Print Form

Notice of Exemption

Appendix E

To: Office of Planning and Research
P.O. Box 3044, Room 113
Sacramento, CA 95812-3044

County Clerk
County of: Orange
601 North Ross Street
Santa Ana, CA 92701

From: (Public Agency): Orange County Fire Authority
1 Fire Authority Road, Irvine, CA 92602
(Address)

Project Title: Fire Adapted Portola Hills Project - Lawrence Slope

Project Applicant: California Sustainability Group

Project Location - Specific:
The project site is located at 19191 Lawrence Canyon, just inside the mouth of Santiag

Project Location - City: Silverado Project Location - County: Orange

Description of Nature, Purpose and Beneficiaries of Project:
The Lawrence Brothers Estate proposes to remove 451 Mexican fan palms and 46 pine trees to reduce the fuel load and protect 2,192 homes within the adjacent Portola Hills neighborhood. The hazardous fuel will be removed from the perimeter slope to meet Orange County Fire Authority (OCFA) and California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE) standards for defensible space.

Name of Public Agency Approving Project: Orange County Fire Authority

Name of Person or Agency Carrying Out Project: Bethany Ross

Exempt Status: **(check one):**

- ☐ Ministerial (Sec. 21080(b)(1); 15268);
- ☐ Declared Emergency (Sec. 21080(b)(3); 15269(a));
- ☐ Emergency Project (Sec. 21080(b)(4); 15269(b)(c));
- ☒ Categorical Exemption. State type and section number: Class 4, Sec 15304
- ☐ Statutory Exemptions. State code number: _____

Reasons why project is exempt:
The proposed fuel reduction project is consistent with CEQA Guidelines Categorical Exemption Class 4 in that the project will not take threatened, endangered, or rare species or cause sedimentation into surface waters. The project consists of a manipulated and exotic-dominated land cover type characterized primarily by pine trees and invasive Mexican fan palms and that is unlikely to support any threatened, endangered, or rare species. There are no state or federal jurisdictional areas and no surface waters, and therefore the project will not result in erosion or sedimentation into surface waters. In addition, the trees will be remove with hand tools and will be chipped and disposed of at a licensed green waste facility, making the project exempt from CAL FIRE's cultural resources review.

Lead Agency
Contact Person: Scott Hatch Area Code/Telephone/Extension: (714) 573-6178

If filed by applicant:

1. Attach certified document of exemption finding.
2. Has a Notice of Exemption been filed by the public agency approving the project? Yes ▪ No

Signature: Bethany Ross Date: 9/6/2024 Title: CEO

Signed by Lead Agency ▪ Signed by Applicant

Authority cited: Sections 21083 and 21110, Public Resources Code.
Reference: Sections 21108, 21152, and 21152.1, Public Resources Code.

Date Received for filing at OPR: _____

Revised 2011

☐

Michael Baker INTERNATIONAL

We Make a Difference

MEMORANDUM

To: Orange County Clerk-Recorder, 601 North Ross Street, Santa Ana, CA 92701

Subject: Filing of Notice of Exemption in compliance with Section 15062 of Title 14 California Code of Regulations

Project Title: Fire Adapted Portola Hills Project – Lawrence Slope

Project Location: The project site is located on the Lawrence Brothers Estate near the mouth of Santiago Canyon at 19191 Lawrence Canyon in Orange County, California.

Name of Public Agency Approving Project: Orange County Fire Authority (OCFA)

Exempt Status: California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines Section 15304 (Class 4) – *Minor Alterations to Land*

Reasons Why Project is Exempt:
The proposed fuel reduction project is consistent with CEQA Guidelines Categorical Exemption Class 4 in that the project will not take threatened, endangered, or rare species or cause sedimentation into surface waters. The project consists of the removal of invasive Mexican fan palms (*Washingtonia robusta*) and pine trees (*Pinus* sp.) growing within the southwestern portion of the property. These trees represent a fire danger to the nearby Portola Hills neighborhood, located within 100 feet of the nearest proposed removals. The property is known to support bats but based on a bat survey conducted in May and June 2024, none of the bat species detected on-site qualify as threatened, endangered, or rare as defined under California Code of Regulations Title 14, Section 15380, and no other endangered, threatened, or rare species are known or likely to occur within the project site based on the on-site habitat. In addition, there are no state or federal jurisdictional areas and no surface waters and the project will not result in erosion or sedimentation into surface waters. The project proponent would implement a series of project design features with the aim of further protecting local bats. Therefore, the proposed project is consistent with the requirements of CEQA Categorical Exemption Class 4. In addition, the project is considered exempt from the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection's (CAL FIRE) cultural resources review as it qualifies as a "fire-safe project" to reduce the risk of catastrophic wildfires to surrounding communities by removing fire-prone trees within the project site.

Summary:
The California Sustainability Group, Inc. plans to conduct removal of Mexican fan palms and pine trees on private property for fire remediation purposes through licensed subcontractors.

Description:
The Fire Adapted Portola Hills Project on the Lawrence Brothers Estate will remove 451 volunteer Mexican fan palms and 46 pine trees to reduce the fuel load and protect 2,192 homes within the Portola Hills neighborhood. The hazardous fuel will be removed from perimeter slope to meet OCFA and CAL FIRE standards for defensible space.

Because bats are known to inhabit the project site and/or the immediate surrounding area based on studies conducted in May and June 2024, the following project design features (PDF) will be implemented during the palm tree removals:

PDF-1. Any palms to be removed will be removed in two stages:
   a. Palms that have dead palm fronds ("skirts") will be cleaned up and the dead fronds will be thinned out or removed, without removing the palm tree.
   b. These trees will be removed at least 48 hours later to allow any bats that may have been present to vacate and move elsewhere.

PDF-2. PDF-1a does not apply to palms that do not have any dead fronds, i.e. those that have been maintained and pruned more regularly.

PDF-3. Palms will only be removed outside of the bat maternity season and outside of winter. Removals will occur either in March and April or September and October.

PDF-4. A qualified biologist should monitor all palm tree trimming and removals and alert the removal personnel if any wildlife, including bats, are in imminent danger from the work. Wildlife will be allowed to vacate the area on their own.

As described in the attached *Biological Resources Baseline Study*, the project consists of manipulated and exotic-dominated land cover types. The trees that are proposed for removal are almost entirely invasive Mexican fan palms, with a small number of additional pine trees, and the project site is not expected to support any threatened, endangered, or rare species. There are no state or federal jurisdictional areas and no surface waters, and therefore the project will not result in erosion or sedimentation into surface waters. Because the project will use hand tools (chainsaws) for the tree removals, will avoid ground disturbance, and will chip the downed trees and dispose of them at a licensed green waste facility, the project is also exempt from CAL FIRE's cultural resources review.

September 5, 2024

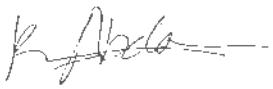
Scott Hatch
Wildland Resource Planner
Orange County Fire
Authority 1 Fire Authority
Road,
Irvine, CA 92602

Dear Scott Hatch:

The properties of the Fire Adapted Portola Hills CAL FIRE Wildfire Prevention Grant Project, 5GA22224, were developed on manufactured slopes in the early 1990s. The non-native tree species to be removed from the Lawrence property were planted with the intent to be grown and sold as a nursery business. The Washingtonia robusta are not native or natural to the area and have been left in a neglected state once it was determined they would not be sold.

The non-native Washingtonia robusta and pinus species will be removed from the treatment zones by flush cutting the above grade. Roots will be left intact, and no work will be done below grade. Therefore, It is my professional opinion that the proposed tree removal has no potential to impact cultural resources.

Sincerely,



Kholood Abdo, MA, RPA
Senior Archaeologist
Michael Baker International

Michael Baker
INTERNATIONAL

We Make a Difference

July 10, 2024 JN 199394

CALIFORNIA SUSTAINABILITY GROUP, INC.
Bethany Ross
President/CEO
638 Camino de los Mares, Suite H130-456
San Clemente, CA 92673
CAL FIRE Contract 5GA22224, Project 22-WP-ORC-4769081

SUBJECT: Results of a Biological Resources Baseline Study for the Fire Adapted Portola Hills Project – Lawrence Slope located in Orange County, California

Dear Ms. Ross,

Michael Baker International, Inc. (Michael Baker) is pleased to submit this biological resources baseline study to California Sustainability Group for the proposed Fire Adapted Portola Hills Project – Lawrence Slope (project or project site) located just inside the mouth of Santiago Canyon in Orange County, California. Michael Baker conducted a literature review and field survey to characterize existing biological conditions and assess the potential for the project to take special-status[1] plant and wildlife species. In order to meet the project's goal of achieving a Class 4 Exemption under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), the project must not cause take of endangered, rare, or threatened plant or animal species or cause significant erosion and sedimentation of surface waters. This report additionally includes a discussion of the project's ability to qualify for a cultural resources exemption.

Project Location

The project site is generally located just inside of the mouth of Santiago Canyon in Orange County, California. The project is partially located in Section 4 of Township 6 South, Range 7 West and Section 36 of Township 5 South, Range 7 West of the USGS *Santiago Peak*, *California* 7.5-minute topographic quadrangle map as well as an un-sectioned area of Township 5 South, Range 7 West of the USGS *El Toro*, *California* 7.5-minute

[1] As used in this report, "special-status" refers to plant and wildlife species that are federally-/state-listed, proposed, or candidates; plant species that have been designated a California Rare Plant Rank species by the California Native Plant Society; wildlife species that are designated by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife as Fully Protected, Species of Special Concern, or Watch List species; and state/locally rare vegetation communities.

5 Hutton Centre Drive, Suite 500 | Santa Ana, CA 92707
Office: 949.472.3505 | Fax: 949.472.8373 | mbakerintl.com

topographic map. The project site consists of a vegetated slope on the back (south) side of the Rancho Las Lomas venue, otherwise known as the Lawrence Brothers Estate. The Lawrence Brothers Estate is generally bounded by Santiago Canyon Road to the north and east, the Portola Hills residential neighborhood to the south, and Ridgeline Road to the west.

Project Description

The Fire Adapted Portola Hills Project on the Lawrence Brothers Estate will remove 451 volunteer Mexican fan palms (*Washingtonia robusta*) and 46 pine trees (*Pinus* sp.) to reduce the fuel load and protect 2,192 homes within the Portola Hills neighborhood. The hazardous fuel will be removed from the perimeter slope to meet Orange County Fire Authority (OCFA) and California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE) standards for defensible space.

Because bats are known to inhabit the project site and/or the immediate surrounding area based on studies conducted by Michael Baker in May and June 2024, the following project design features (PDF) will be implemented during the palm tree removals:

PDF-1. Any palms to be removed will be removed in two stages:
   a. Palms that have dead palm fronds ("skirts") will be cleaned up and the dead fronds will be thinned out or removed, without removing the palm tree.
   b. These trees will be removed at least 48 hours later to allow any bats that may have been present to vacate and move elsewhere.

PDF-2. PDF-1a does not apply to palms that do not have any dead fronds, i.e. those that have been maintained and pruned more regularly.

PDF-3. Palms will only be removed outside of the bat maternity season and outside of winter. Removals will occur either in March and April or September and October.

PDF-4. A qualified biologist should monitor all palm tree trimming and removals and alert the removal personnel if any wildlife, including bats, are in imminent danger from the work. Wildlife will be allowed to vacate the area on their own.

Methodology

Literature Review and Records Searches

Records searches were conducted to determine which special-status plant and wildlife species have been recorded from the project vicinity within the USGS *El Toro* and *Santiago Peak, California* 7.5-minute quadrangles. The records search was achieved through a query of the California Department of Fish and Wildlife's (CDFW) California Natural Diversity Database (CNDDB; CDFW 2024) and the California Native Plant Society's Inventory of Rare and Endangered Plants of California (CIRP; CNPS 2024). The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's (USFWS) Information for Planning and Consultation

(IPaC) online environmental planning tool was also reviewed to identify protected biological resources falling under USFWS jurisdiction that are known or expected to occur on or within the project vicinity (USFWS 2024a). In addition, Michael Baker reviewed the USFWS Environmental Conservation Online System Critical Habitat Mapper (USFWS 2024b), the U.S. Department of Agriculture/Natural Resources Conservation Service (USDA) Web Soil Survey (USDA 2024), and historic/current aerial photographs (Google, Inc. 2024 and Historicaerials.com 2024).

