
APPENDIX B
SOUTHWESTERN WILLOW FLYCATCHER SURVEY REPORT

**SHANK ROAD WETLAND SITE – AR 21
ALAMORIO AREA, NEAR CITY OF BRAWLEY
IMPERIAL COUNTY, CALIFORNIA**

SOUTHWESTERN WILLOW FLYCATCHER SURVEY

UTM: 11-S: 634,000mE; 3,651,300mN

Prepared for

Tetra Tech, Inc.
180 Howard Street, Suite 250
San Francisco CA 94105-1617
Telephone (415) 974-1221
Facsimile (415) 974-5914

Prepared by

Pacific Southwest Biological Services, Inc.
Post Office Box 985
National City CA 91951-0985
Telephone (619) 477-5333
Facsimile (619) 477-5380
e-mail: bio@psbs.com

PSBS #U636

2 August 2005

R. Mitchel Beauchamp, M. Sc., President

**SHANK ROAD WETLAND SITE – AR 21
ALAMORIO AREA, NEAR CITY OF BRAWLEY
IMPERIAL COUNTY, CALIFORNIA**

SOUTHWESTERN WILLOW FLYCATCHER SURVEY

2 August 2005

SUMMARY

A protocol survey for the Southwestern Willow Flycatcher was conducted in 2005 on an approximately 50-acre site on a reach of the Alamo River near the City of Brawley. **The species was not detected on the property.**

INTRODUCTION

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

Pacific Southwest Biological Services, Inc. (Pacific Southwest), at the request of Mr. Andrew Gentile of Tetra Tech, Inc., conducted a presence/absence survey for the Southwestern Willow Flycatcher (*Empidonax traillii extimus*) (Flycatcher) on the project property. The Flycatcher is federally listed as endangered by the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS). The purpose of the survey was to determine presence/absence of this species on the project site.

PROJECT LOCATION

The site is located in the Alamorio area, east of the City of Brawley in central Imperial County, California, approximately 26 miles north of the US/Mexican border. The map location is within the western half of Section 30, Township 13 South, Range 14 East, of the San Bernardino Base and Meridian; US Geological Survey 7.5' Alamorio, California quadrangle (UTM: 11-S: 643,000mE; 3,651,300mN) (Figures 1 and 2). Access to the site from US Interstate Highway 8 (I-8) is north on State Highway 111, east on State Highway across the Alamo River to the community of Alamorio, then north on Seybert Road, proceeding across the Oak drain, and east on the dirt road to the Alamo River.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

A wetland creation project is proposed for the site. The purpose of the project is to improve water quality in the Alamo River.

SURVEY METHODS AND DEFINITIONS

METHODS

Pacific Southwest biologist Cornelius W. Bouscaren performed the survey, which was carried out according to USFWS protocol (Sogge *et al.* 1997). Mr. Bouscaren has a permit (TE-778100-3, expires 16 July 2005) authorized by the USFWS to perform such surveys for this Flycatcher species. The protocol calls for a minimum of one survey between 15-31 May, a

minimum of one survey between 1-21 June, and, for project-related surveys, a minimum of three surveys between 22 June-17 July, each at least five days apart. During these surveys use of vocalization tapes of prerecorded calls of the Flycatcher is mandatory as part of the survey protocol. The schedule and field conditions during the visits are summarized below.

DATE	PERSONNEL	TIME	CONDITIONS
22 May 05	Bouscaren	0500-0835	71-87°F, skies clear, winds calm
2 Jun 05	Bouscaren	0500-0815	72-85°F, skies clear, winds east 3 mph becoming west 3 mph
28 Jun 05	Bouscaren	0500-0810	74-84°F, skies clear, winds west 5-12 mph
6 Jul 05	Bouscaren	0455-0810	69-83°F, skies clear, winds calm
14 Jul 05	Bouscaren	0500-0800	78-88°F, 75% high clouds, winds east 3 mph

Methods for the surveys consisted of walking through habitat at the site that is considered appropriate for this species, i.e., Tamarisk Scrub. Simultaneously with walking the habitat, the biologist doing the survey watches and listens for wildlife, observing any indirect signs of species presence. "Pishing," a vocal technique commonly used to attract passerines (songbirds) and draw them into view, was occasionally employed. Binoculars (8.5x44) were used to assist in the detection and identification of any sighted wildlife. In accordance with survey protocol, taped vocalizations of the Flycatcher species were occasionally played. The size of the property and the extent of appropriate habitat are such that the site could be surveyed in its entirety during each of the survey visits.

