

From: [Buzek, Aubry L](#)
To: [Perez, Chris](#)
Cc: [DeLaGarza, Imer](#); [Gardiner, Dawn](#); [Bilodeau, Stephanie A](#)
Subject: USFWS Starship Launch Statement
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Good afternoon! Please review the statement for media release below and let me know of any edits or changes that you would like me to make. Once it looks OK to you I'll send it up to HQ OC/DOI for approval and then send it out to reporters.

On April 20 at 8:33 a.m. CT, SpaceX conducted the first flight test of the Starship and Super Heavy rocket from Starbase located adjacent to Lower Rio Grande Valley National Wildlife Refuge. Following the launch and mid-air explosion, Cameron County closed Boca Chica Beach and State Highway 4 for 48 hours due to launch pad safety concerns. U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service staff began their assessment of the launch impacts on refuge-owned and managed lands at 2 p.m. on Saturday, April 22.

Impacts from the launch include numerous large concrete chunks, stainless steel sheets, metal and other objects hurled thousands of feet away along with a plume cloud of pulverized concrete which deposited material up to 6.5 miles northwest of the pad site. While no debris was documented on refuge fee-owned lands, staff did document approximately 385 acres of debris on SpaceX's facility and at Boca Chica State Park, which is leased by the Service and managed as a component of the Lower Rio Grande National Wildlife Refuge. Additionally, a 3.5 acre fire started south of the pad site on Boca Chica State Park land. At this time, no dead birds or wildlife have been located on refuge-owned or managed lands.

Three temperature loggers placed between 1,456 feet to 3,050 feet away from the pad site did not detect significant changes in ambient temperature during the launch. Sound measuring equipment set up 2 miles from the launch site detected a maximum of 114.9db A-weighted during the launch, with levels above 100db A-weighted lasted for 1 minute (FWS preliminary data). It is important to note that this is not confirmed and there is a possibility for error since equipment may or may not be calibrated exactly.

The Service is in communication with SpaceX and other partner agencies and organizations to provide on-the-ground guidance to minimize further impacts and reduce long-term damages to natural resources. We are also coordinating with the FAA on their site assessment, post launch event recommendations and Endangered Species Act compliance. For more information on the FAA's mishap investigation, reach out to Steve Kulm at steven.w.kulm@faa.gov.

Aubry Buzek
Public Affairs Specialist – Texas
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
512-962-0289
aubry_buzek@fws.gov