Habitat Assessment

A field survey was conducted by Michael Baker senior biologist Mr. Ryan Winkleman on January 31, 2024. The survey was conducted between the hours of 1240 and 1310, with temperatures ranging from 67 to 69 degrees Fahrenheit, winds from 0 to 3 miles per hour, and skies partly cloudy. Vegetation communities occurring within the project site were mapped on an aerial photograph and classified in accordance with the vegetation descriptions provided in *A Manual of California Vegetation* (Sawyer *et al*., 2009) and cross referenced with the vegetation descriptions provided by Holland (1986). In addition, site characteristics such as soil condition, topography, hydrology, anthropogenic disturbances, indicator species, condition of on-site vegetation communities, and the presence of potentially regulated jurisdictional features were noted. Michael Baker used Geographic Information Systems (GIS) ArcView software to digitize the mapped vegetation communities and then transferred these data onto an aerial photograph to further document existing conditions and quantify the acreage of each vegetation community.

All wildlife species observed, as well as dominant plant species within each vegetation community, were recorded in a field notebook. Plant species observed during the field survey were identified by visual characteristics and morphology in the field, while unusual and less familiar plant species were photographed and later identified using taxonomic guides. Plant species that are considered ornamental were generally not identified, unless they were considered to be a dominant plant species on the project site. Plant nomenclature used in this memo report follows the Jepson Flora Project (2024) and scientific names are provided immediately following common names of plant species (first reference only). Wildlife detections were made through aural and visual detection, as well as observation of sign including scat, trails, tracks, burrows, and nests. Field guides used to assist with identification of species during the habitat assessment included *The Sibley Guide to Birds* (Sibley 2014) for birds, *A Field Guide to Western Reptiles and Amphibians* (Stebbins 2003) for herpetofauna, and *A Field Guide to Mammals of North America* (Reid 2006). Although common names of wildlife species are well standardized, scientific names are provided immediately following common names of wildlife species in this report (first reference only).

Bat Habitat Suitability Assessment and Survey

A bat roosting habitat assessment and out-flight survey was conducted on May 28, 2024 by Michael Baker bat biologist Mr. John Parent to assess the survey area's suitability to provide bat habitat and to identify any potential maternity roosts and day- or night-roosting sites. The initial survey consisted of a preliminary daytime habitat assessment. The biologist walked meandering transects throughout the entire survey area to assess the potential for the survey area to provide maternity roosts and day- and night-roosting habitat. After the habitat assessment, the bat biologist placed two Titley Scientific Acoustic monitors within the project site, one outfitted with an omni-directional microphone and the other with a uni-directional microphone. The detectors were left in place on the project site from the evening of May 28 to the morning of June 4, 2024.

Summary of Applicable Regulations

State

California Environmental Quality Act

CEQA provides for the protection of the environment within the state of California by establishing state policy to prevent significant, avoidable damage to the environment through the use of alternatives or mitigation measures. This applies to actions directly undertaken, financed, or permitted by state lead agencies. Some projects may be determined to be "exempt" from CEQA if they fit certain project categories and meet certain requirements, e.g. no habitat present for special-status species. In this case, the project is attempting to meet the requirements of the Class 4 exemption for minor alterations to land including fuel management activities within 30 feet of structures to reduce the volume of flammable vegetation, or within 100 feet if the local fire protection agency has determined that 100 feet of clearance is necessary. To meet this exemption under biological resources, a project must demonstrate that implementation of the project will not result in the take of endangered, rare, or threatened plant or animal species or significant erosion and sedimentation of surface waters.

If a project is determined to be subject to CEQA, the lead agency will be required to conduct an Initial Study (IS); if the IS determines that the project may have significant impacts on the environment, the lead agency will subsequently be required to prepare an Environmental Impact Report (EIR). A finding of no significant effects by the IS will require preparation of either a Negative Declaration or a Mitigated Negative Declaration instead of an EIR. Section 15380 of the CEQA Guidelines independently defines "endangered" species as those whose survival and reproduction in the wild are in immediate jeopardy, while "rare" species are defined as those who are in such low numbers that they could become endangered if their environment worsens.

Local

Central/Coastal Orange County Natural Community Conservation Plan/Habitat Conservation Plan

The Central/Coastal Orange County Natural Community Conservation Plan/Habitat Conservation Plan (NCCP/HCP) is a comprehensive, multi-jurisdictional habitat conservation plan focusing on conservation of species and their associated habitats in Orange County (R.J. Meade 1996). The Orange County NCCP/HCP focuses on protection of coastal sage scrub habitat and three designated "Target Species": the coastal California gnatcatcher (*Polioptila californica California*; CAGN; a federally threatened species and California species of special concern (SSC)), coastal cactus wren (*Campylorhynchus brunneicapillus sandiegensis*; a California SSC), and orange-throated whiptail (*Aspidoscelis hyperythra*; a California SSC). A Habitat Reserve area was created to meet the ecological requirements of these three (3) species and thirty-six (36) other "Identified Species," with the understanding that the three target species would serve as "surrogates" for the broader suite of organisms that depend upon coastal sage scrub for their continued survival in the NCCP/HCP planning area. The Implementing Agreement (IA) satisfies the state and federal mitigation requirements for designated development and adequately provides for the conservation and protection of the 39 species and their habitats identified in the NCCP/HCP.

Results

Existing Site Conditions

The project site is located at an elevation of approximately 1,260 to 1,350 feet above mean sea level, sloping gently downward from south to north. Based on historic aerial imagery, the first signs of development and habitation on the Lawrence Brothers Estate occurred between 1952 and 1977 (HistoricAerials.com 2024). The property was acquired by the Lawrence family in 1977 and used as a residence for many years before being converted into a commercial events venue with roads and trails, event buildings and structures, and a nonprofit zoo. Current conditions are a mixture of development and open space, with most of the development in the northeastern half of the property and most of the southwestern half being undeveloped. The boundaries of this project are entirely located in the southwestern half of the property, in close proximity to the adjacent Portola Hills neighborhood.

Vegetation Communities and Land Cover Types

One (1) land cover type was mapped within the proposed vegetation removal areas: date palm – California fan palm groves (refer to Figure 2, *Vegetation Communities and Other Land Uses*). This land cover type is described in further detail below; it does not constitute suitable habitat for special-status species, except as otherwise mentioned, or qualify as a protected habitat type.

Date Palm – California Fan Palm Groves

The entire project site, approximately 2.73 acres, was mapped as date palm – California fan palm groves. This land cover type is dominated by invasive Mexican fan palms; fan palms on the property in general are a combination of trees that were intentionally planted as part of an abandoned cultivation effort and trees that escaped cultivation and spread into new areas, including within the project site. The understory in the southern portion of this land cover type is dominated by manicured grasses and weeds, primarily shortpod mustard (*Hirschfeldia incana*). The northern portion of the community has more species variability, with pines and coast live oaks (*Quercus agrifolia*) growing underneath the palms and small patches of coastal sage scrub species including California sagebrush (*Artemisia californica*), lemonadeberry (*Rhus integrifolia*), prickly pear (*Opuntia* sp.), and laurel sumac (*Malosma laurina*).

Wildlife

The project site is adjacent to areas of relatively undisturbed open space and as a result is host to a wide variety of wildlife species. A total of twenty-four (24) wildlife species were detected during the general field survey, including one (1) reptile and twenty-three (23) species of birds. None of the species that were detected are considered to be endangered, rare, or threatened. In addition, a total of three species of bat—Mexican free-tailed bat (*Tadarida brasiliensis*), western red bat (*Lasiurus blossevillii*: California Species of Special Concern [SSC]), and western yellow bat (*Lasiurus xanthinus*; California SSC)—were detected by the Titley monitors that were left on-site during the bat survey.

Special-Status Biological Resources

Special-Status Plants

Thirty-three (33) special-status plant species were identified in the project vicinity by reviews of the CNDDB CIRP, and IPaC online databases (refer to Attachments C through E). Of these 33 species, none are expected to occur within the project site based on a review of specific habitat preferences, known occurrences and distributions, and elevation ranges. Therefore, special-status plants are not considered to be a constraint to project implementation and take of special-status plants including endangered, rare, or threatened plants is not expected.

Special-Status Wildlife

Thirty-seven (37) special-status wildlife species were identified in the project vicinity by reviews of the CNDDB and IPaC online database (refer to Attachments C and E). Of these 37 species, none are expected to occur within the project site based on a review of specific habitat preferences, known occurrences and distributions, and elevation ranges. Although two of the bats that were detected on-site are considered SSC, for the purposes of the CEQA Class 4 Exemption these species are not considered endangered, rare, or

threatened under the California Code of Regulations (CCR) Title 14, Section 15380 and their presence does not conflict with the project qualifying for the Class 4 Exemption. A more detailed description of this qualification is provided in the "CEQA Class 4 Exemption" section below. Therefore, special-status wildlife are not considered to be a constraint to project implementation and take of special-status wildlife including endangered, rare, or threatened wildlife species is not expected.

Critical Habitat

According to the most recent final designations at the time of writing, the entire project site falls within designated Critical Habitat for coastal California gnatcatcher (USFWS 2024b). According to the latest Critical Habitat designation, the primary constituent elements, which have since undergone a nomenclature change and are now referred to as physical and biological features (PBFs), for CAGN include the following:

- Dynamic and successional sage scrub habitats: Venturan coastal sage scrub, Diegan coastal sage scrub, Riversidean sage scrub, maritime succulent scrub, Riversidean alluvial fan scrub, southern coastal bluff scrub, and coastal sage-chaparral scrub in Ventura, Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino, and San Diego Counties that provide space for individual and population growth, normal behavior, breeding, reproduction, nesting, dispersal and foraging; and
- Non-sage scrub habitats such as chaparral, grassland, riparian areas, in proximity to sage scrub habitats as described for [PBF] 1 above that provide space for dispersal, foraging, and nesting.

The project site is almost entirely composed of Mexican fan palms with a grassy understory. The northern portion has an understory variably vegetated by pines and coast live oaks with sparse lemonadeberry and California sagebrush. The project site does not contain the PBFs necessary to support CAGN, and therefore does not meet the qualifications to be considered as true "critical habitat" for CAGN.

State and Federal Jurisdictional Resources

There are no state or federal jurisdictional aquatic resources located within the project site and none would be directly impacted by the proposed project. Therefore, a jurisdictional delineation is not expected and state and/or federal jurisdictional aquatic resources are not considered to be a constraint to project implementation. Additionally, with a lack of aquatic features on-site or immediately adjacent to the project site, erosion or sedimentation of surface waters would not occur.

Orange County Central/Coastal NCCP/HCP

The project site is located within designated preserved areas of the Orange County Central/Coastal NCCP/HCP. Specifically, the project site falls within designated non-reserve open space, for which conversion of coastal sage scrub or take of covered

species under the NCCP/HCP is not authorized without separate review by CDFW and USFWS. In this case, the project site does not constitute coastal sage scrub habitat, the proposed project would not remove the small amounts of coastal sage scrub plants that are present, and no covered species are expected to occur within the project site. No other portions of the project site fall within any designated preserved areas, contain any coastal sage scrub habitat or other covered habitat types, or pose any other potential conflicts to the project's consistency with the NCCP/HCP. Therefore, the project is considered to be consistent with the Orange County Central/Coastal NCCP/HCP.

CEQA Class 4 Exemption

Eligibility for the CEQA Class 4 Exemption for biological resources is contingent upon the project proponent demonstrating that proposed project activities will not result in the taking of endangered, rare, or threatened plant or animal species or significant erosion and sedimentation of surface waters. There is no suitable habitat within the proposed removal areas to support endangered, rare, or threatened plant or animal species, and trees proposed for removal are generally non-native, with most of them being invasive Mexican fan palms that are a significant fire danger both to the Lawrence Brothers Estate and to the adjacent Portola Hills neighborhood. Although two of the bats that were detected on-site are considered SSC, for the purposes of the CEQA Class 4 Exemption these species are not considered endangered, rare, or threatened under the California Code of Regulations (CCR) Title 14, Section 15380, which clarifies that under California law, species are only considered to be endangered, rare, or threatened if they are listed as such under Sections 670.2 or 670.5 of CCR Title 14 or under Sections 17.11 or 17.12 of the Code of Federal Regulations Title 50. Neither of these species is listed under these code sections and therefore under current California law they are not considered to be endangered, rare, or threatened for the purposes of the Class 4 Exemption.

