

2.17 Plant Species

2.17.1 Regulatory Setting

The USFWS and CDFW have regulatory responsibility for the protection of special status plant species. “Special status” species are selected for protection because they are rare and/or subject to population and habitat declines. Special status is a general term for species that are provided varying levels of regulatory protection. The highest level of protection is given to threatened and endangered species; these are species that are formally listed or proposed for listing as endangered or threatened under the Federal Endangered Species Act (FESA) and/or the California Endangered Species Act (CESA). Section 2.19, Threatened and Endangered Species, of this document contains detailed information about these species.

This section of the document discusses all other special status plant species, including CDFW species of special concern, USFWS candidate species, and California Native Plant Society (CNPS) rare and endangered plants.

The regulatory requirements for FESA can be found at 16 USC Section 1531, et seq. See also 50 CFR Part 402. The regulatory requirements for CESA can be found at California Fish and Game Code, Section 2050, et seq. Department projects are also subject to the Native Plant Protection Act, found at California Fish and Game Code, Section 1900-1913, and CEQA, found at California PRC, Sections 21000-21177.

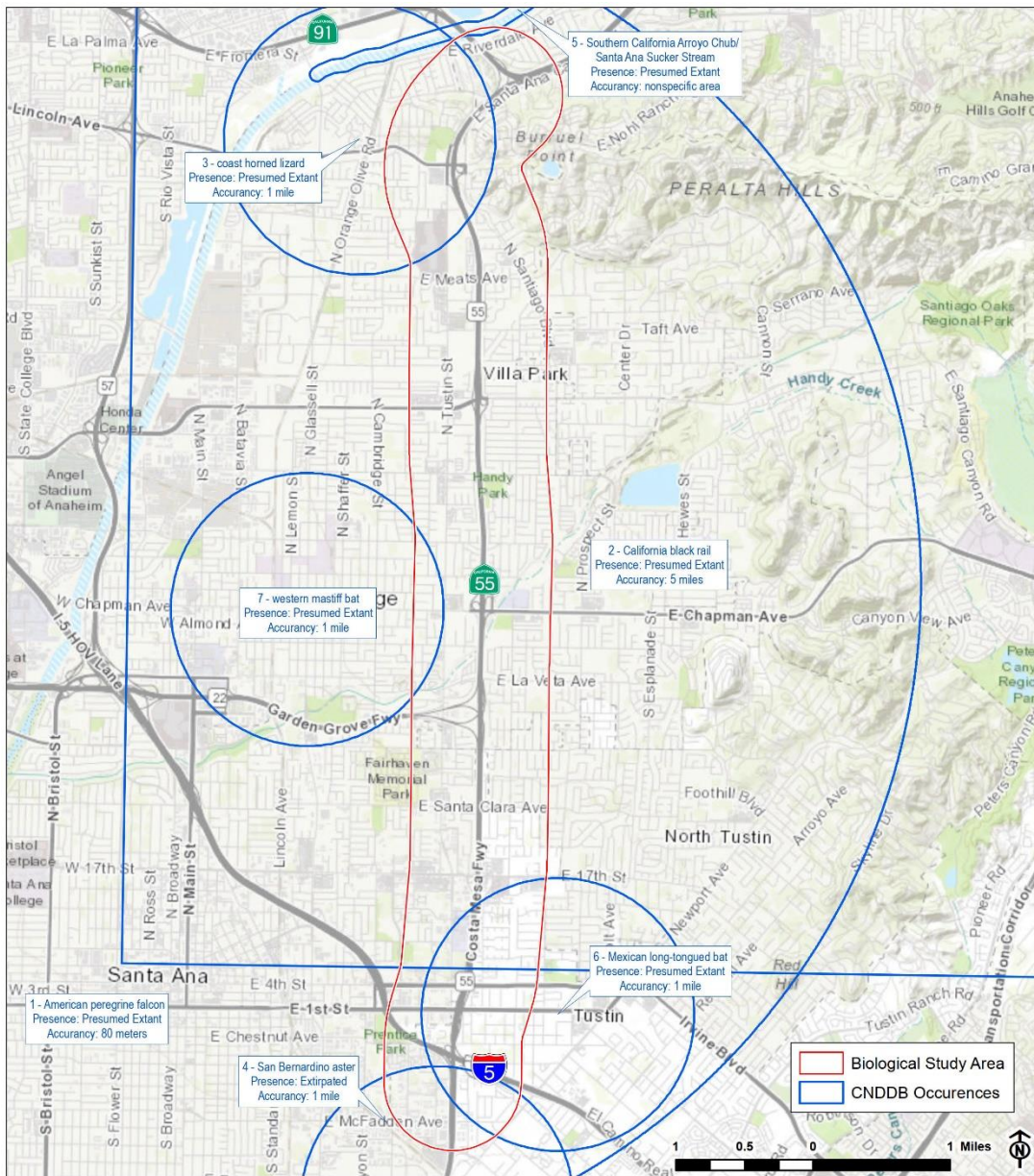
2.17.2 Affected Environment

Information presented in this section was obtained from the *Natural Environment Study* (minimal impacts) (January 2019) and the *Rare Plant and Vegetation Assessment*, dated June 2018 and included as Appendix C to the Natural Environment Study (Minimal Impacts).

Prior to conducting field surveys, a list of special status plants known to occur in the vicinity of the proposed project was developed. This list of potentially occurring special status species was created using the following sources:

- The USFWS official species list for the proposed project (USFWS 2018; See Section 4.2.6)
- CDFW California Natural Diversity Database (CNDDDB) record search for the Tustin, California, and Orange, California, 7.5-minute quadrangles (CNDDDB 2018). CNDDDB special status species occurrences within a 0.5-mile radius of the proposed project are shown in Figure 2.17-1.
- CNDDDB Occurrences of Special Status Species
- CNPS Inventory of Rare and Endangered Plants record search of the Tustin, California and Orange, California 7.5-minute USGS topographic quadrangles (Table 2.17-1)
