

December 13, 2018
(2018-047.006)

Ms. Veronica Mardis
County of Los Angeles Department of Public Works
Stormwater Engineering Division
Via Email: Vmardis@dpw.lacounty.gov

Subject: Least Bell's Vireo Preconstruction Surveys for the Devil's Gate Reservoir Restoration Project, in the City of Pasadena, California

Dear Ms. Mardis,

This letter report has been prepared to present the results of preconstruction surveys for least Bell's Vireo (*Vireo bellii pusillus*) conducted by ECORP Consulting, Inc. (ECORP) for Los Angeles County Department of Public Works' (LACDPW) Devil's Gate Reservoir Restoration Project in the City of Pasadena, Los Angeles County, California. The preconstruction surveys for least Bell's vireo were conducted to comply with Condition 7.2 in the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) Incidental Take Permit (ITP) No. 2081-2016-031-05 that was issued for the Devil's Gate Reservoir Restoration Project (Project) on July 16, 2018.

Condition 7.2 of the ITP states:

"The Permittee and Designated Biologist(s) shall ensure that Vegetation Removal (initial, routine, and episodic) in Covered Species suitable habitat are conducted outside of the Covered Species breeding season (March 1 to September 15). One week prior to vegetation removal outside the Covered Species breeding season, a minimum of three (3) surveys shall be conducted on separate days with the last survey completed no more than one (1) day prior to proposed vegetation removal. Surveys shall be conducted to determine Covered Species status within 300 feet of the Project Area. If Covered Species observations result in no observations of nest building, completed nest(s), egg laying, incubation, hatchlings, fledglings, or attempted territory establishment activities, then work may commence."

SURVEY METHODS

Preconstruction surveys for least Bell's vireo were conducted in compliance with ITP Condition 7.2 for initial vegetation removal activities that are to occur outside the vireo's breeding season. Surveys were conducted between dawn and 11 a.m. when weather conditions are favorable in accordance with USFWS 2001 protocol (nesting season) guidelines. Meandering transects were walked throughout suitable least Bell's vireo riparian habitat areas to visually and audibly detect the presence of least Bell's vireo. Upland habitat within 300 feet of the Project Area that could

serve as a stopover site for late migrants or overwintering individuals was also surveyed. All bird and wildlife species detected during the survey were recorded on standardized data sheets.

RESULTS

Three preconstruction surveys for least Bell’s vireo were conducted within one week of initial scheduled vegetation removal slated to begin on November, 28th, 2018. Due to a one-day delay of the project, a fourth least Bell’s vireo preconstruction survey was added. Each survey was conducted by a CDFW-approved Designated Biologist for least Bell’s vireo surveys. The dates, personnel, and weather conditions for each survey are presented in Table 1. Representative photographs of the project site during surveys are provided in Attachment A; field survey datasheets are provided in Attachment B.

Table 1. Weather Conditions during Surveys

Date	Surveyors*	Time		Temperature (°F)		Cloud Cover (%)		Wind Speed (mph)	
		start	end	start	end	start	end	start	end
11/20/18	CT	0700	1100	54	73	10	0	0-1	1-2
11/21/18	SS	0615	1045	51	65	80	0	0-2	1-3
11/26/18	TD	0640	1100	54	73	0	0	1-3	0-1
11/27/18	TD	0645	1100	54	73	20	70	0-1	0-1

*CT = Christine Tischer, SS = Shannan Shaffer, TD = Taylor Dee

No least Bell’s vireo were identified during the preconstruction surveys. A complete list of all birds and other wildlife observed during the preconstruction surveys is provided in Attachment C.

DISCUSSION

Eight protocol surveys conducted by ECORP during the 2018 breeding season and two post-breeding season surveys conducted in August, 2018 did not detect this species in the Project Area. Observations of least Bell’s vireo previously documented within the Project area have been irregular and typically coincide with seasonal migrations of least Bell’s vireos through the Project Area¹. As described by the Draft Recovery Plan for the least Bell’s vireo², the least Bell’s vireo is a migratory bird species that overwinters in southern Baja California, Mexico, and breeds in California and northern Baja California, Mexico. It typically returns to its southern California breeding grounds between mid-March and early April and departs between late July and late September. Although this species is not expected to occur in southern California at this time of

¹ ECORP Consulting, Inc (ECORP). 2018. Least Bell’s Vireo 2018 Survey Report, Devil’s Gate Reservoir Sediment Removal and Management Project, Los Angeles County, California. Prepared for the Los Angeles Department of Public Works, Water Resource Division. October 8, 2018.