In addition, under CCR Title 14, Section 251.1, the definition of "take" is clarified to include the harassment of animals and the disruption of their breeding, feeding, or sheltering activities; however, such actions that are taken to protect public or private property, such as the proposed project, are exempt from this definition. Furthermore, there are no surface waters present in or around the trees proposed for removal. Therefore, the project will not result in take of endangered, rare, or threatened plant or animal species or significant erosion and sedimentation of surface waters and will qualify for a CEQA Class 4 Exemption from biological resources for the proposed fuel management activities.

Finally, CAL FIRE's *Cultural Resources Review Procedures for CAL FIRE Projects* (CAL FIRE 2020) includes a list of exempt practices, or CAL FIRE project types that, because they are unlikely to impact cultural resources, do not require archaeological survey, investigation, and reporting, including an archaeological records check, notification to Native Americans, pre-field research, cultural resource survey, or the completion of an archaeological survey report. "Fire-safe projects" are included in the list of exempt

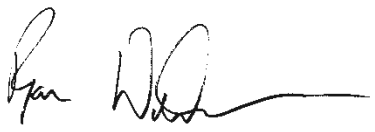
practices and are defined as those projects that involve “treatment of vegetation surrounding communities to reduce the risk of catastrophic wildfires through thinning and/or removal of vegetation by crews using hand tools or non-ground disturbing equipment” (CAL FIRE 2020). In order to be exempt from a cultural resources review, CAL FIRE requires that such projects chip the downed woody vegetation and either spread it on-site or remove it from the site. This project would use chainsaws for the tree removals and all trees would be chipped and disposed of at a licensed green waste facility. Therefore, this project would also satisfy CAL FIRE’s requirements as being exempt from a cultural resources review.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Based on the results of Michael Baker’s literature review and vegetation mapping in January 2024, the project site is primarily composed of a manipulated and exotic-dominated land cover type characterized primarily by pine trees and invasive Mexican fan palms. No special-status plant or wildlife species were observed during the general field survey and there is no habitat within the project site to support endangered, rare, or threatened species. The bat species that were detected on-site during the bat survey also do not qualify as endangered, rare, or threatened. Based on the results of the field survey and a review of specific habitat preferences, occurrence records, known distributions, and elevation ranges, it was determined that none of the special-status species identified by the CNDDB, CNPS, and IPaC are expected to occur within the project site, and the project site is not expected to support any species qualifying as endangered, rare, or threatened. There are no state or federal jurisdictional areas and no surface waters, and therefore the project will not result in erosion or sedimentation of surface waters. Based on Michael Baker’s assessment of the project site, the project qualifies for a Class 4 CEQA Exemption for fuel management in proximity to existing structures. In addition, the project qualifies for CAL FIRE’s exemption from a cultural resources study.

Please do not hesitate to contact me at (949) 533-0918 or ryan.winkleman@mbakerintl.com should you have any questions or require further information regarding this report.

Sincerely,



Ryan Winkleman
Senior Biologist/Project Manager
Natural Resources

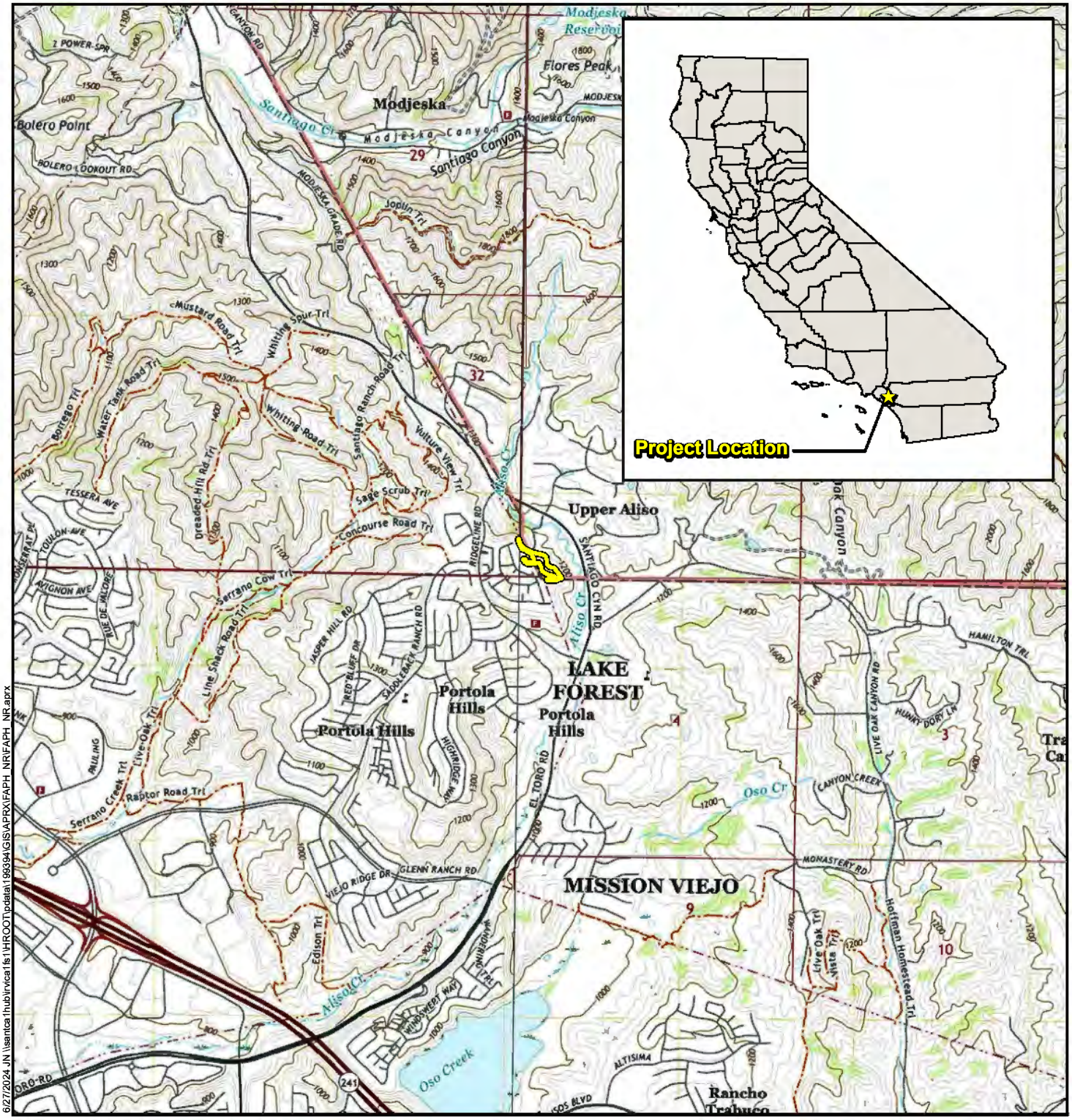
Attachments:

A. *Figures*
B. *Site Photographs*

C. CDFW CNDDB Species Lists
D. CNPS Species List
E. USFWS IPaC Species List
F. References

Attachment A

Figures



6/27/2024 JN \\santca1hub\rivca1fs1\WROOT\pdata\199394\GIS\APRX\FAPH_NRIFAPH_NR.aprx

Legend

Project Site

FIRE ADAPTED PORTOLA HILLS PROJECT - LAWRENCE SLOPE
BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES BASELINE STUDY

Regional and Project Vicinity

Michael Baker INTERNATIONAL

0 0.25 0.5 Miles

Source: USGS 7.5-Minute topographic quadrangle maps: *Lake Forest and Santiago Peak, California (2022)*

Figure 1

Legend

- Project Site
- Reference Point
- Date Palm - California Fan Palm Groves (2.73 acres)

Michael Baker INTERNATIONAL

0 65 130 Feet

Source: Esri/Maxar (09/2022)

FIRE ADAPTED PORTOLA HILLS PROJECT - LAWRENCE SLOPE
BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES BASELINE STUDY

Vegetation Communities and Land Use Types

Figure 2

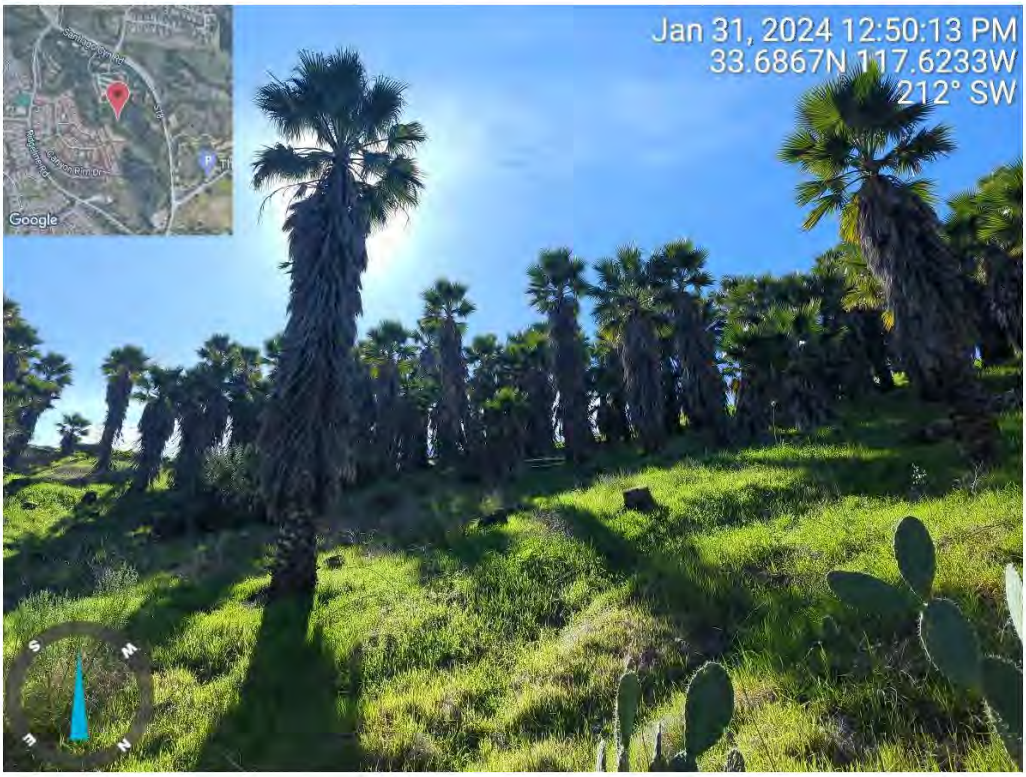
Attachment B

Site Photographs

Photograph 1: West-facing view of proposed Mexican fan palms to be removed from the southern end of the project site.

Photograph 2: Northwest-facing view of the top of the proposed removal palms. The Portola Hills neighborhood is visible immediately to the left.

Photograph 3: West-facing view of Mexican fan palm proposed for removal.



Photograph 4: Southwest-facing view of Mexican fan palms proposed for removal.

