

September 17, 2021
(2018-047.026/004)

Mr. Keith Hala
County of Los Angeles Department of Public Works
Stormwater Engineering Division
Via Email: khala@dpw.lacounty.gov

Subject: August 2021 Summary of Least Bell's Vireo Breeding Season Surveys for the Devil's Gate Reservoir Restoration Project, in the City of Pasadena, California

Dear Mr. Gim,

This letter report has been prepared to summarize the results of the breeding season focused surveys for least Bell's vireo (*Vireo bellii pusillus*) conducted in August 2021 by ECORP Consulting, Inc. (ECORP) for Los Angeles County Public Works' (LACPW) Devil's Gate Reservoir Restoration Project in the City of Pasadena, Los Angeles County, California. The focused breeding season surveys for least Bell's vireo were conducted to comply with Condition 7.3.4 in the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) Incidental Take Permit (ITP) No. 2081-2016-031-05 that was issued for the Devil's Gate Reservoir Restoration Project (Project) which states that if Covered Activities are proposed during the least Bell's vireo breeding season (defined as March 1 to September 15):

"The Designated Biologist(s) shall continue weekly focused surveys within 500 feet of Covered Activities in Covered Species habitat during the breeding season to determine the presence of Covered Species;"

Per Conservation Measure 11b of the USFWS Informal Section 7 Consultation, if sediment removal is conducted between March 15 and August 31 "twice weekly surveys for the vireo will be conducted by the biological monitor in areas of suitable habitat within 500 feet of proposed construction activities to determine the presence of vireo nest building activities, egg incubation activities, or brood rearing activities."

Twice-weekly least Bell's vireo surveys per Section 7 began on April 20, 2021 after preconstruction least Bell's vireo surveys were completed, and sediment removal activities were initiated. Sediment removal activities were completed on August 10, 2021 and site demobilization activities continued through the end of August 2021.

SURVEY METHODS

Focused breeding season surveys for least Bell’s vireo were conducted in compliance with ITP Condition 7.3.4 and Section 7 Conservation Measure CM 11b for Project activities that are to occur during the vireo’s breeding season (March 1 to August 31). Surveys were conducted between dawn and 11 a.m. when weather conditions were favorable in accordance with USFWS 2001 protocol (nesting season) guidelines.¹ Meandering transects were walked throughout suitable least Bell’s vireo habitat areas within 500 feet of the Project boundaries to visually and audibly detect the presence of least Bell’s vireo. All bird and wildlife species detected during the survey were recorded on standardized data sheets. All surveys were conducted in compliance with the Nesting Bird Management Plan prepared for the Project.²

RESULTS

Nine focused breeding season surveys for least Bell’s vireo were conducted during August 2021. Each survey was conducted by a CDFW- and USFWS-approved Designated Biologist for least Bell’s vireo surveys. The dates, personnel, and weather conditions for each survey are presented in Table 1. Field survey datasheets are provided in Attachment A.

Date	Surveyors*	Time		Temperature (°F)		Cloud Cover (%)		Wind Speed (mph)	
		start	end	start	end	start	end	start	end
08/02/2021	SS	0610	1054	69	83	0	0	0-1	0-1
08/06/2021	SS	0616	1055	68	79	5	0	0-1	3-5
08/09/2021	SS	0615	1100	65	73	0	0	1-3	3-5
08/13/2021	SS	0615	1100	67	83	0	0	0-1	3-5
08/16/2021	CT	0640	1000	69	86	0	27	0-1	1-3
08/20/2021	SS	0631	1059	61	68	90	75	1-3	1-3
08/23/2021	CT	0915	1100	67	77	10	10	1-2	1-3
08/27/2021	SS	0625	1100	67	87	10	0	0-1	1-3
08/31/2021	CT	0645	1020	68	72	95	98	0-1	1-2

CT = Christine Tischer, SS = Shannan Shaffer,

No least Bell’s vireos were detected during the August 2021 breeding season surveys.

Reports of least Bell’s vireo sightings on August 1 and 8, 2021, were received by ECORP from a local resident birder that frequents the site for recreation. Both observations were of vocalizing individuals. On August 16 and 19, 2021, individual least Bell’s vireos were observed foraging within the on-site habitat restoration areas by Designated Biologists monitoring on-site habitat restoration activities. It is unknown if all the observations in August 2021 were of the same

¹ U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS). 2001. Least Bell’s Vireo Survey Guidelines. U.S. Department of the Interior. Carlsbad, CA, USFWS, 3 pp.

² ECORP Consulting, Inc (ECORP). 2019. Nesting Bird Management Plan, Devil’s Gate Reservoir Restoration Project, Los Angeles County, California. Prepared for the Los Angeles Department of Public Works, Water Resource Division. March 2019.

individual or different individuals. Given the timing of the observations, it is not likely that the individuals were engaged in breeding activities at the Project site.

Brown-headed cowbirds were not observed during the August 2021 breeding season surveys.