As a condition of the federal permit to perform this survey, Pacific Southwest is required to submit a copy of this report to the USFWS, the California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG), and the US Geological Survey (USGS). A copy of the form required by the USGS is included (Attachment 1).

DEFINITIONS

Vegetation Communities

Vegetation habitats or communities are assemblages of plant species that usually coexist in the same area. The classification of vegetation communities is based upon the life form of the dominant species within the community and the associated flora. The nomenclature for vegetation communities follows Holland's Preliminary Descriptions of the Terrestrial Natural Communities of California (1986), as modified by Oberbauer (1996).

Wildlife Habitats

Wildlife habitats differ from vegetation communities in that a wildlife habitat may contain several vegetation communities that are similar in structure but different in the plant species composition, location, and soil substrate. This distinction becomes an important factor when assessing the sensitivity of a particular wildlife habitat to impacts. In addition, the interaction of various wildlife species occurs between many different wildlife habitats. This becomes more evident where these habitats overlap in areas known as ecotones. These ecotones

support a combination of species from two or more adjoining habitats that generally increases the number and diversity of species within these areas. Wildlife habitats encountered on the project site approximate the vegetation communities discussed below.

Species Nomenclature

The scientific nomenclature used in this report is from the following standard references: vascular plants (Hickman 1993); vegetation communities (Holland 1986, Oberbauer 1996); wildlife habitats (Mayer and Laudenslayer 1988); birds (American Ornithologists' Union 1998); and mammals (Jameson and Peeters 1988).

SURVEY RESULTS

GENERAL PHYSIOGRAPHY

The property lies on the east side of the Alamo River, which joins the Salton Sea approximately 16 miles north of the site. The reach of the river surveyed is approximately 0.7 mile in length. The survey area included approximately 50 acres in area, with an elevation range of approximately 150 feet below mean sea level to 140 feet below mean sea level.

Adjacent land uses include active agriculture on all sides. Some of the fields were flooded at times during the survey.

BOTANICAL RESOURCES

Vegetation Communities

One vegetation community/habitat type occurs on the property (Figure 3). A brief description of the community with Element Code Number (#) follows:

Tamarisk Scrub (#32500)

This community dominates the property, with Athel Tamarisk (*Tamarix aphylla*) and Greasewood (*Sarcobatus vermiculatus*) species being the most numerous. Other abundant species include Fourwing Saltbush (*Atriplex canescens*), Giant Reed (*Arundo Donax*), Arrowweed (*Pluchea Sericea*), and Blue Palo Verde (*Cercidium floridum* ssp. *floridum*). The site is highly disturbed, with vehicle tracks, spent shotgun shells, and trash abundant. A dirt service road marks the eastern boundary of the site.

ZOOLOGICAL RESOURCES

General Wildlife Habitat

Quality of the Tamarisk Scrub on the site is poor because of the nature of the community (non-native) and the high level of disturbance of the area.

Fauna

Forty-seven general (i.e., not federally listed) species of animals were detected on and adjacent to the property. These include one reptile, 43 birds, and three mammals. A complete list of animals observed or detected on the site is included (Appendix 1).

Reptiles

One reptile, the Baja California Collared Lizard (*Crotaphytus insularis*) was observed on the site.