Attachment C

CDFW CNDDB Species Lists

Selected Elements by Scientific Name

California Department of Fish and Wildlife

California Natural Diversity Database

Query Criteria: Quad IS (El Toro (3311766) OR Santiago Peak (3311765))
 AND Taxonomic Group IS (Fish OR Amphibians OR Reptiles OR Birds OR Mammals OR Mollusks OR Arachnids OR Crustaceans OR Insects)

Species	Element Code	Federal Status	State Status	Global Rank	State Rank	Rare Plant Rank/CDFW SSC or FP
Accipiter cooperii Cooper's hawk	ABNKC12040	None	None	G5	S4	WL
Agelaius tricolor tricolored blackbird	ABPBXB0020	None	Threatened	G1G2	S2	SSC
Aimophila ruficeps canescens southern California rufous-crowned sparrow	ABPBX91091	None	None	G5T3	S4	WL
Ammodramus savannarum grasshopper sparrow	ABPBXA0020	None	None	G5	S3	SSC
Anaxyrus californicus arroyo toad	AAABB01230	Endangered	None	G2G3	S2	SSC
Anniella stebbinsi Southern California legless lizard	ARACC01060	None	None	G3	S3	SSC
Antrozous pallidus pallid bat	AMACC10010	None	None	G4	S3	SSC
Arizona elegans occidentalis California glossy snake	ARADB01017	None	None	G5T2	S2	SSC
Aspidoscelis hyperythra orange-throated whiptail	ARACJ02060	None	None	G5	S2S3	WL
Aspidoscelis tigris stejnegeri coastal whiptail	ARACJ02143	None	None	G5T5	S3	SSC
Athene cunicularia burrowing owl	ABNSB10010	None	None	G4	S2	SSC
Bombus crotchii Crotch bumble bee	IIHYM24480	None	Candidate Endangered	G2	S2	
Bombus pensylvanicus American bumble bee	IIHYM24260	None	None	G3G4	S2	
Buteo regalis ferruginous hawk	ABNKC19120	None	None	G4	S3S4	WL
Campylorhynchus brunneicapillus sandiegensis coastal cactus wren	ABPBG02095	None	None	G5T3Q	S2	SSC
Chaetodipus fallax fallax northwestern San Diego pocket mouse	AMAFD05031	None	None	G5T3T4	S3S4	
Circus hudsonius northern harrier	ABNKC11011	None	None	G5	S3	SSC
Crotalus ruber red-diamond rattlesnake	ARADE02090	None	None	G4	S3	SSC

Selected Elements by Scientific Name

California Department of Fish and Wildlife

California Natural Diversity Database

Species	Element Code	Federal Status	State Status	Global Rank	State Rank	Rare Plant Rank/CDFW SSC or FP
Elanus leucurus white-tailed kite	ABNKC06010	None	None	G5	S3S4	FP
Emys marmorata western pond turtle	ARAAD02030	Proposed Threatened	None	G3G4	S3	SSC
Eremophila alpestris actia California horned lark	ABPAT02011	None	None	G5T4Q	S4	WL
Eumops perotis californicus western mastiff bat	AMACD02011	None	None	G4G5T4	S3S4	SSC
Gila orcuttii arroyo chub	AFCJB13120	None	None	G2	S2	SSC
Icteria virens yellow-breasted chat	ABPBX24010	None	None	G5	S4	SSC
Neotoma lepida intermedia San Diego desert woodrat	AMAFF08041	None	None	G5T3T4	S3S4	SSC
Oncorhynchus mykiss irideus pop. 10 steelhead - southern California DPS	AFCHA0209J	Endangered	Candidate Endangered	G5T1Q	S1	
Onychomys torridus ramona southern grasshopper mouse	AMAFF06022	None	None	G5T3	S3	SSC
Phrynosoma blainvillii coast horned lizard	ARACF12100	None	None	G4	S4	SSC
Polioptila californica californica coastal California gnatcatcher	ABPBJ08081	Threatened	None	G4G5T3Q	S2	SSC
Rhinichthys osculus ssp. 8 Santa Ana speckled dace	AFCJB3705K	None	None	G5T1	S1	SSC
Salvadora hexalepis virgultea coast patch-nosed snake	ARADB30033	None	None	G5T4	S3	SSC
Setophaga petechia yellow warbler	ABPBX03010	None	None	G5	S3	SSC
Spea hammondii western spadefoot	AAABF02020	Proposed Threatened	None	G2G3	S3S4	SSC
Streptocephalus woottoni Riverside fairy shrimp	ICBRA07010	Endangered	None	G1G2	S2	
Taricha torosa Coast Range newt	AAAAF02032	None	None	G4	S4	SSC
Thamnophis hammondii two-striped gartersnake	ARADB36160	None	None	G4	S3S4	SSC
Vireo bellii pusillus least Bell's vireo	ABPBW01114	Endangered	Endangered	G5T2	S3	

Record Count: 37

Selected Elements by Scientific Name

California Department of Fish and Wildlife

California Natural Diversity Database

Query Criteria: Quad IS (El Toro (3311766) OR Santiago Peak (3311765))
 AND Taxonomic Group IS (Ferns OR Gymnosperms OR Monocots OR Dicots OR Lichens OR Bryophytes)

Species	Element Code	Federal Status	State Status	Global Rank	State Rank	Rare Plant Rank/CDFW SSC or FP
Astragalus brauntonii Braunton's milk-vetch	PDFAB0F1G0	Endangered	None	G2	S2	1B.1
Brodiaea filifolia thread-leaved brodiaea	PMLIL0C050	Threatened	Endangered	G2	S2	1B.1
Calochortus weedii var. intermedius intermediate mariposa-lily	PMLIL0D1J1	None	None	G3G4T3	S3	1B.2
Clinopodium chandleri San Miguel savory	PDLAM08030	None	None	G2G3	S2	1B.2
Comarostaphylis diversifolia ssp. diversifolia summer holly	PDERI0B011	None	None	G3T2	S2	1B.2
Dudleya multicaulis many-stemmed dudleya	PDCRA040H0	None	None	G2	S2	1B.2
Hesperocyparis forbesii Tecate cypress	PGCUP040C0	None	None	G2	S2	1B.1
Lepechinia cardiophylla heart-leaved pitcher sage	PDLAM0V020	None	None	G3	S2S3	1B.2
Lepidium virginicum var. robinsonii Robinson's pepper-grass	PDBRA1M114	None	None	G5T3	S3	4.3
Monardella hypoleuca ssp. intermedia intermediate monardella	PDLAM180A4	None	None	G4T2?	S2?	1B.3
Monardella macrantha ssp. hallii Hall's monardella	PDLAM180E1	None	None	G5T3	S3	1B.3
Nama stenocarpa mud nama	PDHYD0A0H0	None	None	G4G5	S1S2	2B.2
Nolina cismontana chaparral nolina	PMAGA080E0	None	None	G3	S3	1B.2
Pentachaeta aurea ssp. allenii Allen's pentachaeta	PDAST6X021	None	None	G4T1	S1	1B.1
Phacelia keckii Santiago Peak phacelia	PDHYD0C4G1	None	None	G1	S1	1B.3
Senecio aphanactis chaparral ragwort	PDAST8H060	None	None	G3	S2	2B.2
Sidalcea neomexicana salt spring checkerbloom	PDMAL110J0	None	None	G4	S2	2B.2

Record Count: 17

Selected Elements by Scientific Name

California Department of Fish and Wildlife

California Natural Diversity Database

Query Criteria: Quad IS (El Toro (3311766) OR Santiago Peak (3311765))
 AND Taxonomic Group IS (Dune OR Scrub OR Herbaceous OR Marsh OR Riparian OR Woodland OR Forest OR Alpine OR Inland Waters OR Marine OR Estuarine OR Riverine OR Palustrine)

Species	Element Code	Federal Status	State Status	Global Rank	State Rank	Rare Plant Rank/CDFW SSC or FP
Canyon Live Oak Ravine Forest	CTT61350CA	None	None	G3	S3.3	
Canyon Live Oak Ravine Forest						
Southern Coast Live Oak Riparian Forest	CTT61310CA	None	None	G4	S4	
Southern Coast Live Oak Riparian Forest						
Southern Cottonwood Willow Riparian Forest	CTT61330CA	None	None	G3	S3.2	
Southern Cottonwood Willow Riparian Forest						
Southern Riparian Scrub	CTT63300CA	None	None	G3	S3.2	
Southern Riparian Scrub						
Southern Sycamore Alder Riparian Woodland	CTT62400CA	None	None	G4	S4	
Southern Sycamore Alder Riparian Woodland						
Valley Needlegrass Grassland	CTT42110CA	None	None	G3	S3.1	
Valley Needlegrass Grassland						

Record Count: 6

Attachment D

CNPS Species List

CALIFORNIA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY

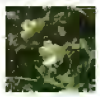
CNPS Rare Plant Inventory

Search Results

33 matches fou d. Click o scie tific ame for details

Search Criteria: Quad is o e of [**3311766:3311765**] n

▲ SCIENTIFIC NAME	COMMON NAME	FAMILY	LIFEFORM	BLOOMING PERIOD	FED LIST	STATE LIST	GLOBAL RANK	STATE RANK	CA RARE PLANT RANK	CA ENDEMIC	DATE ADDED	PHOTO
Astragalus brauntonii	Brau to 's milk-vetch n	Fabaceae	pere ial herb	Ja -Aug	FE	No e	G2	S2	1B.1	Yes	1974-01-01	 © 2009 Thomas Stoughto
Brodiaea filifolia	thread-leaved brodiaea	Themidaceae	pere ial bulbiferous herb	Mar-Ju	T	CE	G2	S2	1B.1	Yes	1974-01-01	 © 2016 Keir n Morse
Calochortus catalinae n	Catali a mariposa lily n	Liliaceae	pere ial bulbiferous herb	(Feb)Mar-Jun	No e	No e	G3G4	S3S4	4.2	Yes	1974-01-01	No Photo n Available
Calochortus plummerae	Plummer's mariposa-lily n	Liliaceae	pere ial bulbiferous herb n	May-Jul	No e	No e	G4	S4	4.2	Yes	1994-01-01	No Photo n Available
Calochortus weedii var. *intermedius* n	i termediate mariposa-lily n	Liliaceae	pere ial bulbiferous herb n	May-Jul	No e	No e	G3G4T3	S3	1B.2	Yes	1994-01-01	No Photo Available
Clinopodium chandleri n	Sa Miguel savory n	Lamiaceae	pere ial shrub	Mar-Jul	No e	No e	G2G3	S2	1B.2 n		1974-01-01	No Photo n Available
Comarostaphylis diversifolia ssp. n *diversifolia* n	summer holly	Ericaceae	pere ial evergree shrub n	Apr-Ju	o e	No e	G3T2	S2	1B.2 n		1980ก 01-01	N No Photo n Available
Convolvulus simulans n	small-flowered mor i g-glory n	Co volvulaceae	a ual herb	Mar-Jul	No e	No e	G4	S4	4.2 n		1994-01-01	No Photo n Available
Deinandra paniculata	pa iculate tarpla t n	Asteraceae	a ual herb	(Mar)Apr-Nov n	No e	No e	G4n	S4	4.2 n		2001-01-01	No Photo n Available
Diplacus clevelandii	Clevela d's bush mo keyflower n	Phrymaceae	pere ial rhizomatous n herb	Apr-Jul	No e	No e	G4	S4	4.2 n		1980-01-01	 © 2020 W. Juerge Schre k n

Dudleya y a p. vatif lia	Santa Monica dudle a	C a u aceae	pe ennia he b	Ma -Jun	FT	None	G5T1	S1	1B.1	Ye	1974-01-01	No Photo Available
Dudleya lti auli	man - temmed dudle a	Cra ulaceae	perennial herb	Apr-Jul	None	None	G2 y	S2	1B.2	Ye	1974-01-01	No Photo Available
Dudleya vi ida	tick dudle a	Cra ulaceae	perennial herb	Ma -Jun	None	None	G2 y	S2	1B.2	Ye	1974-01-01	No Photo Available
Erythranthe diffu a y	Palomar monke flower	Phr maceae y	annual herb	Apr-Jun	None	None	G4	S3	4.3 y		1974-01-01	 Ron Vanderhoff, 2019
He per ypari f rbe ii y	Tecate c pre	upre aceae	C perennial y evergreen tree y		None	None	G2	S2	1B.1		1974-01-01	 © 2011 Joe Malone y
Juglan alif rni a	Southern California black walnut	Juglandaceae	perennial deciduou tree	Mar-Aug	None	None	G4 y	S4	4.2	Ye	1994-01-01	 © 2020 Zo a Akulova y
Lepe hinia ardi phylla	heart-leaved pitcher age	Lamiaceae	perennial hrub	Apr-Jul	None	None	G3	S2S3	1B.2 y		1974-01-01	 © 2003 Vince Scheidt
Lepidiu virgini u var. *r bin nii* y	Robin on' pepper-gra y	Bra icaceae	annual herb	Jan-Jul	None	None	G5T3	S3	4.3 y		1994-01-01	 © 2015 Keir y Mor e
Liliu y hu ldtii p. *ellatu*	ocellated Humboldt lil y	Liliaceae y	perennial bulbiferou herb	Mar-Jul(Aug) y	None	None	G4T4?	S4?	4.2	Ye	1980-01-01	 © 2008 Thoma Stoughton
M nardella hyp leu a p. *inter dia* y	intermediate monardella y	Lamiaceae y	perennial rhizomatou y herb y	Apr-Sep	None	None	G4T2?	S2?	1B.3	Ye	2012-10-16	 © 2016 Ron Vanderhoff y
M nardella ranatha p. *hallii*	Hall' y monardella y	Lamiaceae y	perennial rhizomatou y herb	Jun-Oct	None	None	G5T3	S3	1B.3	Ye	1974-01-01	No Photo Available
Na a ten arpa	mud nama	Namaceae	annual/perennial herb	Jan-Jul	None	None	G4G5	S1S2	2B.2 y		1994-01-01	No Photo y Available

