

WDFW Combined Response to Public Comments Received December 22, 2020 through January 19, 2021 for the proposal to List the Oregon Vesper Sparrow as a State Endangered Species (DNS 20-061)

Public comments, response to comments, and consideration of comments

A total of twelve comments were received. Seven of the twelve comments were in favor of the proposal with no additional comments.

1. *Livestock grazing should not be allowed in areas where the vesper sparrow is known to inhabit. The priority use of F&W lands should be for the benefit of wildlife not for livestock.*

Roughly ~75% of the current Washington population occurs on JBLM land with no livestock grazing and livestock grazing is not currently permitted on any of the WDFW wildlife areas where the species occurs. Livestock grazing may be incorporated into strategies and recommendations in subsequent recovery plans if warranted.

2. *The proposal is extremely vague. How can one agree with a proposal when the affects an impacts to other activities and entities is unknown?*

An Oregon Vesper Sparrow classification as endangered wildlife makes it illegal to hunt for, possess, maliciously harass, or kill, or possess or intentionally destroys the nests or eggs of Oregon Vesper Sparrow according to RCW 77.15.120. Additional consideration and recommendations may be incorporated into future recovery and management plans written for or relevant to Oregon Vesper Sparrow including any necessary public input and decision-making from the Fish and Wildlife Commission.

3. Two comments signed in with opposition referring to the use of agency funds and priority of this work.
This work is funded through a combination of personalized license plate dollars, and federal state wildlife grant dollars both of which are intended to be used towards nongame species and Species of Greatest Conservation Need conservation, recovery, and management. WDFW has statutory responsibility to preserve, protect, and perpetuate all wildlife.
4. There was a comment relating to fishing that was not applicable to this rule and outside of the scope. WDFW has a statutory responsibility to preserve, protect, and perpetuate all wildlife.