Birds

Forty-three avian species were recorded during the surveys. These include such common and widespread species as the cattle egret (*Bubulcus ibis*), California quail (*Callipepla californica*), mourning dove (*Zenaida macroura*), Anna's hummingbird (*Calypte anna*), northern flicker (*Colaptes aurata*), American crow (*Corvus brachyrhynchos*), verdin (*Auriparus flaviceps*), Bewick's wren (*Thryomanes bewickii*), California towhee (*Pipilo crissalis*), song sparrow (*Melospiza melodia*), and red-winged blackbird (*Agelaius phoeniceus*). No raptor nests were observed during the surveys.

Note: The Flycatcher was not detected on the site during the survey.

Mammals

Three mammals, the desert cottontail (*Sylvilagus audubonii*), California ground squirrel (*Spermophilus beecheyi*) and coyote (*Canis latrans*), were observed.

CONCLUSION

Implementation of the proposed project will have no adverse impact to the Southwestern Willow Flycatcher. This conclusion is based on the lack of available habitat at the project site, the overly disturbed and degraded nature and poor quality of the habitat that may be available, the level of human disturbance found at the project site, and the lack of sightings of this species during the surveys, indicating that it is unlikely to occur at the project site.

REFERENCES

- American Ornithologists' Union. 1998. Checklist of North American Birds. Seventh Edition. American Ornithologists' Union. 829 pp.
- Hickman, J. C., ed. 1993. The Jepson Manual, Higher Plants of California. University of California Press, Berkeley. 1,400 pp.
- Holland, R. F. 1986. Preliminary Descriptions of the Terrestrial Natural Communities of California. California Department of Fish and Game. 156 pp.
- Jameson, E.W., Jr. and H. J. Peeters. 1988. California Mammals. University of California Press. 403 pp.
- Mayer, K. E. and W. F. Laudenslayer, Jr., (eds.) 1988. A Guide to Wildlife Habitats of California. California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection. 166 pp.
- Oberbauer, T. 1996. Terrestrial Vegetation Communities in San Diego County Based on Holland's Descriptions. San Diego Association of Governments, San Diego, California. 6 pp.
- Sogge, M. K., R. M. Marshall, S. J. Sferra, and T. J. Tibbits. 1997. A Southwestern Willow Flycatcher Natural History Summary and Survey Protocol. Technical Report NPS/NAUCPRS/NRTR-97/12. USGS Colorado Plateau Research Station, Northern Arizona University, Flagstaff, Arizona. 37 pp. (3-page revision added 2000).
- U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service. 1995. Endangered and Threatened Wildlife and Plants; Final Rule Determining Endangered Status for the Southwestern Willow Flycatcher. **60 Federal Register** 10694. February 27, 1995.

CERTIFICATION

Certification: I hereby certify that the statements furnished above and in the attached exhibits present the data and information required for this biological evaluation, and that the facts, statements, and information presented are true and correct to the best of my knowledge and belief.

DATE: _____

SIGNED: _____
Cornelius W. Bouscaren

APPENDIX 1. ANIMALS OBSERVED OR DETECTED – SHANK ROAD WETLAND SITE – AR 21

COMMON NAME	SCIENTIFIC NAME
REPTILES	
Crotaphytidae Baja California Collared Lizard	<i>Crotaphytus insularis</i>
BIRDS	
Ardeidae (Hérons and Bitterns) Great Egret Snowy Egret Cattle Egret Green Heron Black-crowned Night-Heron	<i>Ardea alba</i> <i>Egretta thula</i> <i>Bubulcus ibis</i> <i>Butorides virescens</i> <i>Nycticorax nycticorax</i>
Threskiornithidae (Ibises and Spoonbills) White-faced Ibis	<i>Plegadis chihi</i>
Cathartidae (Vultures) Turkey Vulture	<i>Cathartes aura</i>
Accipitridae (Hawks, Eagles, Harriers, and Kites) Northern Harrier Red-tailed Hawk	<i>Circus cyaneus</i> <i>Buteo jamaicensis</i>
Falconidae (Falcons) American Kestrel	<i>Falco sparverius</i>
Odontophoridae (New World Quail) California Quail	<i>Callipepla californica</i>
Charadriidae (Plovers) Killdeer	<i>Charadrius vociferus</i>
Scolopacidae (Sandpipers) Long-billed Curlew	<i>Numenius americanus</i>
Columbidae (Pigeons and Doves) Rock Pigeon White-winged Dove Mourning Dove Common Ground-Dove	<i>Columba livia</i> <i>Zenaida asiatica</i> <i>Zenaida macroura</i> <i>Columbina passerina</i>
Cuculidae (Cuckoos) Greater Roadrunner	<i>Geococcyx californianus</i>
Camprimulgidae (Nightjars) Lesser Nighthawk	<i>Chordeiles acutipennis</i>
Trochilidae (Hummingbirds) Anna's Hummingbird	<i>Calypte anna</i>

