



ECOREGIONS:

Overview of Ecoregions

Oregon's diverse landscapes range from lush rainforests to deserts, contributing to diverse combinations of species that differ from one area to another. Differences in vegetation, climate, and history of human use influence how the six key conservation issues affect fish and wildlife at the local level and what actions are needed to address those issues.

Similarly, each community's residents perceive, value and manage their natural resources in ways unique to their respective regions. To capture this regional diversity and local knowledge, the Conservation Strategy examines Oregon's eight ecoregions. Ecoregions are portions of the state with similar climate and vegetation. The Conservation Strategy uses the Environmental Protection Agency's Level III Ecoregion map (www.epa.gov/wed/pages/ecoregions/or_eco.htm), but combines the Snake River Plain with the Northern Basin and Range.

This section provides an overview for each of Oregon's eight ecoregions. Each overview contains information on land uses, economies, and ecology; Strategy Species and Habitats; conservation issues and approaches to address them; documented and potential invasive species; some conservation actions; and example(s) of successful collaborative conservation projects. More specific information on Strategy Habitats and Species is presented in the following chapters.

Conservation Opportunity Areas

Landowners and land managers throughout Oregon can contribute to conserving fish and wildlife by maintaining, restoring, and improving habitats. Conservation actions that benefit Strategy Species and Habitats are important regardless of location. However, focusing investments in certain priority areas can increase likelihood of long-term success over larger landscapes, improve funding efficiency, and promote cooperative efforts across ownership boundaries. Conservation

Opportunity Areas are landscapes where broad fish and wildlife conservation goals would be best met. Conservation Opportunity Areas were developed to guide voluntary actions. Land use or other activities within these areas will not be subject to any new regulations. These maps and the associated data should only be used in ways consistent with these intentions. For more information on how these areas were identified, see Appendix IV (Methods) on page a:34.

The Conservation Strategy envisions that, over time, voluntary conservation actions consistent with local priorities will be carried out within these Conservation Opportunity Areas by a variety of partners (e.g., landowners, land managers, watershed councils, local land trusts, Soil and Water Conservation Districts). The impact of these conservation actions on Strategy Species and Habitats will be monitored. Through this process, additional information will be gained on the habitat elements of importance to Strategy Species. This information will be used to refine the boundaries of Conservation Opportunity Areas in the future.

The Conservation Opportunity Area profiles include information on recommended conservation actions, special features, key species, key habitats, and if the area has been identified as a priority by other planning efforts. These profiles highlight some priority actions to implement in individual Conservation Opportunity Areas, which can range from restoration projects to monitoring for invasive species. These recommendations were identified through existing plans, spatial analysis, and expert review. They are not meant to be exhaustive, so other actions also will be appropriate, as influenced by local site characteristics and management goals. Actions need to be compatible with local priorities, local comprehensive plans and land use ordinances, as well as other local, state, or federal laws. Actions on federal lands must undergo federal planning processes prior to implementation to ensure consistency with existing plans and management objectives for the area.