Nolina cismontana	parry's nolina	Ruscaceae	perennial evergreen shrub	(Mar May Jul)	one	None	G3	S3	1B.2	Yes	2001-01-01	 © 2005 Saint Mono Mountains National Reserve Area
Pentachaeta aurea ssp. *allenii*	Allen's pentachaeta	Asteraceae	annual herb	Mar Jun	None	None	G4T1	S1	1B.1	Yes	2008-05-08	 ©2008 Bob Allen
Phacelia hubbyi	Hubby's phacelia	Hydrophyllaceae	annual herb	Apr Jul	None	None	G4	S4	4.2	Yes	2007-02-02	No Photo Available
Phacelia keckii	Santiago Peak phacelia	Hydrophyllaceae	annual herb	May Jul	None	None	G1	S1	1B.3	Yes	1980-01-01	No Photo Available
Piperia cooperi	chapparal rein orchid	Orchidaceae	perennial herb	Mar Jun	None	None	G3	S3S4	4.2		2001-01-01	No Photo Available
Piperia leptopetala	narrow petaled rein orchid	Orchidaceae	perennial herb	May Jul	None	None	G4	S4	4.3	Yes	2001-01-01	No Photo Available
Rhinorhipis cornuta var. *fishiae*	Fish's milkwort	Polygalaceae	perennial deciduous shrub	May Aug	None	None	G5T4	S4	4.3		1974-01-01	No Photo Available
Roeziana coulteri	Coulter's matilija poppy	Papaveraceae	perennial rhizomatous herb	Mar Jul(Aug)	None	None	G4	S4	4.2		1974-01-01	No Photo Available
Senecio aphanactis	chaparral ragwort	Asteraceae	annual herb	Jan Apr(May)	None	None	G3	S2	2B.2		1994-01-01	No Photo Available
Sidalcea neomexicana	salt spring checkerbloom	Malvaceae	perennial herb	Mar Jun	None	None	G4	S2	2B.2		1994-01-01	No Photo Available
Viguiera laciniata	San Diego County viguiera	Asteraceae	perennial shrub	Feb Jun(Aug)	None	None	G4	S4	4.3		1974-01-01	No Photo Available

Showing 1 to 33 of 33 entries

Suggested Citation:

California Native Plant Society, Rare Plant Program. 2024. Rare Plant Inventory (online edition, v9.5). Website https://www.rareplants.cnps.org [accessed 6 February 2024].

Attachment E

USFWS IPaC Species List

IPaC resource list

This report is an automatically generated list of species and other resources such as critical habitat (collectively referred to as *trust resources*) under the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's (USFWS) jurisdiction that are known or expected to be on or near the project area referenced below. The list may also include trust resources that occur outside of the project area, but that could potentially be directly or indirectly affected by activities in the project area. However, determining the likelihood and extent of effects a project may have on trust resources typically requires gathering additional site-specific (e.g., vegetation/species surveys) and project-specific (e.g., magnitude and timing of proposed activities) information.

Below is a summary of the project information you provided and contact information for the USFWS office(s) with jurisdiction in the defined project area. Please read the introduction to each section that follows (Endangered Species, Migratory Birds, USFWS Facilities, and NWI Wetlands) for additional information applicable to the trust resources addressed in that section.

Location

Orange County, California

Local office

Carlsbad Fish And Wildlife Office

(760) 431-9440
(760) 431-5901

2177 Salk Avenue - Suite 250
Carlsbad, CA 92008-7385

Endangered species

This resource list is for informational purposes only and does not constitute an analysis of project level impacts.

The primary information used to generate this list is the known or expected range of each species. Additional areas of influence (AOI) for species are also considered. An AOI includes areas outside of the species range if the species could be indirectly affected by activities in that area (e.g., placing a dam upstream of a fish population even if that fish does not occur at the dam site, may indirectly impact the species by reducing or eliminating water flow downstream). Because species can move, and site conditions can change, the species on this list are not guaranteed to be found on or near the project area. To fully determine any potential effects to species, additional site-specific and project-specific information is often required.

Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act **requires** Federal agencies to "request of the Secretary information whether any species which is listed or proposed to be listed may be present in the area of such proposed action" for any project that is conducted, permitted, funded, or licensed by any Federal agency. A letter from the local office and a species list which fulfills this requirement can **only** be obtained by requesting an official species list from either the Regulatory Review section in IPaC (see directions below) or from the local field office directly.

For project evaluations that require USFWS concurrence/review, please return to the IPaC website and request an official species list by doing the following:

1. Draw the project location and click CONTINUE.
2. Click DEFINE PROJECT.
3. Log in (if directed to do so).
4. Provide a name and description for your project.
5. Click REQUEST SPECIES LIST.

Listed species[1] and their critical habitats are managed by the Ecological Services Program of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and the fisheries division of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA Fisheries[2]).

Species and critical habitats under the sole responsibility of NOAA Fisheries are **not** shown on this list. Please contact NOAA Fisheries for species under their jurisdiction.

1. Species listed under the Endangered Species Act are threatened or endangered; IPaC also shows species that are candidates, or proposed, for listing. See the listing status page for more information. IPaC only shows species that are regulated by USFWS (see FAQ).

2. NOAA Fisheries, also known as the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), is an office of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration within the Department of Commerce.

The following species are potentially affected by activities in this location:

Birds

NAME	STATUS
Coastal California Gnatcatcher *Polioptila californica californica* Wherever found There is **final** critical habitat for this species. Your location overlaps the critical habitat. https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/8178	Threatened
Least Bell's Vireo *Vireo bellii pusillus* Wherever found There is **final** critical habitat for this species. Your location does not overlap the critical habitat. https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/5945	Endangered
Southwestern Willow Flycatcher *Empidonax traillii extimus* Wherever found There is **final** critical habitat for this species. Your location does not overlap the critical habitat. https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/6749	Endangered

Reptiles

NAME	STATUS
Southwestern Pond Turtle *Actinemys pallida* Wherever found No critical habitat has been designated for this species. https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/4768	Proposed Threatened

Amphibians

NAME	STATUS
Arroyo (=arroyo Southwestern) Toad *Anaxyrus californicus* Wherever found There is **final** critical habitat for this species. Your location does not overlap the critical habitat. https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/3762	Endangered

Insects

NAME	STATUS
Monarch Butterfly Danaus plexippus Wherever found No critical habitat has been designated for this species. https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/9743	Candidate

Crustaceans

NAME	STATUS
Riverside Fairy Shrimp Streptocephalus woottoni Wherever found There is **final** critical habitat for this species. Your location does not overlap the critical habitat. https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/8148	Endangered

Flowering Plants

NAME	STATUS
Santa Monica Mountains Dudleyea Dudleya cymosa ssp. ovatifolia Wherever found No critical habitat has been designated for this species. https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/2538	Threatened
Thread-leaved Brodiaea Brodiaea filifolia Wherever found There is **final** critical habitat for this species. Your location does not overlap the critical habitat. https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/6087	Threatened

Critical habitats

Potential effects to critical habitat(s) in this location must be analyzed along with the endangered species themselves.

This location overlaps the critical habitat for the following species:

NAME	TYPE

Coastal California Gnatcatcher Polioptila californica californica https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/8178#crithab	Final

Bald & Golden Eagles

Bald and golden eagles are protected under the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act[1] and the Migratory Bird Treaty Act[2].

Any person or organization who plans or conducts activities that may result in impacts to bald or golden eagles, or their habitats[3], should follow appropriate regulations and consider implementing appropriate conservation measures, as described in the links below. Specifically, please review the "Supplemental Information on Migratory Birds and Eagles".

Additional information can be found using the following links:

- Eagle Management https://www.fws.gov/program/eagle-management
- Measures for avoiding and minimizing impacts to birds https://www.fws.gov/library/collections/avoiding-and-minimizing-incidental-take-migratory-birds
- Nationwide conservation measures for birds https://www.fws.gov/sites/default/files/documents/nationwide-standard-conservation-measures.pdf
- Supplemental Information for Migratory Birds and Eagles in IPaC https://www.fws.gov/media/supplemental-information-migratory-birds-and-bald-and-golden-eagles-may-occur-project-action

There are bald and/or golden eagles in your project area.

For guidance on when to schedule activities or implement avoidance and minimization measures to reduce impacts to migratory birds on your list, see the PROBABILITY OF PRESENCE SUMMARY below to see when these birds are most likely to be present and breeding in your project area.

NAME	BREEDING SEASON
Bald Eagle Haliaeetus leucocephalus This is not a Bird of Conservation Concern (BCC) in this area, but warrants attention because of the Eagle Act or for potential susceptibilities in offshore areas from certain types of development or activities. https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/1626	Breeds Jan 1 to Aug 31

Golden Eagle Aquila chrysaetos — Breeds Jan 1 to Aug 31

This is not a Bird of Conservation Concern (BCC) in this area, but warrants attention because of the Eagle Act or for potential susceptibilities in offshore areas from certain types of development or activities.
https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/1680

Probability of Presence Summary

The graphs below provide our best understanding of when birds of concern are most likely to be present in your project area. This information can be used to tailor and schedule your project activities to avoid or minimize impacts to birds. Please make sure you read "Supplemental Information on Migratory Birds and Eagles", specifically the FAQ section titled "Proper Interpretation and Use of Your Migratory Bird Report" before using or attempting to interpret this report.

Probability of Presence ( )

Each green bar represents the bird's relative probability of presence in the 10km grid cell(s) your project overlaps during a particular week of the year. (A year is represented as 12 4-week months.) A taller bar indicates a higher probability of species presence. The survey effort (see below) can be used to establish a level of confidence in the presence score. One can have higher confidence in the presence score if the corresponding survey effort is also high.

How is the probability of presence score calculated? The calculation is done in three steps:

1. The probability of presence for each week is calculated as the number of survey events in the week where the species was detected divided by the total number of survey events for that week. For example, if in week 12 there were 20 survey events and the Spotted Towhee was found in 5 of them, the probability of presence of the Spotted Towhee in week 12 is 0.25.
2. To properly present the pattern of presence across the year, the relative probability of presence is calculated. This is the probability of presence divided by the maximum probability of presence across all weeks. For example, imagine the probability of presence in week 20 for the Spotted Towhee is 0.05, and that the probability of presence at week 12 (0.25) is the maximum of any week of the year. The relative probability of presence on week 12 is 0.25/0.25 = 1; at week 20 it is 0.05/0.25 = 0.2.
3. The relative probability of presence calculated in the previous step undergoes a statistical conversion so that all possible values fall between 0 and 10, inclusive. This is the probability of presence score.

To see a bar's probability of presence score, simply hover your mouse cursor over the bar.

Breeding Season ( )

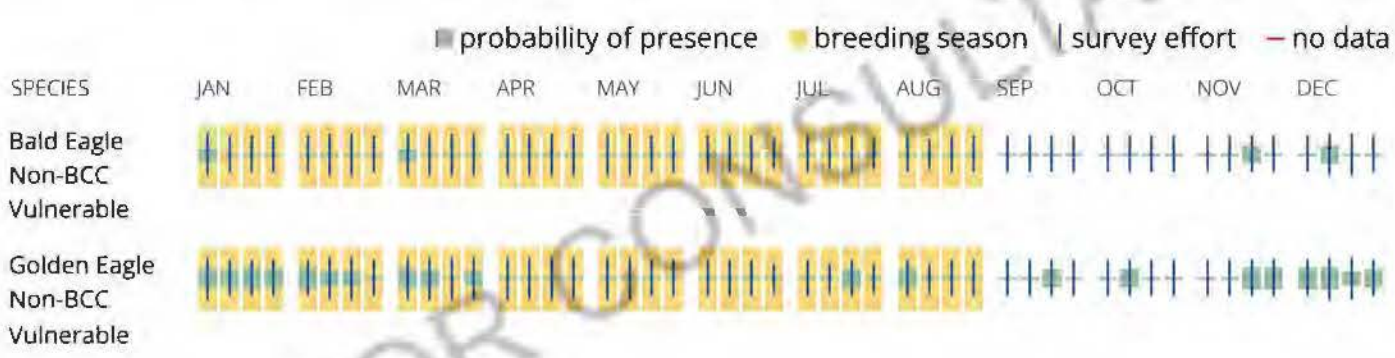
Yellow bars denote a very liberal estimate of the time-frame inside which the bird breeds across its entire range. If there are no yellow bars shown for a bird, it does not breed in your project area.