DISCUSSION

Nine focused breeding season surveys for least Bell's vireo conducted in August 2021 did not detect least Bell's vireo in or within 500 feet of the Project site. Individual observations of least Bell's vireo were made at the Project site by a local resident as well as Designated Biologists monitoring on-site habitat restoration activities during August 2021. These observations were isolated and did not indicate breeding of least Bell's vireo during the 2021 season. Weekly focused breeding season surveys at the Project site will continue until the end of the breeding season (September 15).

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

SIGNED: 

Lauren Simpson
Staff Biologist
ECORP Consulting, Inc.
2861 Pullman Street
Santa Ana, CA 92705

DATE: September 17, 2021

Attachments:

Attachment A: Survey Datasheets

ATTACHMENT A

Survey Datasheets

Least Bell's Vireo Log for Devils Gate (Environmental Conditions)

Submitted by: SoCal_Bio

Submitted time: Aug 2, 2021, 10:55:04 AM

Survey Date

Aug 2, 2021

Observer Name

Shannan Shaffer

Survey Conditions

Start Time

06:10

Start Temperature

69

Start Wind Speed

0-1

Start Cloud Cover

0

End Time

10:54

End Temperature

83

End Wind Speed

0-1

End Cloud Cover

0

Were Least Bell's Vireo Observed

No

Incidental Species Observed

BUSH, CALT, CA ground squirrel, ACWO, WREN, M9DI, BLPH, AMCR, CASJ, CAQU, LEGO, HOFI, BEWR, desert cottontail, NOMO, MALL, RTHA, CORA, western whiptail, western fence lizard, coyote, ANHU, SOSPO, SPTO, Y EWA, COHA, NRWS

Log Completed?

Yes

Least Bell's Vireo Log for Devils Gate (Environmental Conditions)

Submitted by: SoCal_Bio

Submitted time: Aug 6, 2021, 11:45:16 AM

Survey Date

Aug 6, 2021

Observer Name

Shannan Shaffer

Survey Conditions

Start Time

06:16

Start Temperature

68

Start Wind Speed

0-1

Start Cloud Cover

5

End Time

10:55

End Temperature

79

End Wind Speed

3-5

End Cloud Cover

0

Were Least Bell's Vireo Observed

No

Incidental Species Observed

CALT, COYE, BUSH, ANHU, SOSP, MODO, coyote, CAQU, ACWO, HOFI, LEGO, AMCR, EUST, desert cottontail, CA ground squirrel, BEWR, CASJ, western fence lizard, SPTO, CAKI

Log Completed?

Yes

Least Bell's Vireo Log for Devils Gate (Environmental Conditions)

Submitted by: SoCal_Bio

Submitted time: Aug 9, 2021, 2:43:01 PM

Survey Date

Aug 9, 2021

Observer Name

Shannan Shaffer

Survey Conditions

Start Time

06:15

Start Temperature

65

Start Wind Speed

1-3

Start Cloud Cover

0

End Time

11:00

End Temperature

73

End Wind Speed

3-5

End Cloud Cover

0

Were Least Bell's Vireo Observed

No

Incidental Species Observed

CORA, ACWO, parrots, NRWS, BLPH, BUSH, HOFI, MODO, CAQU, SPTO, ANHU, coyote, desert cottontail, LEG O, CASJ, CALT, RTHA, TUVU, western fence lizard, BEWR, WREN, COHA, EUST, alligator lizard

Log Completed?

Yes

Least Bell's Vireo Log for Devils Gate (Environmental Conditions)

Submitted by: SoCal_Bio

Submitted time: Aug 13, 2021, 12:00:19 PM

Survey Date

Aug 13, 2021

Observer Name

Shannan Shaffer

Survey Conditions

Start Time

06:15

Start Temperature

67

Start Wind Speed

0-1

Start Cloud Cover

0

End Time

11:00

End Temperature

83

End Wind Speed

3-5

End Cloud Cover

0

Were Least Bell's Vireo Observed

No

Incidental Species Observed

AMCR, coyote, desert cotyontail, CASJ, CAQU, ACWO, LEGO, HOFI, MODO, CATH ANHU, SOSP, BLPH, CAKI, WREN, RTHA, TUVU, CORA, CALT, NOMO, western fence lizard, CA ground squirrel,

Log Completed?

Yes

Least Bell's Vireo Log for Devils Gate (Environmental Conditions)

Submitted by: SoCal_Bio

Submitted time: Aug 19, 2021, 7:40:33 PM

Survey Date

Aug 16, 2021

Observer Name

Christine Tischer

Survey Conditions

Start Time

06:40

Start Temperature

69

Start Wind Speed

0-1

Start Cloud Cover

0

End Time

10:00

End Temperature

86

End Wind Speed

1-3

End Cloud Cover

25

Were Least Bell's Vireo Observed

No

Brown-Headed CowBird Observations

Number of Individuals

0

Locations

Incidental Species Observed

BUSH, parrots, BGGN, CORA, ACWO, NUWO, CAQU, ANHU, CALT, OATI, MODO, BEWR, CASJ, CATH, SPTO, WREN, BASW, HOFI, valley carpenter bee, YWAR (×6), SOSP, cottontail, AMCR, eastern fox squirrel, LEGO, BLP H, western fence lizard, hornet nest (underground burrow), checkered white, BTPI, ECDO, WTSW, checkered skipper, western tiger swallowtail, gulf fritillary

Log Completed?

