



United States Department of the Interior

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
New England Ecological Services Field Office
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In Reply Refer To:

September 11, 2023

Project Code: 2023-0127489

Project Name: Eversource X178-1 Transmission Line Rebuild Project

Subject: List of threatened and endangered species that may occur in your proposed project location or may be affected by your proposed project

To Whom It May Concern:

Updated 4/12/2023 - Please review this letter each time you request an Official Species List, we will continue to update it with additional information and links to websites may change.

About Official Species Lists

The purpose of the Act is to provide a means whereby threatened and endangered species and the ecosystems upon which they depend may be conserved. Federal and non-Federal project proponents have responsibilities under the Act to consider effects on listed species.

The enclosed species list identifies threatened, endangered, proposed, and candidate species, as well as proposed and final designated critical habitat, that may occur within the boundary of your proposed project and/or may be affected by your proposed project. The species list fulfills the requirements of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) under section 7(c) of the Endangered Species Act (Act) of 1973, as amended (16 U.S.C. 1531 et seq.).

New information based on updated surveys, changes in the abundance and distribution of species, changed habitat conditions, or other factors could change this list. Please note that under 50 CFR 402.12(e) of the regulations implementing section 7 of the Act, the accuracy of this species list should be verified after 90 days. The Service recommends that verification be completed by visiting the IPaC website at regular intervals during project planning and implementation for updates to species lists and information. An updated list may be requested by returning to an existing project's page in IPaC.

Endangered Species Act Project Review

Please visit the “**New England Field Office Endangered Species Project Review and Consultation**” website for step-by-step instructions on how to consider effects on listed

species and prepare and submit a project review package if necessary:

<https://www.fws.gov/office/new-england-ecological-services/endangered-species-project-review>

NOTE Please do not use the **Consultation Package Builder** tool in IPaC except in specific situations following coordination with our office. Please follow the project review guidance on our website instead and reference your **Project Code** in all correspondence.

Northern Long-eared Bat - (Updated 4/12/2023) The Service published a final rule to reclassify the northern long-eared bat (NLEB) as endangered on November 30, 2022. The final rule went into effect on March 31, 2023. You may utilize the **Northern Long-eared Bat Rangewide Determination Key** available in IPaC. More information about this Determination Key and the Interim Consultation Framework are available on the northern long-eared bat species page:

<https://www.fws.gov/species/northern-long-eared-bat-myotis-septentrionalis>

For projects that previously utilized the 4(d) Determination Key, the change in the species' status may trigger the need to re-initiate consultation for any actions that are not completed and for which the Federal action agency retains discretion once the new listing determination becomes effective. If your project was not completed by March 31, 2023, and may result in incidental take of NLEB, please reach out to our office at newengland@fws.gov to see if reinitiation is necessary.

Additional Info About Section 7 of the Act

Under section 7(a)(2) of the Act and its implementing regulations (50 CFR 402 et seq.), Federal agencies are required to determine whether projects may affect threatened and endangered species and/or designated critical habitat. If a Federal agency, or its non-Federal representative, determines that listed species and/or designated critical habitat may be affected by the proposed project, the agency is required to consult with the Service pursuant to 50 CFR 402. In addition, the Federal agency also may need to consider proposed species and proposed critical habitat in the consultation. 50 CFR 402.14(c)(1) specifies the information required for consultation under the Act regardless of the format of the evaluation. More information on the regulations and procedures for section 7 consultation, including the role of permit or license applicants, can be found in the "Endangered Species Consultation Handbook" at:

<https://www.fws.gov/service/section-7-consultations>

In addition to consultation requirements under Section 7(a)(2) of the ESA, please note that under sections 7(a)(1) of the Act and its implementing regulations (50 CFR 402 et seq.), Federal agencies are required to utilize their authorities to carry out programs for the conservation of threatened and endangered species. Please contact NEFO if you would like more information.

Candidate species that appear on the enclosed species list have no current protections under the ESA. The species' occurrence on an official species list does not convey a requirement to

consider impacts to this species as you would a proposed, threatened, or endangered species. The ESA does not provide for interagency consultations on candidate species under section 7, however, the Service recommends that all project proponents incorporate measures into projects to benefit candidate species and their habitats wherever possible.

Migratory Birds

In addition to responsibilities to protect threatened and endangered species under the Endangered Species Act (ESA), there are additional responsibilities under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA) and the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act (BGEPA) to protect native birds from project-related impacts. Any activity, intentional or unintentional, resulting in take of migratory birds, including eagles, is prohibited unless otherwise permitted by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (50 C.F.R. Sec. 10.12 and 16 U.S.C. Sec. 668(a)). For more information regarding these Acts see:

<https://www.fws.gov/program/migratory-bird-permit>

<https://www.fws.gov/library/collections/bald-and-golden-eagle-management>

Please feel free to contact us at **newengland@fws.gov** with your **Project Code** in the subject line if you need more information or assistance regarding the potential impacts to federally proposed, listed, and candidate species and federally designated and proposed critical habitat.