Survey Effort (|)
Vertical black lines superimposed on probability of presence bars indicate the number of surveys performed for that species in the 10km grid cell(s) your project area overlaps. The number of surveys is expressed as a range, for example, 33 to 64 surveys.

To see a bar's survey effort range, simply hover your mouse cursor over the bar.

No Data (–)
A week is marked as having no data if there were no survey events for that week.

Survey Timeframe
Surveys from only the last 10 years are used in order to ensure delivery of currently relevant information. The exception to this is areas off the Atlantic coast, where bird returns are based on all years of available data, since data in these areas is currently much more sparse.



What does IPaC use to generate the potential presence of bald and golden eagles in my specified location?

The potential for eagle presence is derived from data provided by the Avian Knowledge Network (AKN). The AKN data is based on a growing collection of survey, banding, and citizen science datasets and is queried and filtered to return a list of those birds reported as occurring in the 10km grid cell(s) which your project intersects, and that have been identified as warranting special attention because they are a BCC species in that area, an eagle (Eagle Act requirements may apply). To see a list of all birds potentially present in your project area, please visit the Rapid Avian Information Locator (RAIL) Tool.

What does IPaC use to generate the probability of presence graphs of bald and golden eagles in my specified location?

The Migratory Bird Resource List is comprised of USFWS Birds of Conservation Concern (BCC) and other species that may warrant special attention in your project location.

The migratory bird list generated for your project is derived from data provided by the Avian Knowledge Network (AKN). The AKN data is based on a growing collection of survey, banding, and citizen science datasets and is queried and filtered to return a list of those birds reported as occurring in the 10km grid

cell(s) which your project intersects, and that have been identified as warranting special attention because they are a BCC species in that area, an eagle (Eagle Act requirements may apply), or a species that has a particular vulnerability to offshore activities or development.

Again, the Migratory Bird Resource list includes only a subset of birds that may occur in your project area. It is not representative of all birds that may occur in your project area. To get a list of all birds potentially present in your project area, please visit the Rapid Avian Information Locator (RAIL) Tool.

What if I have eagles on my list?

If your project has the potential to disturb or kill eagles, you may need to obtain a permit to avoid violating the Eagle Act should such impacts occur. Please contact your local Fish and Wildlife Service Field Office if you have questions.

Migratory birds

Certain birds are protected under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act[1] and the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act[2].

Any person or organization who plans or conducts activities that may result in impacts to migratory birds, eagles, and their habitats[3] should follow appropriate regulations and consider implementing appropriate conservation measures, as described in the links below. Specifically, please review the "Supplemental Information on Migratory Birds and Eagles".

1. The Migratory Birds Treaty Act of 1918.
2. The Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act of 1940.

Additional information can be found using the following links:

- Eagle Management https://www.fws.gov/program/eagle-management
- Measures for avoiding and minimizing impacts to birds https://www.fws.gov/library/collections/avoiding-and-minimizing-incidental-take-migratory-birds
- Nationwide conservation measures for birds https://www.fws.gov/sites/default/files/documents/nationwide-standard-conservation-measures.pdf
- Supplemental Information for Migratory Birds and Eagles in IPaC https://www.fws.gov/media/supplemental-information-migratory-birds-and-bald-and-golden-eagles-may-occur-project-action

The birds listed below are birds of particular concern either because they occur on the USFWS Birds of Conservation Concern (BCC) list or warrant special attention in your project location. To learn more about the levels of concern for birds on your list and how this list is generated, see the FAQ below. This is not a list of every bird you may find in this location, nor a guarantee that every bird on this list will be found in your project area. To see exact locations of where birders and the general public have sighted birds in and around

your project area, visit the E-bird data mapping tool (Tip: enter your location, desired date range and a species on your list). For projects that occur off the Atlantic Coast, additional maps and models detailing the relative occurrence and abundance of bird species on your list are available. Links to additional information about Atlantic Coast birds, and other important information about your migratory bird list, including how to properly interpret and use your migratory bird report, can be found below.

For guidance on when to schedule activities or implement avoidance and minimization measures to reduce impacts to migratory birds on your list, see the PROBABILITY OF PRESENCE SUMMARY below to see when these birds are most likely to be present and breeding in your project area.

NAME	BREEDING SEASON
Allen's Hummingbird *Selasphorus sasin* This is a Bird of Conservation Concern (BCC) throughout its range in the continental USA and Alaska. https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/9637	Breeds Feb 1 to Jul 15
Bald Eagle *Haliaeetus leucocephalus* This is not a Bird of Conservation Concern (BCC) in this area, but warrants attention because of the Eagle Act or for potential susceptibilities in offshore areas from certain types of development or activities. https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/1626	Breeds Jan 1 to Aug 31
Belding's Savannah Sparrow *Passerculus sandwichensis beldingi* This is a Bird of Conservation Concern (BCC) only in particular Bird Conservation Regions (BCRs) in the continental USA https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/8	Breeds Apr 1 to Aug 15
Black-chinned Sparrow *Spizella atrogularis* This is a Bird of Conservation Concern (BCC) throughout its range in the continental USA and Alaska. https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/9447	Breeds Apr 15 to Jul 31
Bullock's Oriole *Icterus bullockii* This is a Bird of Conservation Concern (BCC) only in particular Bird Conservation Regions (BCRs) in the continental USA	Breeds Mar 21 to Jul 25
California Gull *Larus californicus* This is a Bird of Conservation Concern (BCC) throughout its range in the continental USA and Alaska.	Breeds Mar 1 to Jul 31

California Thrasher Toxostoma redivivum — Breeds Jan 1 to Jul 31

This is a Bird of Conservation Concern (BCC) throughout its range in the continental USA and Alaska.

Clark's Grebe Aechmophorus clarkii — Breeds Jun 1 to Aug 31

This is a Bird of Conservation Concern (BCC) throughout its range in the continental USA and Alaska.

Common Yellowthroat Geothlypis trichas sinuosa — Breeds May 20 to Jul 31

This is a Bird of Conservation Concern (BCC) only in particular Bird Conservation Regions (BCRs) in the continental USA
https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/2084

Golden Eagle Aquila chrysaetos — Breeds Jan 1 to Aug 31

This is not a Bird of Conservation Concern (BCC) in this area, but warrants attention because of the Eagle Act or for potential susceptibilities in offshore areas from certain types of development or activities.
https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/1680

Lawrence's Goldfinch Carduelis lawrencei — Breeds Mar 20 to Sep 20

This is a Bird of Conservation Concern (BCC) throughout its range in the continental USA and Alaska.
https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/9464

Marbled Godwit Limosa fedoa — Breeds elsewhere

This is a Bird of Conservation Concern (BCC) throughout its range in the continental USA and Alaska.
https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/9481

Nuttall's Woodpecker Picoides nuttallii — Breeds Apr 1 to Jul 20

This is a Bird of Conservation Concern (BCC) only in particular Bird Conservation Regions (BCRs) in the continental USA
https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/9410

Oak Titmouse Baeolophus inornatus — Breeds Mar 15 to Jul 15

This is a Bird of Conservation Concern (BCC) throughout its range in the continental USA and Alaska.
https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/9656

Olive-sided Flycatcher Contopus cooperi — Breeds May 20 to Aug 31

This is a Bird of Conservation Concern (BCC) throughout its range in the continental USA and Alaska.
https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/3914

Western Grebe aechmophorus occidentalis — Breeds Jun 1 to Aug 31

This is a Bird of Conservation Concern (BCC) throughout its range in the continental USA and Alaska.
https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/6743

Wrentit Chamaea fasciata — Breeds Mar 15 to Aug 10

This is a Bird of Conservation Concern (BCC) throughout its range in the continental USA and Alaska.

Probability of Presence Summary

The graphs below provide our best understanding of when birds of concern are most likely to be present in your project area. This information can be used to tailor and schedule your project activities to avoid or minimize impacts to birds. Please make sure you read "Supplemental Information on Migratory Birds and Eagles", specifically the FAQ section titled "Proper Interpretation and Use of Your Migratory Bird Report" before using or attempting to interpret this report.

Probability of Presence (■)

Each green bar represents the bird's relative probability of presence in the 10km grid cell(s) your project overlaps during a particular week of the year. (A year is represented as 12 4-week months.) A taller bar indicates a higher probability of species presence. The survey effort (see below) can be used to establish a level of confidence in the presence score. One can have higher confidence in the presence score if the corresponding survey effort is also high.

How is the probability of presence score calculated? The calculation is done in three steps:

1. The probability of presence for each week is calculated as the number of survey events in the week where the species was detected divided by the total number of survey events for that week. For example, if in week 12 there were 20 survey events and the Spotted Towhee was found in 5 of them, the probability of presence of the Spotted Towhee in week 12 is 0.25.
2. To properly present the pattern of presence across the year, the relative probability of presence is calculated. This is the probability of presence divided by the maximum probability of presence across all weeks. For example, imagine the probability of presence in week 20 for the Spotted Towhee is 0.05, and that the probability of presence at week 12 (0.25) is the maximum of any week of the year. The relative probability of presence on week 12 is 0.25/0.25 = 1; at week 20 it is 0.05/0.25 = 0.2.

3. The relative probability of presence calculated in the previous step undergoes a statistical conversion so that all possible values fall between 0 and 10, inclusive. This is the probability of presence score.

To see a bar's probability of presence score, simply hover your mouse cursor over the bar.

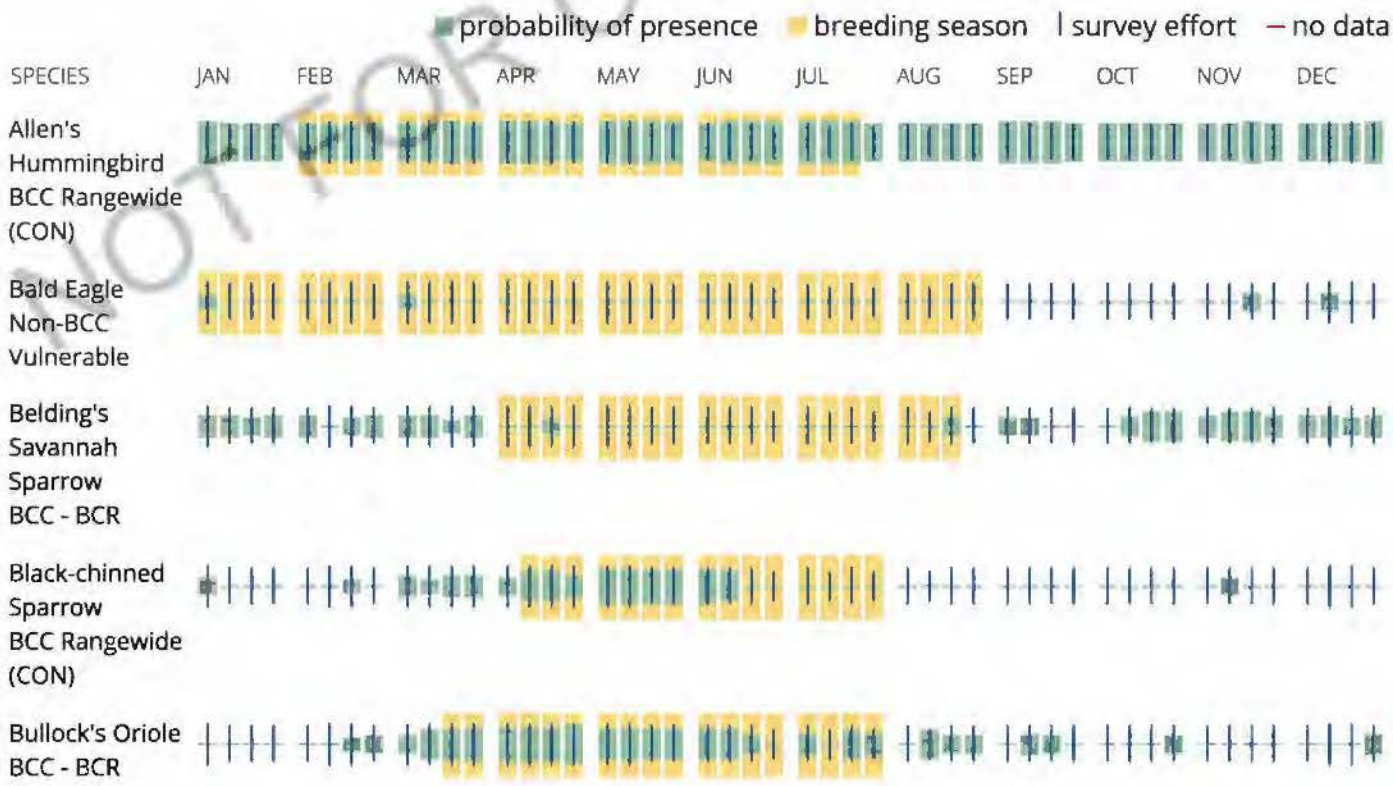
Breeding Season (▪)
Yellow bars denote a very liberal estimate of the time-frame inside which the bird breeds across its entire range. If there are no yellow bars shown for a bird, it does not breed in your project area.

