



# 2022 Pacific Fisher Summary Report

June 1, 2022



Bushnell

01-20-2010 00:15:30

Cover photo: Pacific Fisher at bait pack in Yager Creek watershed.

## Project Description

**Title:** Pacific Fisher Summary Report 2022

**Purpose:** Habitat Conservation Plan Monitoring

**Date Initiated:** March 1999

**Projected End Date:** Ongoing

**Managers:** Sal Chinnici, Director, Forest Sciences, and Brad Mauney, Lead Wildlife Biologist

## Executive Summary:

The Pacific fisher (*Pekania pennanti*) is a medium-sized carnivore in the weasel family. It is one of 17 covered species of the HRC Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP). The Pacific fisher is no longer a Federal or State Candidate for listing under the respective Endangered Species Acts. For California, the California Fish and Game Commission on August 5, 2015, made the finding that listing the Southern Sierra Nevada Evolutionarily Significant Unit (ESU) as threatened is warranted, and that listing the Northern California ESU was not warranted.

In November 2019, the Service published a revised proposed rule to list the West Coast DPS of fisher as threatened under the ESA. Based on the most recent data, the Service has now determined there are two distinct West Coast populations of fisher: the Southern Sierra Nevada DPS and the Northern California-Southern Oregon DPS. On 15 June 2020, the Service announced it will list the Southern Sierra Nevada DPS of fisher as endangered under the ESA. The Northern California-Southern Oregon DPS was not listed, as it is more widespread within its range, and has more diversity in ages, male to female ratios and breeding success. The fisher also remains a California Department of Fish and Wildlife Species of Special Concern.

The HCP conservation strategy for the Pacific fisher is a combination of a habitat-based approach with an additional structural component element. The management objective is to maintain enough suitable habitat to contribute to a sustainable population of the species in the northern California coastal province. Conservation measures include retention of late seral habitat, aquatic resource protection, measures to retain and recruit habitat structural components, and old growth habitat reserves (i.e., the Marbled Murrelet Conservation Areas or MMCA's).

Monitoring for this species has been through forest carnivore surveys to establish continued occupancy of HRC lands and tracking of seral stage distribution in Watershed Assessment Areas (WAAs) as discussed below. No surveys were conducted during the 2021-2022 period. There were no new incidental detections recorded during that time. Here we include the habitat summary information for your review. No changes in the monitoring strategy are recommended at this time.

Sal Chinnici



Director, Forest Sciences

**Document Distribution List**

Susan Sniado  
CA Dept. of Fish & Wildlife  
Northern California - North Coast Region  
610 2nd Street  
Eureka, CA 95501

John Peters  
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
Arcata Fish and Wildlife Office  
1655 Heindon Rd.  
Arcata, CA 95521

Clarence Hostler  
NOAA Fisheries  
1655 Heindon Rd.  
Arcata, CA 95521

Chris Curtis  
Cal Fire  
118 Fortuna Blvd.  
Fortuna, CA 95540

Dominik Scwhab  
Cal Fire  
135 Ridgway  
Santa Rosa, CA 95401

## Habitat Summary

Regarding maintenance of habitat for the Pacific fisher, the HCP states:

*“Retention of late seral habitat on the ownership through the life of the permit is expected to provide sufficient habitat in terms of quantity, quality, and distribution to contribute to a viable population. Channel Migration Zones (CMZs) and Riparian Management Zones (RMZs) are expected to provide connectivity across the landscape. In many locations, CMZs and RMZs will intersect with other RMZs or be augmented by habitat subject to silvicultural restrictions (e.g., NSO activity sites, mass-wasting sites, or steep slopes adjacent to RMZs). These areas, MMCAs, and adjoining public lands will form an interconnecting network of habitat which is expected to provide opportunities for denning and resting sites in the Humboldt, Yager, and Van Duzen WAAs. HRC land within the Bear, Mattole, and Eel WAAs is not expected to provide blocks of late seral habitat through the life of the permit. Late seral and old growth habitat on public lands adjacent to HRC ownership in these two WAAs is expected to provide suitable habitat for the species.*

*The conservation measures to retain and recruit habitat structural components within and outside of RMZs across the ownership is expected to provide older forest legacies in younger stands when these stands reach a mid-successional seral stage. These legacy components are expected to provide suitable substrate for Pacific fisher denning and resting sites.”*

The quantity and distribution of late seral habitat as of January 2022, according to the most recent stand inventory information as cross-walked to California Wildlife Habitat Relationships System (CWHR) types, and thus seral stage for the Watershed Assessment Areas (WAAs), is shown in Table 1. HRC’s HCP commitment is to maintain at least 10% late seral of forested lands by WAA (HCP 6.11). CMZs, RMZs, NSO activity sites, mass-wasting sites, and steep slope areas are tracked separately through other HCP programs and applied on each Timber Harvesting Plan (THP). In addition, the retention and recruitment of habitat structural components are tracked via individual THPs.

Pacific fisher habitat should also benefit over time as a result of the HRC conservation measure of retention of all old growth trees meeting the company’s policy, and use of uneven-aged silviculture, two additional measures not contemplated during the writing of the HCP and Biological Opinion. In addition, HRC continues to designate stands meeting the definition of High Conservation Value Forest (HCVF) according to the requirements of Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) certification, including an approximately 200 acre late seral forest on the north side of Long Ridge in the North Fork of the Mattole River watershed.

**Table 1.** Seral Types by Watershed Assessment Area (WAA) as of January 2022.

<b>WAA</b>	<b>Grass</b>	<b>Hardwood</b>	<b>Open</b>	<b>Young</b>	<b>Mid</b>	<b>Late</b>	<b>Totals</b>	<b>% Late Seral*</b>
Humboldt Bay	0	386	247	12197	17688	8129	38647	21.03
Yager Creek	96	658	851	17469	10909	4385	34368	12.79
Van Duzen	79	361	845	7651	11907	4677	25520	18.38
Eel River	561	5538	2278	29218	24634	13351	75580	17.80
Bear/Mattole River	3300	10388	620	7238	3335	9805	34686	31.24
Mad River	300	1432	131	539	1032	1256	4690	28.61
<b>Total</b>	<b>4336</b>	<b>18763</b>	<b>4972</b>	<b>74312</b>	<b>69505</b>	<b>41603</b>	<b>210517</b>	

\*Percent of forested lands (i.e., excluding grasslands, HCP 6.11.2.1)