- NCCP/HCP review of covered activities and plan implementation (ICF 2016)

Figure 2.17-1. CNDDB Occurrences of Special Status Species



No.	Name	Common Name	State	Year	Authority	Conservation Status	Endemic	Global Rank	State Rank	Local Rank	Global Distribution	State Distribution	Local Distribution	Notes
1	American peregrine falcon	Falco peregrinus	CA	1993	95000	NT	NT	NT	NT	NT	Widespread in the western United States and northern Mexico.	Widespread in the western United States and northern Mexico.	Widespread in the western United States and northern Mexico.	Endemic to the western United States and northern Mexico.
2	California black rail	Tringa melanoleuca	CA	1981	95000	NT	NT	NT	NT	NT	Widespread in the western United States and northern Mexico.	Widespread in the western United States and northern Mexico.	Widespread in the western United States and northern Mexico.	Endemic to the western United States and northern Mexico.
3	Coast horned lizard	Phrynosoma munita	CA	1981	95000	NT	NT	NT	NT	NT	Widespread in the western United States and northern Mexico.	Widespread in the western United States and northern Mexico.	Widespread in the western United States and northern Mexico.	Endemic to the western United States and northern Mexico.
4	San Bernardino aster	Aster sp.	CA	1981	95000	EX	EX	EX	EX	EX	Widespread in the western United States and northern Mexico.	Widespread in the western United States and northern Mexico.	Widespread in the western United States and northern Mexico.	Endemic to the western United States and northern Mexico.
5	Southern California Arroyo Chub/Santa Ana Sucker Stream	Chub/Sucker	CA	1981	95000	PE	PE	PE	PE	PE	Widespread in the western United States and northern Mexico.	Widespread in the western United States and northern Mexico.	Widespread in the western United States and northern Mexico.	Endemic to the western United States and northern Mexico.
6	Mexican long-tongued bat	Myotis sp.	CA	1981	95000	NT	NT	NT	NT	NT	Widespread in the western United States and northern Mexico.	Widespread in the western United States and northern Mexico.	Widespread in the western United States and northern Mexico.	Endemic to the western United States and northern Mexico.
7	Western mastiff bat	Myotis sp.	CA	1981	95000	NT	NT	NT	NT	NT	Widespread in the western United States and northern Mexico.	Widespread in the western United States and northern Mexico.	Widespread in the western United States and northern Mexico.	Endemic to the western United States and northern Mexico.

