

## Frequently Asked Questions about the New Version of Recovery On-line Activity Reporting (ROAR) Database

### How Can I Access ECOS & ROAR?

- Go to: <https://ecos.fws.gov/>. If you are a Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) employee, enter your email address and your Active Directory password (same password you use to login into your computer). If you are a National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) employee, click the “Register for Access (Non FWS Users) link under the username and password boxes; follow the prompts on the next page.
- Once you’ve logged in, the next screen will have your name at the top, and on the left hand side under “My Applications” you will list all of the ECOS modules to which you have access. Click on the ROAR link.
- If you do not see ROAR listed under “My Applications”, you will need to request access. On the right hand side of your ECOS screen, select “Request Access” under “My Account.”
- On the following Application Access screen, scroll almost to the bottom until you see the row for ROAR. In the drop down box on the left of that row, select Field User or Regional Manager, as appropriate, and click the “Submit Request” button. ECOS will send an email to the module manager asking them to approve your access request.
- Once your request is approved (shouldn’t take long – a day at the most), you will get an email stating your request has been approved. Then you can log into ECOS (see above) and click on the ROAR link to get started.

### How Do I Get Help With ROAR Questions?

- If you have questions about what type of information you should input or questions about definitions, please contact your Regional Office contact first. You can also contact Krishna Gifford (413/238-4404 or [krishna\\_gifford@fws.gov](mailto:krishna_gifford@fws.gov)) if the Regional folks are not available.
- If you are having technical difficulties with ROAR, please contact the ECOS Help Desk. At the bottom of every ROAR screen there is a clickable link to the Help Desk – this will bring you to a help ticket form that can be submitted electronically. Or you can call the Help Desk at 970/226-9468; select option 3.
- There are several documents/downloads available in ROAR that are good reference materials. On the left hand side of the ROAR screen, select the “User Guide” button. Scroll to the bottom of that screen. You’ll see several tutorial links; the “Adding Parties” and “Implementation Schedule” tutorials are particularly helpful. Also, the “ROAR Demo (powerpoint)” link provides my back up powerpoint presentation with speaker notes for the topics & screen shots of what I went over in the training session.
- Most screens will have a green circle with a question mark next to the data field; if you put your cursor over that circle, a pop-up box with help text appears.

### When Can Edits Be Made In ROAR?

- Anytime. ROAR is not a time restricted web based database like ones used only for performance measure reporting (i.e., the Recovery Data Call (RDC)). Some of the data in ROAR is used to help with end of year performance reporting so it is important to make any changes to items like Action Status before the end of the Fiscal Year.

### Who Can Make Edits?

- Any ROAR user can view any plan information. Only the ROAR users in the lead Field Office for a plan can make edits to a plan. A Regional Office user can make edits to any plan for which their field office have lead, and any Washington Office user can make edits to any plan in ROAR.
- ROAR does track which edits are made, by who, and when. Currently this is tracked “behind the scenes” in the database and if needed, we can get that information from the programmers. The programmers are working on a user report that would allow us to access that tracking information directly in ROAR.

### How Are “Other Offices” Added To The Plan, And Can They Make Their Own Edits?

- At this time, only the lead Field Office (and Regional Office) can make edits to plans. Other offices can view the plan information, but those Other offices will have to coordinate with the lead office and ask the lead office to make updates. Eventually, we would like those Other Offices to make edits to the plan directly, pending Lead Office approval, but to date that set of “business rules” has been very difficult for the ECOS Programmers to implement. They will continue to work on that issue and hopefully a future iteration of ROAR will have that capability.
- Adding offices can be done under the Plan-Edit Plan – Add Office menu. If this menu is not available on your screen, ask the Regional Office to add the applicable offices. Once added, those Other Offices will show up on the Plan Summary screen, and you can associate that office(s) with a particular action in the implementation schedule by choosing Actions – Edit Action – select the action you want and about ½ way down the screen you’ll see a Office field which will be defaulted to the lead office name. Select a different office (you should be able to select more than one by holding the Ctrl key while you click on the names) and scroll down to the bottom of the screen and click the Save button.