² U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS). 1998. Draft Recovery Plan for the least Bell’s vireo (*Vireo bellii pusillus*). U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Region 1, Portland, OR. 139 pp.

year, a few late migrants and overwintering individuals have been documented. The four preconstruction surveys conducted immediately prior to vegetation clearing activities did not detect least Bell's vireo within the Project Area. The negative results of the preconstruction surveys support the findings of the negative 2018 focused surveys and is consistent with the life history and ecology for this species.

If you have any questions regarding the contents of this letter report, please contact me at (714) 648-0630 or lsimpson@ecorpconsulting.com.

SIGNED: 
Lauren Simpson
Staff Biologist
ECORP Consulting, Inc.
1801 Park Court Place, Building B. Ste 103.
Santa Ana, CA 92701

DATE: December 13, 2018

Attachments:

Attachment A: Representative Site Photos
Attachment B: Field Datasheets
Attachment C: Wildlife Compendium

ATTACHMENT A

Representative Site Photos



Photo 1. Looking at willow riparian on east side of Property.



Photo 2. Looking across *Lepidium* field at riparian habitat.



Photo 3. Looking at habitat from bottom of dam.



Photo 4. Looking at understory of riparian woodland.

ATTACHMENT B

Field Datasheets



LEAST BELL'S VIREO (*Vireo bellii pusillus*) SURVEY FORM

Date: 11-20-18

Project # 2018-047.006/006

Survey number: 1 of 3 pre-con

Project Name Devil's Gate LBV Precon

OBSERVERS:	SURVEY CONDITIONS			
<u>C. Tischer</u>	Time	Temp (F)	Wind (mph)	% Cloud Cover
	START	<u>0700</u>	<u>54°F</u>	<u>0-1mph</u>
	END	<u>1100</u>	<u>73°F</u>	<u>1-2mph</u>
				<u>10%</u>
				<u>Ø</u>

LEAST BELL'S VIREO OBSERVATIONS			
Vireo Status	Location in Survey Area	Appr. Age	Bands (Y/N)
Paired			
Territorial Male			
Juvenile			

Additional Comments (Behavior, Activity, Location in Canopy, etc.)

No LBVI seen or heard

BROWN-HEADED COWBIRD OBSERVATIONS	
# of individuals	<u>Ø</u>
Locations	<u>_____</u>

OTHER SENSITIVE SPECIES OBSERVATIONS (SWWF, YBC, ETC.)

Barn owl flushed from day roost in patch of willows in lepidium field, collector BAOW Pt: -118.17578348/34.18774957



LEAST BELL'S VIREO (*Vireo bellii pusillus*) SURVEY FORM

Date: 11-20-18

Project # 2018-047.006/006

Survey number: 1

Project Name Devil's Gate LRV Arc-con

INCIDENTAL SPECIES OBSERVED		
BLPH O,V	ANHU O,V	SO SP O,V
AMCR O,V	horse (s,t,O)	ROPI O flyover
BUSH O,V	coyote (s,d) = potential	den at -118.17546142 /
Parrots O,V flyover	RSHA V	raccoon (+) 34.18580252
RCKI O,V	cottontail (t,O)	bobcat (+)
WCSP O,V	dom. dog (O) w/owners	SNEG O flyover
YRWA O,V	NUWO O,V	ALHU V
CALT O,V	WEBL V	MOBO O
EUST O,V	RTHA O	LEGO V
ACWO O,V	BEWR O,V	WREN O,V
WSJA O,V	NOFL O,V	HOPI O
SPTO O	CATH O,V	SAPH O
		BAOW O

ADDITIONAL NOTES:	
O = observed	w. fence lizard O juv.
V = vocalization	BGGN V
S = scat	CARI O,V
T = tracks	AMKE O
D = den	CEWA V
06:50 - Nature's Image entering site	NOMO O
0800 water truck, backhoe, small blade, on	CORA O
bobcat, van, + truck on E side	
0835 Nature's Image 4-man crew + 1 woman	55°F clear
monitored(?) using handtools to clear brush under powerlines	

LALDPW on site installing Project signage.

LEAST BELL'S VIREO (*Vireo bellii pusillus*) SURVEY FORM

 Date: Nov 21, 2018

 Project # 2018-047.006/006

 Survey number: 2

 Project Name Devil's Gate Sediment Removal

OBSERVERS:	SURVEY CONDITIONS				
Shannan Shaffer		Time	Temp (F)	Wind (mph)	% Cloud Cover
	START	0615	51	0-2	80
	END	1045	65	1-3	0

LEAST BELL'S VIREO OBSERVATIONS			
Vireo Status	Location in Survey Area	Appr. Age	Bands (Y/N)
Paired			
Territorial Male			
Juvenile			
Additional Comments (Behavior, Activity, Location in Canopy, etc.)			
No LBVI detected.			

