



Critical Habitat

MEXICAN SPOTTED OWL
CRITICAL HABITAT IN COLORADO

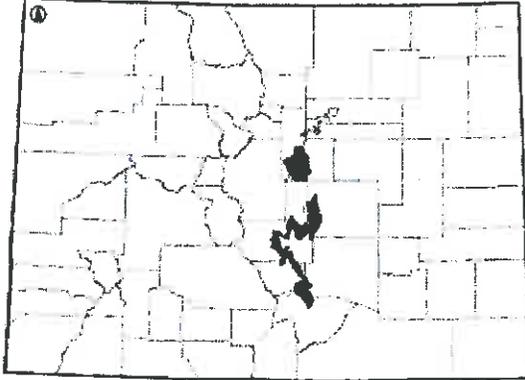


Photo Source: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service



03-0009-11



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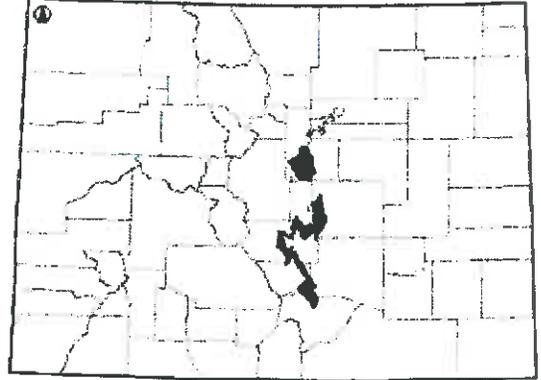


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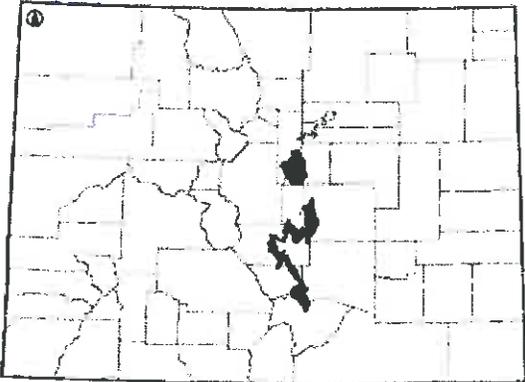


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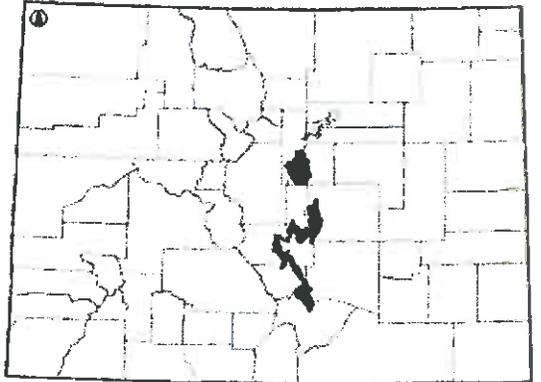


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Critical Habitat

The federal Endangered Species Act provides protection not only species that are listed as threatened or endangered by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), but also for their critical habitat. Designated critical habitat consists of the specific geographic areas containing features that the USFWS considers essential for the conservation of the species, whether or not such areas are actually occupied by the species in question.

An area is designated as critical habitat after USFWS publishes a proposed regulation specifying its boundaries in the Federal Register, receives and reviews public comments, then publishes a notice of its final decision. Federal agencies are required to consult with USFWS to ensure that their proposed actions (such as a federally-funded CDOT transportation improvement) would not destroy or adversely modify designated critical habitat.

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