Yes

Least Bell's Vireo Log for Devils Gate (Environmental Conditions)

Submitted by: SoCal_Bio

Submitted time: Aug 20, 2021, 11:05:48 AM

Survey Date

Aug 20, 2021

Observer Name

Shannan Shaffer

Survey Conditions

Start Time

06:31

Start Temperature

61

Start Wind Speed

1-3

Start Cloud Cover

90

End Time

10:59

End Temperature

68

End Wind Speed

1-3

End Cloud Cover

75

Were Least Bell's Vireo Observed

No

Incidental Species Observed

MODO, CAQU, AMCR, CALT, HOFI, CASJ, NOMO, coyote, LEGO, ANHU, ACWO, CAKI, RTHA, NRWS, BLPH, SP TO, BEWR, desert cottontail, WTSW, COHA

Log Completed?

Yes

Least Bell's Vireo Log for Devils Gate (Environmental Conditions)

Submitted by: SoCal_Bio

Submitted time: Aug 23, 2021, 3:25:26 PM

Survey Date

Aug 23, 2021

Observer Name

Christine Tischer

Survey Conditions

Start Time

09:15

Start Temperature

67

Start Wind Speed

1-2

Start Cloud Cover

10

End Time

11:00

End Temperature

77

End Wind Speed

1-3

End Cloud Cover

10

Were Least Bell's Vireo Observed

No

Brown-Headed CowBird Observations

Number of Individuals

0

Incidental Species Observed

ANHU, CASJ, BEWR, NUWO, CATH, ACWO, western fence lizard, HOFI, LEGO, WREN, CALT, CORA, BUSH, BGN, ALHU, CA ground squirrel, Eastern fox squirrel, western tiger swallowtail, gulf fritillary, coyote (s), carpenter bee, honeybee, cabbage white, ATFL, CAQU, BASW, MODO, side-blotched lizard, common white, YWAR (1), PSFL (1), domestic horse (2 riders in wash north of project), desert cottontail (s), TUVU (flyover), RSHA, SPTO, SOSP, parrots

Additional Notes

Completed initial loop of riparian at 10:45. 2nd loop of western riparian completed at 11:20 (79°F, 15% cloud cover, 2-4 mph winds).

Log Completed?

Yes

Least Bell's Vireo Log for Devils Gate (Environmental Conditions)

Submitted by: SoCal_Bio

Submitted time: Aug 27, 2021, 11:23:38 AM

Survey Date

Aug 27, 2021

Observer Name

Shannan Shaffer

Survey Conditions

Start Time

06:25

Start Temperature

67

Start Wind Speed

0-1

Start Cloud Cover

10

End Time

11:00

End Temperature

87

End Wind Speed

1-3

End Cloud Cover

0

Were Least Bell's Vireo Observed

No

Incidental Species Observed

CALT, SPTO, CASJ, SOSP, BEWR, ANHU, BLPH, ACWO, desert cottontail, CORA, NRWS, COHA, WTSW, LEGO, HOFI, NOMO, MODO, BEWR, BUSH, western fence lizard, alligayor lizard, CA ground squirrel, CATH, CAQU

Log Completed?

Yes

Least Bell's Vireo Log for Devils Gate (Environmental Conditions)

Submitted by: SoCal_Bio

Submitted time: Aug 31, 2021, 10:24:09 AM

Survey Date

Aug 31, 2021

Observer Name

Christine Tischer

Survey Conditions

Start Time

06:45

Start Temperature

68

Start Wind Speed

0-1

Start Cloud Cover

95

End Time

10:20

End Temperature

72

End Wind Speed

1-2

End Cloud Cover

98

Were Least Bell's Vireo Observed

No

Brown-Headed CowBird Observations

Number of Individuals

0

Incidental Species Observed

OATI, CAQU, NUWO, ACWO, CATH, BUSH, DEJU, CALT, MODO, AMCR, parrots, SPTO, ANHU, LEGO, CASJ, cottontail, WREN, SOSP, COYE, HOFI, KILL, RSHA, CORA, RTHA, E fox squirrel, BEWR, BLPH, CA ground squirrel I. BTPI, AMKE, BASW, BGGN, SP rattlesnake

Additional Notes

Spring/summer migrants have moved on. Fall/winter migrants have yet to arrive.

Spoke to 1 man with medium black and white dog about not breaking the native willow vegetation to use as a picnic area. Between DG4 and DG4A. Reported to Parks and Rec who happened to be driving by who said they would go follow up.

Log Completed?

Yes