BROWN-HEADED COWBIRD OBSERVATIONS	
# of individuals	
Locations	

OTHER SENSITIVE SPECIES OBSERVATIONS (SWWF, YBC, ETC.)
None

LEAST BELL'S VIREO (*Vireo bellii pusillus*) SURVEY FORM

Date: Nov 21, 2018

Project # 2018-047.006/006

Survey number: 2

Project Name Devil's Gate Sediment Removal

INCIDENTAL SPECIES OBSERVED

ANHU	CAQU
ACWO	ROPI
RTHA	BGGN
BLPH	RSHA
ALHU	WESJ
CAKI	DUFL
NOFL	EUCD
OATI	Eastern fox squirrel
AMCR	California ground squirrel
BUSH	Coyote
SAPH	
BEWR	
LEGO	
EUST	
WCSP	
SOSP	
HOWR	
SPTO	
CALT	

ADDITIONAL NOTES:



LEAST BELL'S VIREO (*Vireo bellii pusillus*) SURVEY FORM

Date: 11/26/18
Survey number: # 3

Project # 2018-047.006
Project Name Devil's Gate Sediment female

OBSERVERS:	SURVEY CONDITIONS			
Taylor Dee	Time	Temp (F)	Wind (mph)	% Cloud Cover
	START	0640	54	1-3
	END	1100	73	0-1

LEAST BELL'S VIREO OBSERVATIONS			
Vireo Status	Location in Survey Area	Appr. Age	Bands (Y/N)
Paired \emptyset			
Territorial Male \emptyset			
Juvenile \emptyset			
Additional Comments (Behavior, Activity, Location in Canopy, etc.)			
no LBVI observed or heard during the survey			

BROWN-HEADED COWBIRD OBSERVATIONS	
# of individuals \emptyset	
Locations	

OTHER SENSITIVE SPECIES OBSERVATIONS (SWWF, YBC, ETC.)
none



LEAST BELL'S VIREO (*Vireo bellii pusillus*) SURVEY FORM

Date: 11/26/18
Survey number: 3

Project # 2018-047
Project Name Devil's Gate sediment
Removal

INCIDENTAL SPECIES OBSERVED

Acorn woodpecker
~~Acorn woodpecker~~
European starling
California towhee
American crow
desert cottontail
bushtit
Northern flicker
red-shouldered hawk
lesser gold finch
wren
ruby-crowned kinglet
California scrub jay
anna's hummingbird
white-crowned sparrow
blue-gray gnatcatcher
Nuttall's woodpecker
spotted towhee
Black Phoebe

California thrasher
American kestrel
allen's hummingbird
yellow-rumped warbler
song sparrow
house finch
Cassin's kingbird
barn owl
Bewick's wren
common raven
mourning dove
Coyote
eastern fox squirrel

ADDITIONAL NOTES:

na



LEAST BELL'S VIREO (*Vireo bellii pusillus*) SURVEY FORM

Date: 11/27/18
Survey number: #4

Project # 2018-047
Project Name Devil's Gate Sediment Removal

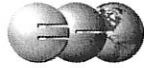
OBSERVERS:	SURVEY CONDITIONS			
Taylor Dee	Time	Temp (F)	Wind (mph)	% Cloud Cover
	START	0645	54°F	0-1
	END	1100	73	0-1

LEAST BELL'S VIREO OBSERVATIONS			
Vireo Status	Location in Survey Area	Appr. Age	Bands (Y/N)
Paired <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			
Territorial Male <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			
Juvenile <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			

Additional Comments (Behavior, Activity, Location in Canopy, etc.)
no LBVI observed or heard during survey

BROWN-HEADED COWBIRD OBSERVATIONS	
# of individuals <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Locations	

OTHER SENSITIVE SPECIES OBSERVATIONS (SWWF, YBC, ETC.)
~~AE~~



LEAST BELL'S VIREO (*Vireo bellii pusillus*) SURVEY FORM

Date: 11/27/18
Survey number: #4

Project # 2018-047
Project Name Devil's Gate Sediment Removal

INCIDENTAL SPECIES OBSERVED

Common raven	house finch	parrot sp.
California scrub jay	Nuttall's woodpecker	Say's phoebe
spotted towhee	wrentit	
European starling	California thrasher	
coyote	black phoebe	
Oak titmouse	song sparrow	
California towhee	eastern fox squirrel	
Cooper's hawk	ruby-crowned kinglet	
mourning dove	woodrat	
Anna's hummingbird	hermit thrush	
Red-shouldered hawk	Bewick's wren	
American crow	bush tit	
yellow-rumped warbler	Cassin's kingbird	
California quail	Cooper's hawk	
northern flicker	side-blotch lizard	
red-tailed hawk	blue-gray gnatcatcher	
acorn woodpecker	western bluebird	
lesser gold finch		

