the species.
- ☐ Be updateable.
- ☐ Be clear, concise, transparent, and written in plain language.
- ☐ Be written for multiple audiences.
  - Internal FWS Reviewers (i.e., managers, supervisors, etc.) and other FWS programs
  - Other Federal agencies, States, and Tribal partners
  - Peer reviewers
  - Decision-making team
  - Public likely to comment on FRN, including government agencies and NGOs
  - ES Service program employees (e.g., recovery, Section 7, etc.)
  - Scientists and species experts

Checklists for each chapter of the SSA Report

Introduction

- Identify the species, including its taxonomy.
- State why we are conducting an SSA.
- State that the SSA framework is the primary methodology. We recommend the following statement:
  This report summarizes the analytical phase of the Species Status Assessment (SSA) using the three biological principles of resiliency, representation, and redundancy to assess the species viability, or its ability to persist over time.
- Identify other methodologies and data used in the analysis.
- Clearly outline any areas of uncertainty.

Species Ecology

- State the most important individual needs for breeding, feeding, and sheltering as well as migration if relevant at various life stages (juvenile—maturity).
- Briefly describe the most important population habitat needs.
- Briefly describe the most important population parameters and explain what makes them important.
- Briefly describe how representation and distribution were assessed.

Factors Influencing Viability

- What were the historical causes of decline? Are those factors still acting on the species resulting in residual effects?
- What are the factors currently acting on the species? Which of those factors are likely to have population-level effects?
- How does the species respond?
- What are the spatial and temporal scales?
- What is the relative magnitude of effect (e.g. entire species, multiple populations, individuals only)?
- Do factors exist that are likely to affect the species in the future (emerging threats)? OR do factors exist that are currently acting at the individual- or population-level but whose magnitude may change?
- Do regulatory mechanisms exist that address any of the factors affecting the species?
- Are any conservation measures, voluntary or otherwise, in place addressing any of the factors?

Future Condition

- The time period(s) over which future viability was assessed and the reason the time period(s) was(were) chosen.
- The method used to extrapolate data into the future and any areas of uncertainty.
- Future species viability in terms of the 3Rs.