

Agency/Organization: SWCA Environmental Consultants

Project Name: Parasitism Control and Evaluation

Project Number: 2019-SWCA-1935A

Reporting Period: July 1 through September 30, 2024

Project Contact Name and Information:

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**QUESTION 1: What did you accomplish during this reporting period?
How did these accomplishments help you reach the goal of your project?
If relevant, what indicators or benchmarks were used to determine your progress?**

From July 1 through September 30, 2024, SWCA conducted the last two rounds of southwestern willow flycatcher (*Empidonax traillii extimus*) (flycatcher) surveys on the western portion of Mesquite West, finished flycatcher territory and nest monitoring efforts at Mesquite West and Mormon Mesa Parcel 5-A, and concluded brown-headed cowbird (*Molothrus ater*) (cowbird) control at Mesquite West. Preliminary findings for the 2024 field season were presented at the 2024 Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan Annual Progress Report Symposium on August 19. The final project data deliverable and final project report were prepared, and both were submitted to the DCP on September 30.

The goals of this project were to maintain and/or improve habitat for flycatcher and to help identify lands where habitat enhancement may be implemented to expand habitat for the flycatcher. Protocol-level flycatcher surveys and intensive monitoring were completed to fulfill the stated project objectives of conducting flycatcher surveys and monitoring at Mesquite West and Mormon Mesa. Flycatcher territory and nest monitoring at Mesquite West and Mormon Mesa included documenting nest successes and failures and parasitism by cowbirds, which are also project objectives. Another objective of the project was to conduct cowbird control at Mesquite West to decrease parasitism rates and increase nest success. Cowbird control efforts in 2024 coincided with a 9% parasitism rate, which was the second lowest rate ever recorded at Mesquite West. The period from 2022 through 2024 marked the first time since SWCA began flycatcher monitoring at Mesquite West that the parasitism rate was below 25% for three consecutive years. In 2024, flycatcher nest success was 58%, the second-highest nest success rate since 2009. Nest success in 2024 was 12% higher than in 2023. Another metric used to assess flycatcher productivity is fecundity (number of young produced per female). Fecundity in 2024 was 2.83 young produced per female, the highest ever recorded at Mesquite West.

QUESTION 2: What, if any, problems were encountered? Briefly describe those problems and the manner in which they were dealt.

The only problem encountered for this project involved the standard access route from the west to Mormon Mesa. In mid-June, a landowner's vehicle was stuck in the sand just north of the

gravel pit along Mormon Mesa Virgin Road. This portion of the road was noted to be more difficult than usual to navigate due to disturbance caused by the landowner attempting to extricate his vehicle from the sand. Due to concerns of our own vehicles getting stuck during future visits to Mormon Mesa, SWCA adjusted to this problem by accessing Parcel 5-A from the east (via Gold Butte Road) for the remaining flycatcher monitoring visits, which included four visits in July.

QUESTION 3: What, if any, proposed activities were not completed? Briefly describe those activities, the reasons they were not completed and your plans for carrying them out.

All proposed activities were completed as planned.

QUESTION 4: What is the calculated percent of work completed?

As of September 30, 2024, SWCA estimates that approximately 90% of work required for this project for 2024 has been completed.

QUESTION 5: Do you foresee any upcoming problems with future project activities? If so, how do you propose to overcome those problems?

No, we do not foresee any upcoming problems with this project.

QUESTION 6: Is there anything else you want to tell the DCP about this project?

No, not at this time.

QUESTION 7: What was produced during the reporting period?

For this reporting period, SWCA produced data deliverables D15 and D17, which were submitted to the DCP on July 5 and August 5, respectively; a quarterly report (D16) covering the period from April 1 through June 30, which was submitted to the DCP on July 5; and the final project data deliverable (D19) and final project report (D20), which were both submitted to the DCP on September 30.