Attachment(s): Official Species List

Attachment(s):

- Official Species List

OFFICIAL SPECIES LIST

This list is provided pursuant to Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act, and fulfills the requirement for Federal agencies to "request of the Secretary of the Interior information whether any species which is listed or proposed to be listed may be present in the area of a proposed action".

This species list is provided by:

New England Ecological Services Field Office

70 Commercial Street, Suite 300

Concord, NH 03301-5094

(603) 223-2541

PROJECT SUMMARY

Project Code: 2023-0127489
Project Name: Eversource X178-1 Transmission Line Rebuild Project
Project Type: Transmission Line - Maintenance/Modification - Above Ground
Project Description: Note: the entire length of this transmission line project is around 3.5 miles although only 0.28 miles of that takes place on Forest Service land. Nevertheless, the full extent of the project was used to map it in IPaC and impacts to listed species for the whole project will be considered.

Eversource, the current permit holder for utility lines across the WMNF, has identified five existing utility poles that need to be replaced within the existing right of way (ROW) of the X178-1 transmission line in Campton, Thornton, and Woodstock, NH.

The proposed structure replacement work will involve replacing five wooden H-frame structures with new, steel H-frame structures along 0.28 miles of the ROW within the WMNF. All work will follow the Best Management Practices Manual for Utility Maintenance in and Adjacent to Wetlands and Waterbodies in NH. Vehicles and equipment that will need to access the transmission line corridor include mobile cranes to set poles, flatbed trucks to deliver materials, and other mobile equipment such as drill rigs, frontend loaders, and excavators. The project proposes to use portions of two existing roads outside of the ROW for access. Grading and the addition of gravel may be necessary to make access roads off the ROW passable by construction equipment. No tree clearing will be required during any phase of construction, and all work will occur within the existing, cleared transmission line ROW and access roads. Trimming of tree branches may be done as needed along the ROW for equipment access. Construction proposed to begin October 2024 with an in service date of December 2026. Work is expected to take place throughout the year to allow for time to replace the structures and replace the overhead wires.

Portions of the ROW occur within the WMNF lands and there are also some areas where access to the ROW may need to cross WMNF lands. The proposed project will use existing access routes within the X178-1 transmission line ROW wherever possible. Most existing access routes are comprised of dirt or grassy areas, or previously used access routes, and are proposed to be improved as part of the project to allow for construction vehicle access. Where access and work pads are proposed within wetlands, Eversource will use temporary timber matting to cross wetlands and minimize rutting and compaction in wetlands. Individual timber mats are about four feet by sixteen feet and will be placed in adjoining segments to span wetlands. Upon completion of work,

temporary timber matting will be removed and impacted wetlands will be restored by seeding and adding mulch. In uplands, Eversource is proposing grading and construction of about sixteen feet wide gravel access roads and 100 by 100 square foot gravel work pads at most structure locations. Upon completion of work, Eversource is proposing to leave access roads in place in order to access structures in the event of an emergency, and will reduce work gravel pads to an approximate 60 foot by 30 foot area in order for bucket trucks to access structures in emergencies and/or structure maintenance. Structure heights will increase on average ten feet to fifteen feet which is required to meet current National Electric Safety Code standards.

Project Location:

The approximate location of the project can be viewed in Google Maps: <https://www.google.com/maps/@44.01218745,-71.67950572984043,14z>



Counties: Grafton County, New Hampshire

ENDANGERED SPECIES ACT SPECIES

There is a total of 3 threatened, endangered, or candidate species on this species list.

Species on this list should be considered in an effects analysis for your project and could include species that exist in another geographic area. For example, certain fish may appear on the species list because a project could affect downstream species.

IPaC does not display listed species or critical habitats under the sole jurisdiction of NOAA Fisheries¹, as USFWS does not have the authority to speak on behalf of NOAA and the Department of Commerce.

See the "Critical habitats" section below for those critical habitats that lie wholly or partially within your project area under this office's jurisdiction. Please contact the designated FWS office if you have questions.

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1. [NOAA Fisheries](#), also known as the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), is an office of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration within the Department of Commerce.

MAMMALS

NAME	STATUS
Canada Lynx <i>Lynx canadensis</i> Population: Wherever Found in Contiguous U.S. There is final critical habitat for this species. Your location does not overlap the critical habitat. Species profile: https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/3652	Threatened
Northern Long-eared Bat <i>Myotis septentrionalis</i> No critical habitat has been designated for this species. Species profile: https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/9045	Endangered

INSECTS

NAME	STATUS
Monarch Butterfly <i>Danaus plexippus</i> No critical habitat has been designated for this species. Species profile: https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/9743	Candidate

CRITICAL HABITATS

THERE ARE NO CRITICAL HABITATS WITHIN YOUR PROJECT AREA UNDER THIS OFFICE'S JURISDICTION.

YOU ARE STILL REQUIRED TO DETERMINE IF YOUR PROJECT(S) MAY HAVE EFFECTS ON ALL ABOVE LISTED SPECIES.

IPAC USER CONTACT INFORMATION

Agency: Forest Service
Name: Brett Hillman
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State: NH
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