### What Is Required?

- If a species has an active (the most recent version of the plan for the species) recovery plan, the summary information and implementation schedule for that plan should be entered into ROAR. Check to see if plans for which your office has lead have been entered into ROAR.
  - If an active plan is missing from the Plan Folder, work with the Regional Office to get it entered. Older versions of plans do not need to be added, but summary info can be added if you have time.
  - If the active plan is in ROAR, but there is no Implementation Schedule available (Schedule – View Schedule), then you should upload the implementation schedule using the Implementation Schedule Template

(Downloads – Implementation Schedule Template). Please take time to view the available tutorials (Download button) on adding Responsible Parties and Uploading Implementation Schedules before you try uploading a schedule for the first time.

- Once an active plan with an implementation schedule is available, check to make sure the information displayed in the Plan Summary screen is accurate, and update Action information using the appropriate screens (Edit All Action (GPRA Fields) screen is the most relevant and has the minimum fields required to be updated).
- Recovery criteria should be added, but it is not absolutely required, unless your RO has made that a priority.
- If a species is formally exempt (approved by the Director) from needing a recovery plan or does not yet have a plan developed, a conservation strategy or official recovery outline should be entered into ROAR. (See more under item #7 for “spotlight” species.)

#### On The Plan Summary Screen, Where Will The Estimated Costs Of Delisting And Estimated Time To Delisting Be Pulled From?

- There are 2 new fields on the Plan Summary screen: “Estimated Total Cost to Delisting” and “Estimated Total Duration to Delisting.”
- For most plans, that information will be in the Executive Summary of the plan. The implementation schedule may or may not have the total cost/time to delisting, depends on the plan. Where that info is in the implementation schedule, it should match the Executive Summary. Most often the implementation schedule only has costs/time indicated for the years in the schedule (3, 5, 20, etc), not for the entire estimated time of the plan.
- If the plan does not have delisting criteria or if the plan does not have cost/time info, then those fields on the Plan Summary screen should indicate “N/A” for not yet available. Currently the default for those fields is \$0, but have asked for that to be changed to N/A.
- WO has this data for some plans and will be working to add it to ROAR over the next month. If that info on the screen seems wrong, let the RO know, they will check with the WO.
- *Data displayed is as it is from when the plan was written.* You can update this information, if desired, through the Plan-Edit Plan screen, but that is not required. Suggest that you update it via comments in the implementation schedule comment field (for estimates), or through the action expenditure fields for time/money actually spent to date instead on updating the plan summary screen.

#### Where Did The Idea Originate From Regarding Modifying The Implementation Schedule?

- Keeping recovery plans up to date is important but difficult to do. FOs don’t get money for plan revisions, but having a document reflect what is really happening on the ground for the species helps the Service, our partners, and the public stay on the same page.

- Sometimes a full plan revision is not needed, just minor updates to the implementation schedule can suffice. The WO would like to use ROAR as a mechanism to make minor updates (edits that don't change the plan's strategy or criteria) to plans that don't require public review & comment. Two ways of doing that are (1) adding/deleting recovery actions in the implementation schedule itself, or (2) adding "implementation activities" (project or sub-action level tracking) to existing actions. *Draft guidance was sent out via a Director's Memo dated May 28, 2008 for the regional and field offices to review and comment. The WO is working on finalizing the guidance based on received comments.*
- Currently, Service lead plans can be edited with adding/deleting actions, but NMFS lead plans or joint NMFS-FWS plans cannot. Those plans can be modified using the implementation activities only.
- Entering implementation activities is not required.
- *FOs should discuss potential changes to the implementation schedule with their FO/RO management prior to adding/deleting actions or adding implementation activities* (as these features are "live" in ROAR, during the draft guidance comment period). Currently there is no automated approval (verification/validation) process available in ROAR, although this may be coming in future versions of the database. Suggest that good justification (i.e., completed 5-yr review recommends additional actions need to be implemented) is needed before actions are added/deleted from implementation schedule. It will be up to the FO and RO to track changes made to the implementation schedule to ensure that cumulative changes do not rise to the level of needing formal public review and comment as a full plan revision.

If The One Of The Reasons For Making Edits To The Implementation Schedule Is So That The Public Always Knows The Latest Implementation Status Of The Plan, How Will The Public "See" This Information?

