

The NatureMapping Program

Wildlife Data Collection Protocols



Name and Observer ID #: Observer ID numbers are either assigned during a workshop or through the website under “How to Participate”.

Species: Try to identify the species as best as possible. (Photographs are accepted, if you have questions on the identification.) Please do not omit the species if you are not sure.

Sure or Unsure: If unsure of the identity, put a “1” after the species name. (If you can identify the species, but it “shouldn’t be there”, put a “2” next to the name.

Date: The month and year.

County and State: County and state where you are observing wildlife.

Township/Range/Section (TRS): Location is very important. We need to know where a species was observed either using a TRS, or latitude/longitude. A township/range grid is 36 square miles. It is made up of 36 sections, each section 1 square mile. The Washington DeLorme Atlas, your mortgage papers if you are a home owner, U.S. Geological Survey maps, have the grids marked on them. An example is T21N R03E S21 – Township 21 North, Range 3 East and Section 21.

Latitude/Longitude: Latitude and longitude should be reported if you don’t know the TRS or if you have a Global Positioning System (GPS) unit, mapping software, or Internet sites. If you use a GPS, please set the unit to WGS84. (If you can’t set the Datum in your GPS, then WGS84 is the default datum). If possible, set the GPS unit to record in Decimal Degrees (e.g. 47.465553).

Source of Identification: How did you find the animal? Did you see it, hear it, was it dead along the side of the road? Did you see tracks?

How many did you find? Count the number of animals you see.

Estimate: If there are a lot of individuals, you can make an estimate. A quick way to estimate is to count 10 birds, tadpoles, fish, etc. and estimate how many other sets of 10 animals you see. Put a check in the Estimate column.

Description of Location: Try to describe the area based on the type of vegetation. For example, alpine meadows, conifer forest, low developed (lots of trees, lawns, parks, golf courses), medium developed (new housing developments, large apartment complexes, etc.), freshwater marsh surrounded by shrubs or assign a Habitat Code from the list below.

Habitat Code: Habitat Codes are 3-digits; the 2nd and 3rd digits provide more details of the habitat. A complete listing is available on-line.

100 – Non-vegetated (sandy beach, rocks, ice, snow)

200 – Development

300 – Agriculture

400 – Lakes and Rivers

500 – Wetlands, streams, estuaries

600 – Non-forested (grasslands,

700 – Deciduous/Hardwood forest

800 – Deciduous/Conifer mixed forest

900 – Coniferous forest