**APPENDIX 1. ANIMALS OBSERVED OR DETECTED – SHANK ROAD WETLAND SITE – AR 21
(CONTINUED)****Tyrannidae** (Tyrant Flycatchers)

Black Phoebe	<i>Sayornis nigricans</i>
Brown-crested Flycatcher	<i>Myiarchus tyrannulus</i>
Western Kingbird	<i>Tyrannus verticalis</i>

Laniidae (Shrikes)

Loggerhead Shrike	<i>Lanius ludovicianus</i>
-------------------	----------------------------

Corvidae (Jays, Crows, Ravens, and Magpies)

American Crow	<i>Corvus brachyrhynchos</i>
---------------	------------------------------

Hirundinidae (Swallows)

Tree Swallow	<i>Tachycineta bicolor</i>
Northern Rough-winged Swallow	<i>Stelgidopteryx serripennis</i>
Cliff Swallow	<i>Petrochelidon pyrrhonota</i>

Remizidae (Verdins)

Verdin	<i>Auriparus flavipes</i>
--------	---------------------------

Aegithalidae (Bushtits)

Bushtit	<i>Psaltriparus minimus</i>
---------	-----------------------------

Troglodytidae (Wrens)

Bewick's Wren	<i>Thryomanes bewickii</i>
---------------	----------------------------

Sylviidae (Old World Warblers and Gnatcatchers)

Black-tailed Gnatcatcher	<i>Polioptila melanura</i>
--------------------------	----------------------------

Mimidae (Mockingbirds and Thrashers)

Northern Mockingbird	<i>Mimus polyglottos</i>
----------------------	--------------------------

Parulidae (Wood-Warblers)

Common Yellowthroat	<i>Geothlypis trichas</i>
---------------------	---------------------------

Emberizidae (Towhees and Sparrows)

California Towhee	<i>Pipilo crissalis</i>
Song Sparrow	<i>Melospiza melodia</i>

Cardinalidae (Cardinals, Grosbeaks, and Buntings)

Blue Grosbeak	<i>Guiraca caerulea</i>
---------------	-------------------------

Icteridae (Blackbirds, Meadowlarks, and Orioles)

Red-winged Blackbird	<i>Agelaius phoeniceus</i>
Western Meadowlark	<i>Sturnella neglecta</i>
Great-tailed Grackle	<i>Quiscalus mexicanus</i>
Brown-headed Cowbird	<i>Molothrus ater</i>

Fringillidae (Finches)

House Finch	<i>Carpodacus mexicanus</i>
-------------	-----------------------------

Passeridae (Old World Sparrows)

House Sparrow	<i>Passer domesticus</i>
---------------	--------------------------

**APPENDIX 1. ANIMALS OBSERVED OR DETECTED – SHANK ROAD WETLAND SITE – AR 21
(CONTINUED)**

MAMMALS

Leporidae (Rabbits and Hares)

Desert Cottontail

Sylvilagus audubonii

Sciuridae (Squirrels, Chipmunks, and Marmots)

California Ground Squirrel

Spermophilus beecheyi

Canidae (Foxes, Wolves, and Relatives)

Coyote

Canis latrans

ATTACHMENT 1. SOUTHWESTERN WILLOW FLYCATCHER SURVEY AND DETECTION FORM