Crucial Habitat Assessment Tool
Mapping Fish and Wildlife Across the West

Quickly identify crucial wildlife habitat in 16 western states and connect to more detailed habitat mapping

westgovchat.org
The Western Governors’ Crucial Habitat Assessment Tool (CHAT) is a cooperative effort of 16 Western states to provide the public and industry a high-level overview of “crucial habitat” across the West.

“Crucial habitats” are places that are likely to provide the natural resources important to aquatic and terrestrial wildlife, including species of concern, as well as hunting and fishing species.

The CHAT helps users in the pre-planning of energy corridors and transmission routes, or in comparing fish and wildlife habitat, by establishing a common starting point across the West for the intersection of development and wildlife.

The tool is designed to enable industry to reduce time, costs, conflicts and surprises – and inform conservation groups – while helping state agencies ensure wildlife values are better incorporated into land use decision-making.

The CHAT is non-regulatory and represents landscape-level analysis. State consultation is necessary for project-level review, additional information and site-specific data. The tool does not identify species at the individual landowner scale.

The online tool is an example of WGA’s ongoing work with federal agencies – including the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Bureau of Land Management and the U.S. Forest Service – to enable use of state fish and wildlife data and analyses to inform land use, planning and related natural resource decisions.

“Users will be able to query the CHAT map to view areas likely to provide the natural resources important to aquatic and terrestrial wildlife, including species of concern, as well as hunting and fishing species.”

“\textit{The Governors encourage widespread use of CHATs to better inform energy, transportation, and land use planning while providing for healthy and productive landscapes.}”

WGA Policy Resolution, \textit{Conserving Wildlife and Crucial Habitat in the West}
Crucial Habitat is ranked on a scale of 1 to 6, with 1 indicating areas most likely to provide crucial habitat and depicted in darker blue colors on the map.
The CHAT can be found online at westgovchat.org

Information on the Western Governors’ Wildlife Council is available at westgov.org/initiatives/wildlife or by contacting the Western Governors’ Association at (303) 623-9378.

About Western Governors’ Association

The Western Governors’ Association represents the Governors of 19 Western states and 3 U.S.-flag islands. The association is an instrument of the Governors for bipartisan policy development, information exchange and collective action on issues of critical importance to the Western United States.