



Memorandum

Members

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DATE: July 23, 2021
TO: County Council
FROM: Barry A. Wenger, Wildlife Advisory Committee Chair
SUBJECT: Nomination of Species of Local Importance

Pursuant to WCC 16.16.710(D) the Wildlife Advisory Committee (WAC) respectfully requests that the Council consider designating the following four wildlife species as "Species of Local Importance."

- Western Toad (also known as boreal toad) (*Anaxyrus* [formerly *Bufo*] *boreas*)
- Coastal Tailed Frog (*Ascaphus truei*)
- Townsend's Big-Eared Bat (*Coryrhinus townsendii*)
- Elk (*Cervus elaphus*)

WCC 16.16.710(C)(12)(b) currently names two specific habitats as "Habitats of Local Importance": i) the marine nearshore habitat, including coastal lagoons, and the associated vegetated marine riparian zone and ii) the Chuckanut wildlife corridor); however, no specific species are named. One of the tasks on the WAC's work plan is to review whether any species should be designated a "Species of Local Importance," and to nominate them if so. Supported by Planning and Development Services (PDS) staff, the WAC has worked over the past several years to develop this initial list.

The background data to support these nominations is provided in the attached report, "Species and Habitats of Local Importance May 2021 Nominations."

Please note that comprehensive, detailed habitat maps are not available for all species. Predominant, large species such as elk that are well documented over many years, and the habitat and annual migrations they use are well-known, so maps are available and provided. Other species, such as the coastal tailed frog and western toad are found only in extremely limited locations and have much less spatial documentation. For these vulnerable species, it is not in the public interest for their habitat locations to be made publicly known through detailed maps. This approach is similar to the way that, for their security, bald eagle nest locations are protected from unrestricted public access. Wildlife resource managers will need to work with the public and scientists to implement this effort over time.

It should also be noted that there are other species that may warrant being included on this list, but unfortunately are poorly documented, and more information is needed to evaluate their status in Whatcom County. Although these other species are not recommended as Species/Habitats of Local Importance at this time, the WAC proposes creation of a "Watch List" to encourage research, monitoring, and documentation.

We urge the Council to schedule a public hearing on this matter (a requirement of WCC 16.16.710(D)(3)) and move to designate these species as "Species of Local Importance." Thank you for your time and consideration.

Attachments:

- (1) WAC Recommendations for Species and Habitats of Local Importance
- (2) Summary Table of Species of Local Importance
- (3) Regulatory review
- (4) Species Technical Reviews