

Terrestrial Habitats - Overview
Nez Perce – Clearwater National Forests
Forest Plan Revision Collaborative Group Meeting, February 2013

- National Forest Management Act (NFMA) requires maintaining the diversity of plant and animal communities
- Endangered Species Act (ESA) requires conservation of ecosystems upon which threatened or endangered species depend.

While many species, such as elk, deer and moose, reside in several ecosections, others find their best habitats where only certain vegetation conditions occur. For example, flammulated owls are associated where frequent fires that reduce forest undergrowth and favor the development of large ponderosa pine. Further, pileated woodpeckers depend for nesting and foraging on large, dead trees that are most abundant in the warm, moist, gentle terrain of the uplands. The deep snows of subalpine landscapes favor Canada lynx and its prey, snowshoe hare. For some species, however, habitats cannot be clearly accounted for by vegetative composition or structure. For these species, special measures may be necessary to assure the availability and distribution their respective habitats.

Species whose habitats are most closely associated with the Bitterroot Mountains Breaklands ecosection landscape include wintering big game, Coeur d'Alene salamander, Idaho giant salamander, red-tailed chipmunk, pygmy shrew, and Selway snail, among others. In much of this landscape, wintering elk rely on browse species that thrive following wildfire, prescribed fire, or timber harvest practices that include prescribed fire.

Within the Idaho Batholith Breaklands, in addition to elk and deer, bighorn sheep find preferred habitats in the Salmon River canyon. Other species whose preferred habitats occur in this landscape include flammulated owl, mountain quail, peregrine falcon, white-headed woodpecker and, among others, certain snails/slugs.

Species primarily associated with Bitterroot Uplands ecosection include pileated woodpecker, fisher, northern goshawk, and moose. This ecosection contains much of roaded portions of the Forest.

Species primarily associated with the Bitterroot Mountains Subalpine and Idaho Batholith Subalpine ecosections include Canada lynx, wolverine, boreal owl, 3-toed woodpecker and, among others, moose.

Species of Conservation Concern: A species of conservation concern is a species, other than federally recognized threatened, endangered, proposed, or candidate species, that is known to occur in the plan area and for which the regional forester has determined that the best available scientific information indicates substantial concern about the species' capability to persist over the long-term in the plan area. (36 CFR 219.9(c))

Security Area: Any area that will hold elk during periods of stress because of geography, topography, vegetation, or a combination of those features, more meaningful than security habitat. A security area for elk was defined by Hillis et al. (1991), as a nonlinear block of hiding cover at least 250 acres in size and at least one-half mile from roads open to motorized traffic.

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