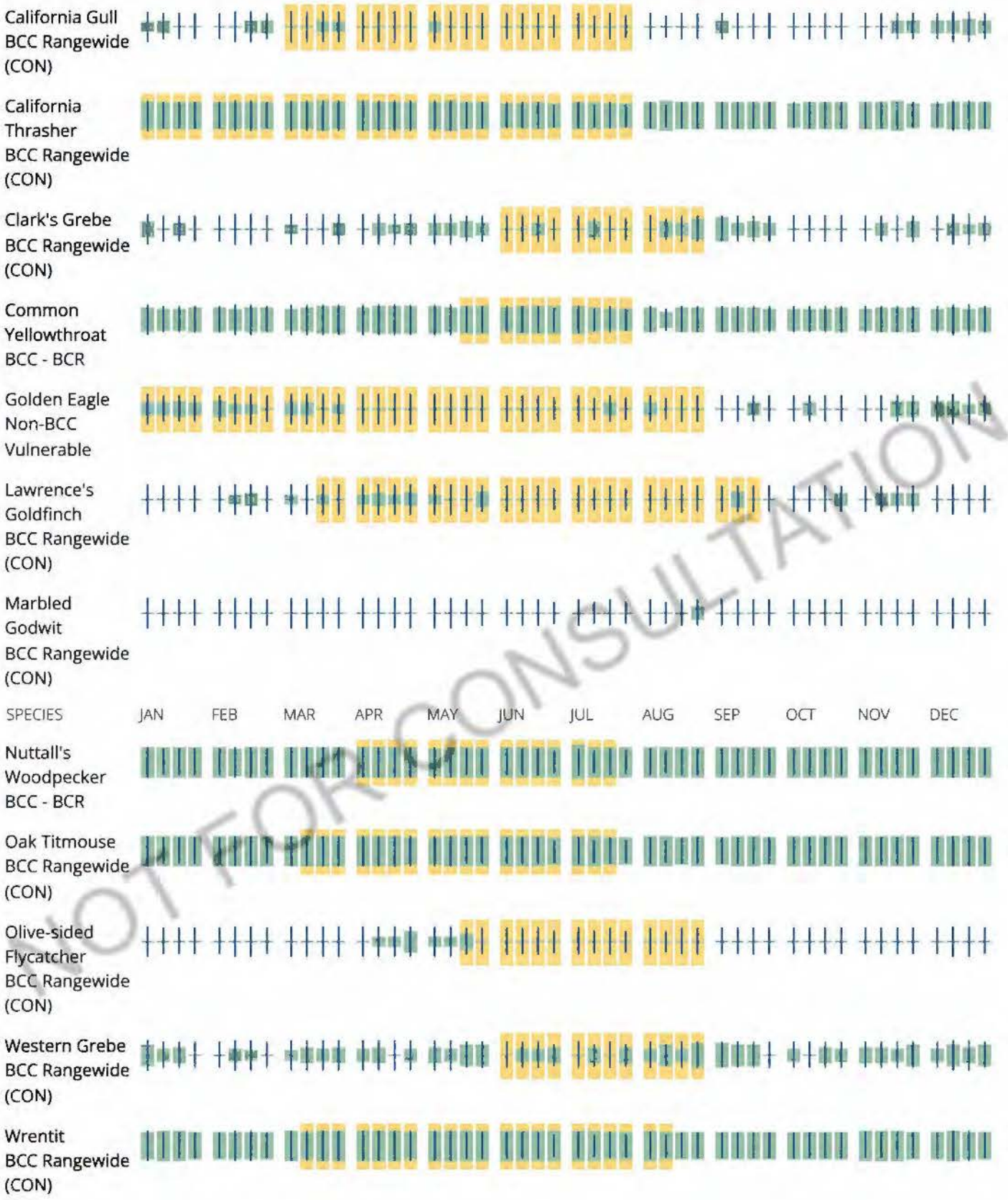
Survey Effort (|)
Vertical black lines superimposed on probability of presence bars indicate the number of surveys performed for that species in the 10km grid cell(s) your project area overlaps. The number of surveys is expressed as a range, for example, 33 to 64 surveys.

To see a bar's survey effort range, simply hover your mouse cursor over the bar.

No Data (–)
A week is marked as having no data if there were no survey events for that week.

Survey Timeframe
Surveys from only the last 10 years are used in order to ensure delivery of currently relevant information. The exception to this is areas off the Atlantic coast, where bird returns are based on all years of available data, since data in these areas is currently much more sparse.





Tell me more about conservation measures I can implement to avoid or minimize impacts to migratory birds.

Nationwide Conservation Measures describes measures that can help avoid and minimize impacts to all birds at any location year round. Implementation of these measures is particularly important when birds are most likely to occur in the project area. When birds may be breeding in the area, identifying the

locations of any active nests and avoiding their destruction is a very helpful impact minimization measure. To see when birds are most likely to occur and be breeding in your project area, view the Probability of Presence Summary. Additional measures or permits may be advisable depending on the type of activity you are conducting and the type of infrastructure or bird species present on your project site.

What does IPaC use to generate the list of migratory birds that potentially occur in my specified location?

The Migratory Bird Resource List is comprised of USFWS Birds of Conservation Concern (BCC) and other species that may warrant special attention in your project location.

The migratory bird list generated for your project is derived from data provided by the Avian Knowledge Network (AKN). The AKN data is based on a growing collection of survey, banding, and citizen science datasets and is queried and filtered to return a list of those birds reported as occurring in the 10km grid cell(s) which your project intersects, and that have been identified as warranting special attention because they are a BCC species in that area, an eagle (Eagle Act requirements may apply), or a species that has a particular vulnerability to offshore activities or development.

Again, the Migratory Bird Resource list includes only a subset of birds that may occur in your project area. It is not representative of all birds that may occur in your project area. To get a list of all birds potentially present in your project area, please visit the Rapid Avian Information Locator (RAIL) Tool.

What does IPaC use to generate the probability of presence graphs for the migratory birds potentially occurring in my specified location?

The probability of presence graphs associated with your migratory bird list are based on data provided by the Avian Knowledge Network (AKN). This data is derived from a growing collection of survey, banding, and citizen science datasets.

Probability of presence data is continuously being updated as new and better information becomes available. To learn more about how the probability of presence graphs are produced and how to interpret them, go the Probability of Presence Summary and then click on the "Tell me about these graphs" link.

How do I know if a bird is breeding, wintering or migrating in my area?

To see what part of a particular bird's range your project area falls within (i.e. breeding, wintering, migrating or year-round), you may query your location using the RAIL Tool and look at the range maps provided for birds in your area at the bottom of the profiles provided for each bird in your results. If a bird on your migratory bird species list has a breeding season associated with it, if that bird does occur in your project area, there may be nests present at some point within the timeframe specified. If "Breeds elsewhere" is indicated, then the bird likely does not breed in your project area.

What are the levels of concern for migratory birds?

Migratory birds delivered through IPaC fall into the following distinct categories of concern:

1. "BCC Rangewide" birds are Birds of Conservation Concern (BCC) that are of concern throughout their range anywhere within the USA (including Hawaii, the Pacific Islands, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands);
2. "BCC - BCR" birds are BCCs that are of concern only in particular Bird Conservation Regions (BCRs) in the continental USA; and

3. "Non-BCC - Vulnerable" birds are not BCC species in your project area, but appear on your list either because of the Eagle Act requirements (for eagles) or (for non-eagles) potential susceptibilities in offshore areas from certain types of development or activities (e.g. offshore energy development or longline fishing).

Although it is important to try to avoid and minimize impacts to all birds, efforts should be made, in particular, to avoid and minimize impacts to the birds on this list, especially eagles and BCC species of rangewide concern. For more information on conservation measures you can implement to help avoid and minimize migratory bird impacts and requirements for eagles, please see the FAQs for these topics.

Details about birds that are potentially affected by offshore projects

For additional details about the relative occurrence and abundance of both individual bird species and groups of bird species within your project area off the Atlantic Coast, please visit the Northeast Ocean Data Portal. The Portal also offers data and information about other taxa besides birds that may be helpful to you in your project review. Alternately, you may download the bird model results files underlying the portal maps through the NOAA NCCOS Integrative Statistical Modeling and Predictive Mapping of Marine Bird Distributions and Abundance on the Atlantic Outer Continental Shelf project webpage.

Bird tracking data can also provide additional details about occurrence and habitat use throughout the year, including migration. Models relying on survey data may not include this information. For additional information on marine bird tracking data, see the Diving Bird Study and the nanotag studies or contact Caleb Spiegel or Pam Loring.

What if I have eagles on my list?

If your project has the potential to disturb or kill eagles, you may need to obtain a permit to avoid violating the Eagle Act should such impacts occur.

Proper Interpretation and Use of Your Migratory Bird Report

The migratory bird list generated is not a list of all birds in your project area, only a subset of birds of priority concern. To learn more about how your list is generated, and see options for identifying what other birds may be in your project area, please see the FAQ "What does IPaC use to generate the migratory birds potentially occurring in my specified location". Please be aware this report provides the "probability of presence" of birds within the 10 km grid cell(s) that overlap your project; not your exact project footprint. On the graphs provided, please also look carefully at the survey effort (indicated by the black vertical bar) and for the existence of the "no data" indicator (a red horizontal bar). A high survey effort is the key component. If the survey effort is high, then the probability of presence score can be viewed as more dependable. In contrast, a low survey effort bar or no data bar means a lack of data and, therefore, a lack of certainty about presence of the species. This list is not perfect; it is simply a starting point for identifying what birds of concern have the potential to be in your project area, when they might be there, and if they might be breeding (which means nests might be present). The list helps you know what to look for to confirm presence, and helps guide you in knowing when to implement conservation measures to avoid or minimize potential impacts from your project activities, should presence be confirmed. To learn more about conservation measures, visit the FAQ "Tell me about conservation measures I can implement to avoid or minimize impacts to migratory birds" at the bottom of your migratory bird trust resources page.

Facilities

National Wildlife Refuge lands

Any activity proposed on lands managed by the National Wildlife Refuge system must undergo a 'Compatibility Determination' conducted by the Refuge. Please contact the individual Refuges to discuss any questions or concerns.

There are no refuge lands at this location.

Fish hatcheries

There are no fish hatcheries at this location.

Wetlands in the National Wetlands Inventory (NWI)

Impacts to NWI wetlands and other aquatic habitats may be subject to regulation under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act, or other State/Federal statutes.

For more information please contact the Regulatory Program of the local U.S. Army Corps of Engineers District.

Please note that the NWI data being shown may be out of date. We are currently working to update our NWI data set. We recommend you verify these results with a site visit to determine the actual extent of wetlands on site.

