

MIS are species of vertebrates and invertebrates whose response to land management activities can be used to predict the likely response of other species with similar habitat requirements (FSM 2631.3).



Black Bears
(Ursus americanus)

Black bears were chosen as a management indicator species because of their importance as game species and for recreation and tourism, and for their use of a wide range of habitat types including old-growth forest, alpine and subalpine meadows, beach and estuary fringe, wetlands, sedge meadows and riparian areas. Black bears in Southeast Alaska are part of a population of the Alexander Archipelago black bears endemic to coastal British Columbia and Southeast Alaska, except Admiralty, Baranof and Chichagof islands (Stone and Cook 2000; Peacock *et al.* 2007).

While early successional habitats may provide abundant food in the short term, over the long term, dense young-growth stands provide poor habitat for black bears due to the lack of understory vegetation and large hollow trees for denning.

Project Level

There are no specific Standards and Guidelines in the Forest Plan concerning black bears; however, bears benefit from habitat maintained under Standards and Guidelines in place for other species; such as stream buffers on fish bearing streams.

River Otter
(Lutra canadensis)



The river otter was selected as an MIS because of its association with coastal and freshwater aquatic environments and the immediately adjacent (within 100 to 500 feet) upland habitats. River otters are distributed throughout Southeast Alaska along coastal and inland waters (MacDonald and Cook 1999). Beach characteristics affect the availability of food and cover, and adjacent upland vegetation is also important in providing cover for otters. Old-growth forests have the highest habitat value, providing canopy cover, large-diameter trees and snags, and burrow and den sites. They tend to use POG (SDM SD5N, SD5S, SD67 categories).. Younger successional stages provide lower quality habitat.

Project Level

There are no specific Standards and Guidelines in the Forest Plan concerning river otters; however, otters benefit from habitat maintained under Standards and Guidelines in place for other species; such as stream buffers on fish bearing streams and the 1,000 foot beach buffer.



Marten (*Martes americana*)

The American marten is a management indicator species because of its association with old-growth forests and its importance as a furbearer.

Coastal habitats (beach fringe) and riparian areas have the highest habitat value for marten, followed by upland forested habitats below 1,500 feet in elevation (USDA Forest Service 2008a). Marten favor large- and medium-sized old-growth forests because they intercept snow, provide cover and denning sites, and provide habitat for marten prey species (Flynn and Schumacher 2001).

2008 Forest Plan

A. Implement a Forest-wide program, in cooperation with ADF&G, to provide and conserve habitat to assist in maintaining long-term sustainable marten populations.

1. Where marten mortality concerns have been identified, cooperate with ADF&G to assist in managing marten mortality rates to within sustainable levels. Both access management on National Forest lands and hunter/trapper harvest regulations administered by the ADF&G shall be considered.

a) Participate in interagency monitoring of marten populations on the Forest. (See also Legacy Forest Structure Standards and Guidelines.)

b) Where marten data suggest that mortality exceeds sustainable levels, work with ADF&G to identify probable sources of mortality. In an interagency analysis, examine the relationship between hunter/trapper marten harvest and human access.

c) Where road access and associated human-caused mortality has been determined, through this analysis to be the significant contributing factor to unsustainable marten mortality, incorporate this information into Travel Management planning with the objective of reducing mortality risk. Local knowledge of habitat conditions, spatial location of roads, and other factors need to be considered by the biologist rather than solely relying upon road densities. Road management objectives would be developed and implemented through an interdisciplinary Access and Travel Management process or comparable process. (Consult Transportation Forest-wide Standards and Guidelines.)

Project Level

Effects to marten habitat, both winter and year round are analyzed at the project level. Winter habitat equals high-POG ≤1500' elevation; year-round habitat equals POG, all elevations.