ADDITIONAL NOTES:

n/a

ATTACHMENT C

Wildlife Compendium

Wildlife Species Observed

Scientific Name	Common Name
REPTILES	
Phrynosomatidae	Spiny Lizards
<i>Sceloporus occidentalis</i>	western fence lizard
<i>Uta stansburiana</i>	common side-blotched lizard
BIRDS	
Accipitridae	Hawks
<i>Accipiter cooperii</i> **	Cooper's hawk
<i>Buteo jamaicensis</i>	red-tailed hawk
<i>Buteo lineatus</i>	red-shouldered hawk
Aegithalidae	Bushtits
<i>Psaltriparus minimus</i>	bushtit
<i>Thryomanes bewickii</i>	Bewick's wren
Ardeidae	Herons and Egrets
<i>Egretta thula</i>	snowy egret (flyover)
Bombycillidae	Waxwings
<i>Bombycilla cedrorum</i>	cedar waxwing
Columbidae	Pigeons and Doves
<i>Columba livia</i>	rock pigeon
<i>Streptopelia decaocto</i>	Eurasian collared-dove
<i>Zenaida macroura</i>	mourning dove
Corvidae	Jays and Crows
<i>Aphelocoma californica</i>	California scrub-jay
<i>Corvus corax</i>	common raven
<i>Corvus brachyrhynchos</i>	American crow
Tyrannidae	Tyrant flycatchers
<i>Empidonax oberholseri</i>	dusky flycatcher
Falconidae	Falcons and Caracaras
<i>Falco sparverius</i>	American kestrel
Fringillidae	Finches
<i>Spinus psaltria</i>	lesser goldfinch
<i>Haemorhous mexicanus</i>	house finch
Mimidae	Mockingbirds and Thrashers
<i>Mimus polyglottos</i>	northern mockingbird
<i>Toxostoma redivivum</i>	California thrasher
Odontophoridae	New World Quail
<i>Callipepla californica</i>	California quail
Paradoxornithidae	Wrentits
<i>Chamaea fasciata</i>	wrentit
Paridae	Titmice
<i>Baeolophus inornatus</i>	oak titmouse
<i>Setophaga coronata</i>	yellow-rumped warbler

Scientific Name	Common Name
Passerellidae (previously Emberizidae)	Sparrows and Towhees
<i>Melospiza melodia</i>	song sparrow
<i>Melospiza crissalis</i>	California towhee
<i>Pipilo maculatus</i>	spotted towhee
<i>Zonotrichia leucophrys</i>	white-crowned sparrow
Picidae	Woodpeckers
<i>Colaptes auratus</i>	northern flicker
<i>Dryobates nuttallii</i>	Nuttall's woodpecker
<i>Melanerpes formicivorus</i>	acorn woodpecker
Psittacidae	Old World Parrots
<i>Amazona</i> sp.	parrot sp. (flyover)
Regulidae	Kinglets
<i>Regulus calendula</i>	ruby-crowned kinglet
Polioptilidae (previously Silviidae)	Gnatcatchers
<i>Polioptila caerulea</i>	blue-gray gnatcatcher
Sturnidae	Starlings
<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>	European starling
Trochilidae	Hummingbirds
<i>Calypte anna</i>	Anna's hummingbird
<i>Selasphorus sasin</i>	Allen's hummingbird
Turdidae	Thrushes
<i>Catharus guttatus</i>	hermit thrush
<i>Sialia mexicana</i>	western bluebird
Tyrannidae	Tyrant Flycatchers
<i>Sayornis nigricans</i>	black phoebe
<i>Sayornis saya</i>	Say's phoebe
<i>Tyrannus vociferans</i>	Cassin's kingbird
Tytonidae	Barn Owls
<i>Tyto alba</i>	barn owl
MAMMALS	
Canidae	Dogs, Wolves, and Foxes
<i>Canis latrans</i>	coyote (scat, potential den)
<i>Canis lupus familiaris</i> *	domestic dog
Cricetidae	New World Rats and Mice
<i>Neotoma</i> sp.	woodrat sp. (middens)
Equidae	Horses and allies
<i>Equus caballus</i> *	domestic horse
Felidae	Cats
<i>Lynx rufus</i>	bobcat (tracks)
Leporidae	Hares and Rabbits
<i>Sylvilagus audubonii</i>	desert cottontail
Procyonidae	Raccoons
<i>Procyon lotor</i>	common raccoon (tracks)
Sciuridae	Squirrels
<i>Sciurus niger</i> *	eastern fox squirrel

Scientific Name	Common Name
<i>Otospermophilus beecheyi</i>	California ground squirrel

*Nonnative species

**CDFW California Species of Special Concern/CDFW Fully Protected Species/Watch List Species