This location overlaps the following wetlands:

FRESHWATER EMERGENT WETLAND

PEM1A

FRESHWATER FORESTED/SHRUB WETLAND

PFOC

PFOA

PSSA

RIVERINE

R4SBA

A full description for each wetland code can be found at the National Wetlands Inventory website

NOTE: This initial screening does **not** replace an on-site delineation to determine whether wetlands occur. Additional information on the NWI data is provided below.

Data limitations

The Service's objective of mapping wetlands and deepwater habitats is to produce reconnaissance level information on the location, type and size of these resources. The maps are prepared from the analysis of high altitude imagery. Wetlands are identified based on vegetation, visible hydrology and geography. A margin of error is inherent in the use of imagery; thus, detailed on-the-ground inspection of any particular site may result in revision of the wetland boundaries or classification established through image analysis.

The accuracy of image interpretation depends on the quality of the imagery, the experience of the image analysts, the amount and quality of the collateral data and the amount of ground truth verification work conducted. Metadata should be consulted to determine the date of the source imagery used and any mapping problems.

Wetlands or other mapped features may have changed since the date of the imagery or field work. There may be occasional differences in polygon boundaries or classifications between the information depicted on the map and the actual conditions on site.

Data exclusions

Certain wetland habitats are excluded from the National mapping program because of the limitations of aerial imagery as the primary data source used to detect wetlands. These habitats include seagrasses or submerged aquatic vegetation that are found in the intertidal and subtidal zones of estuaries and nearshore coastal waters. Some deepwater reef communities (coral or tuberficid worm reefs) have also been excluded from the inventory. These habitats, because of their depth, go undetected by aerial imagery.

Data precautions

Federal, state, and local regulatory agencies with jurisdiction over wetlands may define and describe wetlands in a different manner than that used in this inventory. There is no attempt, in either the design or products of this inventory, to define the limits of proprietary jurisdiction of any Federal, state, or local government or to establish the geographical scope of the regulatory programs of government agencies. Persons intending to engage in activities involving modifications within or adjacent to wetland areas should seek the advice of appropriate Federal, state, or local agencies concerning specified agency regulatory programs and proprietary jurisdictions that may affect such activities.

Attachment F

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Michael Baker
INTERNATIONAL

We Make a Difference

July 8, 2024 JN 199394

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Bethany Ross
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OCFA Contract 5GA22224, Project 22-WP-ORC-4769081

SUBJECT: Bat Habitat Suitability Assessment, Out-flight Survey and Acoustic Monitoring Report for the Fire Adapted Portola Hills Project – Lawrence Slope located in Lake Forest, Orange County, California

Dear Ms. Ross,

Michael Baker International, Inc. (Michael Baker) is pleased to submit this bat habitat suitability assessment, out-flight survey, and acoustic monitoring report to California Sustainability Group for the proposed Fire Adapted Portola Hills Project – Lawerence Slope (project or project site) located in unincorporated Orange County, California. The reconnaissance-level bat habitat suitability assessment and out-flight was conducted on May 28, 2024 to locate any potential day or night bat-roosting sites, to evaluate the potential for bat foraging and roosting activity within the project site, and to deploy acoustic monitoring equipment. The survey area included the project limits and a 100-foot buffer. Prior to the field assessment, potential bat roosting sites were identified by examining aerial imagery for the presence of any mature trees, rock cliffs, boulders, and anthropogenic structures such as bridges, culverts, and buildings that may provide suitable bat-roosting habitat.

PROJECT LOCATION

The project site is generally located just inside of the mouth of Santiago Canyon in the City of Lake Forest, Orange County, California. The project is partially located in Section 4 of Township 6 South, Range 7 West and Section 36 of Township 56 South, Range 7 West of the USGS Santiago Peak, California 7.5-minute topographic quadrangle map as well as an un-sectioned area of Township 5 South, Range 7 West of the USGS El Toro,

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California 7.5-minute topographic maps. The project site consists of a vegetated slope on the back (south) side of the Rancho Las Lomas venue, otherwise known as the Lawrence Brothers Estate. The Lawrence Brothers Estate is generally bounded by Santiago Canyon Road to the north and east, the Portola Hills residential neighborhood to the south, and Ridgeline Road to the west.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Fire Adapted Portola Hills Project on the Lawrence Brothers Estate will remove 451 volunteer Mexican fan palms and 46 pine trees to reduce the fuel load and protect 2,192 homes within the Portola Hills neighborhood. The hazardous fuel will be removed from perimeter slope to meet OCFA and CAL FIRE standards for defensible space.

METHODOLOGY

Literature Review

Prior to conducting the field assessment, the potential for bat roosting habitat to occur within the survey area was reviewed by examining aerial and street level imagery for the presence of any mature trees, rock cliffs, boulders, and anthropogenic structures such as bridges, culverts, and buildings. The survey area's proximity to vegetated areas and water that may provide foraging habitat, which increases the desirability of a given structure as a potential roost site, were also noted during the preliminary desktop review.

Field Survey

A bat roosting habitat assessment and out-flight survey was conducted on May 28, 2024 by Michael Baker bat biologist John Parent to assess the survey area's suitability to provide bat habitat and to identify any potential maternity roosts and day or night-roosting sites. The survey was conducted between 6:00 p.m. and 8:45 p.m., with weather conditions of approximately 74^{o} Fahrenheit with clear skies and light and variable winds. The bat survey was carried out in three parts as described below.

The initial survey consisted of a preliminary daytime habitat assessment. The biologist walked meandering transects throughout the entire survey area to assess the potential for the survey area to provide maternity roosts and day- and night-roosting habitat by examining the on-site vegetation community, anthropogenic structures, and other physical features that may provide suitable roosting habitat, as well as remaining alert for the presence of any bat sign (e.g., guano deposits, urine staining, or vocalizations). Suitable roosting habitat in structures, such as the existing bridge, is generally based upon the presence of crevices having widths ranging from 0.5 to 4.0 inches, with minimal exposure

to elements above, but allowing entry from below or the side. Cavities of any size that provide shelter from wind and light may also be utilized by bats. The survey area's potential to provide foraging habitat for bats was also evaluated on the basis of vegetation composition, existence of adjacent foraging or roosting habitat, and/or the presence of a permanent water source.

After the habitat assessment, the biologist placed two Titley Scientific Acoustic monitors, one outfitted with an omni-directional microphone and the other with a uni-directional microphone. The detectors were placed along corridors that would likely be followed by bats during the course of their foraging activities. The detectors were left in place from the evening of May 28 to the morning of June 4, 2024.

Following the placement of the passive acoustic monitoring equipment, a bat out-flight and presence/absence survey was conducted by the bat biologist. This survey was supplemented by the use of acoustic monitoring equipment (i.e. SonoBat) to aid in identifying the bat species present and to determine an index of relative bat activity within the survey area. The out-flight survey consisted of walking a meandering path in and around the survey area, focusing on the vegetation within the survey area, while operating acoustic equipment, and documenting observations which correlated with acoustic recordings made by the SonoBat. The survey began 30 minutes before dusk and continued for approximately 60 minutes after dusk, between roughly 7:15 and 8:45 p.m. The SonoBat bat detection program, in conjunction with a Pettersson ultrasound microphone, was used to detect, record, and identify bat species within the study area. The SonoBat bat detection program allows for active collection and the autoclassification of data in real-time, which can aid in the identification of the bat species present.

The SonoBat data collected during the out-flight survey and acoustic monitoring are the basis of the results summarized below.

SURVEY LIMITATIONS

Some limitations are inherent in acoustic monitoring and in the analysis of acoustic data and include (but are not limited to) human bias and past experience in data interpretation, as well as the fact that some species are not equally detectable or may not be recorded at all. Some bats, such as Mexican free-tailed bats (*Tadarida brasiliensis*), emit loud low-frequency echolocation calls that can be recorded from great distances and will be overrepresented in the data, while "whispering" bats, such as Townsend's big-eared bats (*Corynorhinus townsendii*), emit faint calls that may not be recorded at all. In addition, not all call sequences are identifiable; different bat species may use similar types of

echolocation calls, or the same species may use different types of echolocation calls based on the perceptual task and the immediate environment or habitat. Finally, the species composition and activity levels recorded during a single nighttime visit to a site may not necessarily reflect long-term patterns of use (e.g., seasonal vs. nightly use of an area).

Despite these limitations inherent in acoustic monitoring, the data gathered from acoustic call identifications and concurrent field observations are useful in understanding the behavior and activities of bats utilizing a particular area. In addition, exit counts performed by trained biologists, particularly when combined with crevice inspection, can provide useful data with regard to estimating the number of bats roosting at a given location and ascertaining the presence of maternity or hibernation colonies. In this case, efforts were made to evaluate use and presence of bats conservatively within the adjacent upland habitats within the survey area.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

No bats or bat sign were observed by the biologist during the habitat assessment or during the out-flight survey on May 28, 2024. However, review of the data detected during the acoustic monitoring survey conducted from the evening of May 28, 2024 through the morning of June 4, 2024 resulted in the detection of three species of bat, Mexican free-tailed bat, western red bat (*Lasiurus blossevillii*: California Species of Special Concern [SSC]), and western yellow bat (*Lasiurus xanthinus*; California SSC).

The project area is dominated by untrimmed Mexican fan palms (*Washingtonia robusta*), known to be used as both day- and night-roosting habitat by all three of the species detected during the survey. In addition to the fan palm groves, there is an adjacent riparian corridor running along Aliso Creek that provides potentially suitable habitat for day-roosting cavity and foliar-roosting bats and consists of a dense riparian overstory consisting primarily of coast live oak (*Quercus agrifolia)*, California sycamore (*Platanus racemosa*), and arroyo willow (*Salix laseolepis*). Roosting activity at these locations could not be confirmed during the assessment due to the nature of this roosting behavior; these species tend to roost singly, beneath leaves or bark, and may roost in a different location each night making them difficult to detect. The oaks, sycamores, and willows are suitable for the foliage-roosting western red bat and western yellow bat, which were determined to be present within the survey area. Western red bats are strongly associated with established riparian habitats containing a variety of riparian tree and shrub species, which occur within close proximity to the survey area. Western yellow bats are strongly

associated with palms, which are known to be their preferred roosts and which are present in large numbers within the survey area and surrounding property. Many of these potential tree roosts occur in high-quality riparian habitat consisting of native shrub and herbaceous species, increasing the value of the surrounding area as foraging habitat and the likelihood that roosting occurs in the project vicinity.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Bats are highly mobile species; therefore, there is a potential for the bats to occupy any tree containing suitable roosting habitat at any time. Disruption and disturbance of maternity colonies and winter hibernacula sites would be particularly significant, as disturbance of these roosting areas can lead to roost abandonment and/or mortality of the bats within that roost. As bats were determined to inhabit the project site and/or the immediate surrounding area based on studies conducted by Michael Baker in May and June 2024, the following project design features (PDF) will be implemented during the palm tree removals:

PDF-1. Any palms to be removed will be removed in two stages:

a. Palms that have dead palm fronds (“skirts”) will be cleaned up and the dead fronds will be thinned out or removed, without removing the palm tree.

b. These trees will be removed at least 48 hours later to allow any bats that may have been present to vacate and move elsewhere.

PDF-2. PDF-1a does not apply to palms that do not have any dead fronds, i.e. those that have been maintained and pruned more regularly.

PDF-3. Palms will only be removed outside of the bat maternity season and outside of winter. Removals will occur either in March and April or September and October.

PDF-4. A qualified biologist should monitor all palm tree trimming and removals and alert the removal personnel if any wildlife, including bats, are in imminent danger from the work. Wildlife will be allowed to vacate the area on their own.

Please feel free to contact me at (714) 394-5646 or at john.parent@mbakerintl.com with any questions you may have regarding the information presented in this report.

Sincerely,

John R. Parent
Bat Biologist

Attachments A: Site Photographs
B: References

ATTACHMENT A

Site Photographs

Photograph 1: View from the southwestern edge of the survey area of a grove of palm trees proposed for removal.

Photograph 2: View from the southwestern edge of the survey area of a grove of palm trees proposed for removal.

Photograph 3: A bat detector outfitted with a uni-directional microphone attached to the truck of a palm tree with zip-ties.

Photograph 4: A bat detector outfitted with an omni-directional microphone attached to the truck of a palm tree with zip-ties.

ATTACHMENT B

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