

Historic Biological Reports
Scan Control Sheet

County Project Number(s):

CUP-5107

Report Type (check one):

- ☐ Initial Study
- ☒ Species Inventory/Survey
- ☐ Focused Study
- ☐ EIR
- ☐ Draft EIR
- ☐ EIS
- ☐ ND
- ☐ MND
- ☐ Other

Report Date (Month/Day/Year):

06/19/2000

Check if the following apply to the report:

- ☐ Wetland and/or aquatic habitat
- ☐ Within designated Coastal Zone
- ☐ Potential movement corridor for fish and/or wildlife

GNATCATCHER SURVEY

AT

HAPPY CAMP CANYON PARK,
MOORPARK, CA.

Conducted by:

Jim Greaves

June 19, 2000

Year 2000 Happy Camp California Gnatcatcher Survey, by Jim Greaves for Jensen Design

SUMMARY

Surveys for California Gnatcatcher were conducted from 16 April to 17 May 2000. None were found during 4 surveys of the proposed golf course and adjacent habitats. Habitats on site consisted of grasslands, grasslands interspersed with elements of Coastal Sage Scrub (CSS), and a riparian corridor several meters wide with willows, live oaks, and scrub shrubs.

INTRODUCTION

California Gnatcatcher (*Poliophtila californica*) is the southern California coastal form of the Black-tailed Gnatcatcher (*P. melanura*), and was upgraded to full species status at the time of its listing as a Federal Threatened Species in 1993. It was found to be a probably a relict breeder in 1995 when a male was found on a site in Moorpark, less than a mile from Happy Camp; at least 4 nests were found for 2 pairs at that site in 1996, 3 of which were successful. It was the presence of these birds that introduced Ventura County (at least in the Simi Valley and southward) to California Gnatcatcher as a species to be considered during project impact preparations: there have been at least 3 other locations in which the species has occurred in the Simi Valley in recent years (USFWS, unpublished data).

METHODS

The California Gnatcatcher protocol was modified from the 6 recommended surveys to only 4 after discussion with and agreement by Rick Farris, USFWS Ventura Field Office, CA. Surveys were made by walking each side of the riparian corridor, including to the toe of the east-facing west slope of the canyon while intermittently playing back a tape recording of the California Gnatcatcher's calls. Observations of all birds were made with 8 to 10 power binoculars, and notes made of the species and numbers encountered during surveys.

RESULTS

California Gnatcatchers were not found during surveys on 17 and 25 April and 04 and 17 May, either in the immediate impact zone of the proposed golf course, or on adjacent slopes of CSS and grasslands. *A list of all birds found is attached, indicating resident status, wintering or migratory, breeding or not breeding, and sensitive or other category (italics).*

Rufous-crowned Sparrows and Cactus Wrens, both California and Federal "Species of Concern", were encountered in several locations, but not where the project is likely to adversely impact them. The sparrows were on slopes and in the riparian area along the west side of the project, and the wrens were in an extensive cactus patch on the east side of the canyon and in a small patch in the very southwest corner as well as on the slope about a quarter mile to the north.

A brief look was made of the habitat atop the west side of the project to see if it could contain an adequate corridor for California Gnatcatchers to emigrate from the Moorpark site to the west, CSS elements of which were found to be either too young or absent and the top of the west mesa area was predominantly grasslands with few shrubs.

DISCUSSION and CONCLUSIONS

The absence of California Gnatcatchers from this site appears to be the result of two factors: (1) the overall rarity of the species north of Riverside County; and, 2) the CSS habitat on site was not extensive enough or of an age that would be likely to harbor California Gnatcatcher. In addition, although it was of sufficient age, CSS on west (east-facing) slopes above the proposed project did not have California Gnatcatchers that might forage into the project's potential impact areas.

RECOMMENDATIONS

As the client has indicated that the small patches of CSS to be impacted will be replanted adjacent to the impacted portion (around Tee 1), and avoidance will be done for other CSS and riparian locations on site, there is little likelihood that the project will permanently impact potential California Gnatcatcher habitats. In addition, it might be feasible for client to allow CSS and other native habitats to flourish in sections between and/or adjacent to fairways.

Year 2000 Happy Camp California Gnatcatcher Survey, by Jim Greaves for Jensen Design

Table 1. Birds seen on and adjacent to Happy Camp proposed golf course. [P = permanent resident; W = wintering only; M = migratory only; S = summer visitor; B = likely or confirmed breeding on site; some birds, like song sparrow, may as a species fit a combination of categories, such as of wintering, migratory, and permanent: b = breeding adjacent, not confirmed on site; L = likely or possible on site breeding, or on adjacent edges, based on behavior]

Acorn woodpecker - Pb	Rufous-crowned sparrow - PbL
Allen's hummingbird - M	Savannah sparrow - WM
American robin - WM; Pb	Spotted towhee - PbL
Anna's hummingbird - PbL	Song sparrow - WM; PbL
Ash-throated flycatcher - MbL	Turkey vulture - WM; Pb
Bewick's wren - PbL	White-crowned sparrow - WM
Black phoebe - Pb	Wilson's warbler - WM
Black-headed grosbeak - MbL	Wrentit - PbL
Blue grosbeak - Mb	Yellow warbler - M; bL
Blue-gray gnatcatcher - WM	Yellow-rumped warbler - WM
Brown-headed cowbird - WM; PbL	White-tailed kite - P/M; b
Bullock's oriole - M; bL	Western gull - fly-over
Bushtit - PB	Western kingbird - M; b
Cactus wren - Pb	Western scrub-jay - PbL
California quail - PbL	
California thrasher - PbL	Other wildlife encountered:
California towhee - PbL	Coyotes - 2 adults; 1 burrow
Cassin's kingbird - Pb	Ground squirrels - uncommon
Chipping sparrow - WM	Rabbits - common
Cliff swallow - M; b	Woodrats - only nests seen
Common ground dove - PbL	
Common raven - Pb	California whiptail lizards - uncommon
Common yellowthroat - WM; bL	Side-blotched lizards - common
Cooper's hawk - WM; Pb	Western fence lizards - uncommon
Costa's hummingbird - M; bL	
Downy woodpecker - WM; b	
English sparrow - Pb (at housing to south only)	
Greater roadrunner - Pb	
Hairy woodpecker - WM	
Hooded oriole - Mb	
House finch - Pb	
House wren - WM; bL	
Lark sparrow - WM; Pb	
Lazuli bunting - M; bL	
Lesser goldfinch - WM; Pb	
Lincoln's sparrow - WM	
Longspur (species unknown) - M	
Mourning dove - PbL	
Northern flicker - PB (nest in fallen tree)	
Northern harrier - WM	
Northern mockingbird - PB (nest with 3 eggs)	
Nuttall's woodpecker - PbL	
Oak titmouse - PbL	
Olive-sided flycatcher - M	
Orange-crowned warbler - WM; PbL	
Pacific-slope flycatcher - M; bL	
Phainopepla - MbL	
Red-shoulder hawk - Pb	
Red-tailed hawk - Pb	
Rock dove - Pb	