- Although the exact details have not yet been worked out, it would most likely be via a report that pulls data from ROAR and displays it on the appropriate Species' Profile page on the Service's Endangered Species website. If someone does a search for a species, they are brought to the species' Profile page (see the following example: <http://ecos.fws.gov/speciesProfile/SpeciesReport.do?spcode=A03X>). A link to the pdf of the applicable recovery plan is already on the Profile page, so we could add another link that says something like "View Recovery Plan Implementation Information", and once clicked would bring up a report. Not all information associated with the plan would be viewable, or it would be viewable in an aggregate form only. For example, some estimated initiation and completion dates of recovery actions are our "best guesses", so we probably will not want to show those actual dates as they are entered into ROAR, but we could display the dates by Fiscal Years or 5-year blocks.

How Will ROAR Be Used In The Workings Of The Endangered Species Strategic Plan?

- The draft Endangered Species Strategic Plan focuses on "spotlight (formerly known as prioritized) species".
- Each listed spotlight species will have to have some document loaded into ROAR to track what is happening on the ground. For most species that will be the Recovery

Plan. For others, that might be a Recovery Outline or some other document (“Conservation Strategy”) with a modified implementation schedule to show the actions.

- For FY 2008, changes to the spotlight species’ Recovery Priority Numbers (RPN) will be tracked for performance measure purposes. [Note that in FY 09 that performance measure will be changed.] The species’ RPN is shown on the Plan Summary screen after the species’ name. If the RPN shown is incorrect, the RO & WO can edit that number through the Species Module in ECOS. The RPN will be automatically updated everywhere it is displayed through out ECOS once a change is made.
- Recovery actions for spotlight species will be counted in the FY 08 performance measure – specifically, ongoing actions will now be counted (unlike in previous years when only actions that had been implemented/completed in the FY were counted).
- Implementation activities will not be counted in the performance measures, only the “parent” actions.

#### How Do You Add Additional Years Of Estimated Costs To The Implementation Schedule And/Or Action?

- There are two ways to do this:
  - Method 1 - The simplest way would be to add the information as text in the action’s comment field either through the Edit All Action GPRA Fields screen (the comment field is all the way to the left) or the Edit Action screen (the comment field is all the way at the bottom); this method would not change the look of the implementation schedule from how it was published.
  - Method 2- Add additional estimated cost columns to the implementation schedule. This can be done through the Plan – Edit Plan-Schedule Duration field. For example, if the Schedule Duration field has 5 years and you change that to 10 years, an addition 5 years will be added to the implementation schedule. Once the additional years are added, you can put in the estimated costs for the actions in those years (see Method 1 above). Note that this will change the look of the implementation schedule from how it was published.

#### Do The Actual Costs Of Recovery Actions Relate To The Annual Species Expenditure Reports?

- Yes they should. However, there currently is no “live” link between ROAR and the Annual Species Expenditure Report module in ECOS. We hope to have these two databases, as well as TAILS, FIS and other modules, linked in the future so that data is shared across databases such that the field and regional office users do not have to double entry data. It is a complicated programming task, so it is not clear how soon that can happen.

#### How Do You Handle A Species In A Multispecies Plan That Now Also Has Further Information (I.E. New Actions, But Not New Criteria)?

- Suggest adding that new information as an addenda to the parent plan, or adding the new actions to the current implementation schedule. Which ever works best for you and the RO.

When Will There Be Guidance On What Is Required For The Recovery Data Call (RDC)/GPRA?

- The WO is working with the programmers now to finalize the 2008 RDC data input screens. Once that is complete, guidance on how to access the RDC, what info is required, etc will be forthcoming.

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Feature Improvement Suggestions From the Regional Training Sessions:

- The ability to Add or Delete (especially Delete) actions from the implementation schedule may hamper transparency for why actions in the published implementations schedule were changed. It would be better to flag an obsolete action as such with a note to the reason in the comment field [*This is a valid concern. NMFS is choosing to not add or delete actions in part due to this concern. This concern will be considered before finalizing the draft guidance.*]
- It would be helpful to indicate related, but inactive, recovery plans on the Plan Folder summary screen. For example, the palila used to have its own recovery plan, but is now incorporated into the Hawaiian Forest Birds recovery plan; yet there is no way to indicate that linkage in ROAR. [*An ECOS Help Desk Ticket was submitted to request this feature improvement.*]
- It would be helpful to indicate on the Plan Summary screen next to an “inactive” species’ name why that species is “inactive”. For example, it would be helpful to know that the species is now delisted or covered by another plan. [*An ECOS Help Desk Ticket was submitted to request this feature improvement.*]
- It would be helpful to have access to the implementation schedule comments from older, inactive plans. For example, the comments in a draft plan implementation schedule might be helpful to view and maybe include in the final plan’s schedule (if not done at the time the plan was finalized). [*If the older recovery plan & implementation schedule were uploaded into ROAR, you can view that plan’s information (using the “info” button next to the plan name on the Folder Summary screen). Although you won’t be able to edit the inactive plan info, you could “cut & paste” the info into the active plan by highlighting the text from the view screen.*]
- Suggest clarifying whether updating estimated costs fall under “minor update”. [*Updating estimated costs would most likely constitute a minor update. However, instead of spending time modifying estimated costs, it might be more helpful to add the actual expenditure of actions instead.*]

- Species' recovery priority number should be displayed on the public Species Profile page. [*An ECOS Help Desk Ticket was submitted to request this feature improvement.*]
- Add the ability to link specific species to specific actions and/or implementation activities. [*An ECOS Help Desk Ticket previously exists for this feature improvement.*]
- Add criteria in a table format, especially for multispecies plans. [*An ECOS Help Desk Ticket was submitted to request this feature improvement.*]
- Delete "Inverted Name" from the Species Search box on the Ad Hoc Report [*An ECOS Help Desk Ticket was submitted to request this feature improvement.*]
- Add capability to upload pdf of documents related to specific recovery actions [*An ECOS Help Desk Ticket was submitted to request this feature improvement.*]
- Add a Recovery Criteria and Taxa search field in the Ad Hoc Query Report [*An ECOS Help Desk Ticket was submitted to request this feature improvement.*]
- Highlight the required fields similar to how the TAILS module works. [*An ECOS Help Desk Ticket was submitted to request this feature improvement. If this cannot be done (or cannot be done in time), the required fields are on the Edit All Actions (GPRA Fields) screen under the Schedule drop down menu.*]
- Add implementation activities to the Full Schedule Report so that both action and implementation activity details are available in one place. [*An ECOS Help Desk Ticket was submitted to request this feature improvement.*]
- Having clear definitions for the action duration categories of "Ongoing" and "Continual" shown in the implementation schedule would help provide consistency in their use. [*Both the 1990 FWS Policy and Guidelines for Planning and Coordinating Recovery of Endangered and Threatened Species and the 2004 FWS and NMFS Interim Recovery Planning Guidance use the two terms interchangeably. The Webster's New World College Dictionary defines continuous as "going on or extending without interruption or break" and ongoing as "that is going on, or actually in process; continuing, progressing, etc." Since the dictionary definition uses "extending without interruption", perhaps the difference between the two terms could be that "Continual" actions are those that need to be implemented constantly throughout the life of the plan, while "Ongoing" actions need to be implemented periodically. ]*]
- Add a cost field to the "Edit All Actions (GPRA) Fields" screen. [*An ECOS Help Desk Ticket was submitted to request this feature improvement.*]
- On the Edit Document Species Attributes screen, change the "Species Stage" field name to "Plan Stage for Species" so what that field refers to is more obvious. [*This improvement has been implemented.*]

- In the “Add a Criterion” and “Edit a Criterion” screens, add the species scientific names after the common names in the multi-select species box. For species with no common name or when multiple species have the same common name (Haha, for example), it is difficult to determine which species to correctly link to the criterion since the scientific names do not currently appear in the select box. [*This improvement has been implemented.*]
- Make the columns in the Edit All Actions (GPRAs Fields) screen sortable so that it is easier to find the actions needing updates. [*This improvement has been implemented.*]

Other Questions:

- On the Species Profile pages, why does the map display the historic range instead of the where listed range (ex. Western snowy plover)? . [*An ECOS Help Desk Ticket was submitted to request this feature improvement.*]
- Is there any way to have TAILS list Plant Species alphabetically by scientific name, rather than by common name? . [*An ECOS Help Desk Ticket was submitted to request this feature improvement.*]