



Pesticide Update

EPA's Office of Chemical Safety and Pollution Prevention

EPA Updates Process for Developing Maps to Protect Endangered Species

Today, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is taking another step to reduce potential impacts to farmers from implementing endangered species protections while continuing to protect endangered species by [publishing a process](#) it will use to develop maps for protecting species designated as threatened or endangered (listed) by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) and their designated critical habitats. These maps allow EPA to protect listed species from the use of pesticides through geographically specific mitigations. The process identifies areas where listed species are likely to be located and areas where they are not, which ensures that additional measures to protect listed species are only required in these areas.

As EPA assesses pesticide impacts on listed species, the agency may find that some mitigations are only needed to protect listed species. In those cases, EPA will only apply those mitigations where appropriate and necessary in geographically specific areas (referred to as Pesticide Use Limitation Areas or PULAs). PULAs are areas where pesticide exposures are likely to impact the continued existence of a listed species, which may include a reduction in survival or recovery of the species. They are intended to focus mitigations on areas where they are needed to protect populations of specific listed species from the use of pesticides.

When developing a PULA for a specific species, EPA starts by developing a “core map.” A core map identifies areas that are important to a species, which could be a refined range map. In cases where range maps are broad and include areas where a species is no longer thought to live, then core maps would only include areas within the species range where the species likely currently lives. The process released today is intended to identify such areas and exclude areas from EPA’s core map where the species is not likely to live. After developing a core map for a species, EPA develops a PULA that accounts for pesticide movement from a use site (e.g., spray drift and run-off) by adding adjacent areas to the core map. Developing a core map or PULA does not alter FWS’ range map.

EPA's goal is to develop core maps for all FWS listed species that may require protections with respect to pesticide exposures. The agency is focusing first on creating core maps for listed species identified in its [Vulnerable Species Action Plan](#) (VSAP), released in September 2024. This provides a framework for EPA to adopt early, meaningful protections to address potential impacts for listed species that the Agency identifies as particularly "vulnerable" to pesticides. EPA has developed core maps for several VSAP species, which can be found on the agency's website, and [will be developing core maps for the remaining VSAP](#) and other listed species and making them publicly available as they are completed. EPA has also prioritized a subset of listed species for core map development.

Additional information can be found in the [core map development process document](#). Visit EPA's website to learn more about how [EPA's pesticide program](#) is protecting endangered species.