

2.4.2 Threatened and Endangered Species

Publications of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Jan. 17, 1979 and most recently in 2022), and the Colorado Division of Wildlife (1978, and most recently in 2022) were consulted to determine threatened and endangered wildlife species that could occur on or adjacent to the Trapper Mine mine plan area. In addition, a raptor nesting survey was conducted for the mine plan area and adjacent area during May of 1980. Ecology Consultants Inc. baseline data was also examined. There are no areas within or adjacent to the mine plan area that have been or are pending designation as "essential habitat" for any of the threatened or endangered species that could potentially occur there.

2.4.2.1 Bald Eagle

Bald eagles (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*), a previously threatened species, are known to winter along the Yampa River, three miles northwest of the proposed mine plan area, and the Williams Fork River, one mile west of the proposed mine plan area. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (1978) lists the Williams Fork River as a bald eagle wintering area. During big game aerial surveys in January of 1977, 1978 and 1979, Trapper Mine environmental personnel noted bald eagles along the Yampa River north and west of the mine plan area. Map M20 illustrates these wintering areas. Through 2022, no known nesting sites have been located within the mine plan area or adjacent areas. In addition, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (1978), Ecology Consultants, Inc. baseline studies and Trapper Mine raptor surveys indicate there is no nesting in the general area by this species.

Bald eagles are occasionally seen hunting over reclaimed areas of the mine plan area. They may occasionally use the mine plan area for feeding on carrion during winter months or overflights may occur from the Yampa River to the Williams Fork River. Mining has had no effect on the wintering activities of this species as the mining activities are well removed from the winter concentration areas.

2.4.2.2 Greater Sandhill Crane

The greater sandhill crane (Grus canadensis), a species on Colorado's "Special Concern" list, is known to use the Big Bottom area along the Yampa River for nesting and as staging and feeding areas (Colorado Division of Wildlife, 1978; U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 1978). Through 2022, this species has infrequently used the reclaimed areas within the mine plan area for feeding. This species is widely distributed in Routt and Moffat counties, primarily in agricultural and wetland areas. Map M20 illustrates greater sandhill crane nesting and staging areas.

The Colorado Division of Wildlife (1978) considered the area within Big Bottom as essential habitat to sandhill cranes and concluded that all land within one-half mile of the Yampa River from the Highway 13 bridge to two miles downstream be considered essential habitat. Trapper's mine plan area is located approximately three miles southeast of the area considered essential habitat. As mining activities are not within close proximity of essential habitat, no effects on the greater sandhill crane population are likely to occur.

2.4.2.3 Peregrine Falcon

The peregrine falcon (Falco peregrinus) was previously a federally listed endangered species and is a possible migrant through the mine plan area although, through 2022, there have been no known sightings. The Colorado Division of Wildlife (1978) considered the closest essential habitat to be in the Dinosaur National Monument area, approximately ninety miles west of the mine. No known nesting sites are present within or adjacent to the mine plan area. There were no sightings of this species during a raptor nesting survey of the area conducted in May, 1980 (Appendix E). Therefore, mining is unlikely to have an impact upon this species.