SR-55 Improvement Project: I-5 to SR-91
Figure 2: CNDDB Occurrences

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In addition, since the proposed project is a covered activity under the NCCP/HCP, the three covered plant species identified in the plan and shown in Table 2.17-2 were assessed for potential to occur.

Table 2.17-1: California Native Plant Society (CNPS) Inventory of Rare and Endangered Plants

Scientific Name/	Common Name	CNPS Designation	Federal Listing	Occurrence/Habitat
<i>Centromadia parryi australis</i>	southern tarplant	1B.1	none	Not expected/poor habitat
<i>Helianthus nuttallii parishi</i>	Los Angeles sunflower	1A	none	None/ No habitat
<i>Lasthenia glabrata coulteri</i>	Coulter's goldfields	1B.1	none	None/ No habitat
<i>Pentachaeta aurea allenii</i>	Allens pentachaeta	1B.1	none	None/ No habitat
<i>Senecio aphanactis</i>	chaparral ragwort	2B.2	none	None/ No habitat
<i>Symphotrichum defoliatum</i>	San Bernardino aster	1B.2	none	Not expected/poor habitat
<i>Lepidium virginicum robinsonii</i>	Robinson's peppergrass	4.3	none	None/ No habitat
<i>Atriplex coulteri</i>	Coulters saltbush	1B.2	none	None/ No habitat
<i>Atriplex pacifica</i>	south coast saltscale	1B.2	none	None/ No habitat
<i>Atriplex serenana davidsonii</i>	Davidson's saltscale	1B.2	none	None/ No habitat
<i>Suaeda esteroa</i>	estuary seablite	1B.2	none	None/ No habitat
<i>Suaeda taxifolia</i>	woolly seablite	4.2	none	None/ No habitat
<i>Convolvulus simulans</i>	small flowered morning-glory	4.2	none	Not expected/poor habitat
<i>Dudleya multicaulis</i>	many-stemmed dudleya	1B.2	none	None/ No habitat
<i>Juncus acutus leopoldii</i>	southwestern spiny rush	4.2	none	Not expected/poor habitat
<i>Nama stenocarpa</i>	mud nama	2B.2	none	None/ No habitat
<i>Sidalcea neomexicana</i>	salt spring checkerbloom	2B.2	none	Not expected/poor habitat
<i>Hordeum intercedens</i>	vernal barley	3.2	none	None/ No habitat
<i>Camissoniopsis lewisii</i>	Lewis's evening primrose	3	none	None/ No habitat
<i>Calochortus catalinae</i>	Catalina mariposa lily	4.2	none	Not expected/poor habitat

Table 2.17-2: NCCP/HCP Covered Plant Species

Common Name	Scientific Name	CNPS Status	General Habitat Description	Habitat Present/Absent	Rationale
intermediate mariposa lily	<i>Verbesina dissita</i>	1B.1	chaparral, valley grassland, coastal sage scrub	A	The Study Area does not contain chaparral, valley grassland, or coastal sage scrub habitat.
many-stemmed dudleya	<i>Dudleya multicaulis</i>	1B.2	coastal plain in heavy clay soils	A	The Study Area does not contain coastal plain habitat
southern tarplant	<i>Centromadia parryi</i> ssp. <i>australis</i>	1B.1	Wetlands	A	The Study Area does not contain wetland habitat.

Notes: Absent [A] - no habitat present and no further work needed. Habitat Present [HP] -habitat is, or may be present. The species may be present. Present [P] - the species is present. Federal Species of Concern (FSC); USFWS Birds of Conservation Concern (BCC); State Endangered (SE); State Threatened (ST); Fully Protected (FP); State Rare (SR); State Species of Special Concern (SSC); California Native Plant Society (CNPS)

Rare plant field surveys were conducted in May 2017 at the Chapman Avenue and SR 55 freeway bridges along Santiago Creek and in July 2017 at intersections along the entire SR 55 right-of-way between I-5 and SR 91 freeways. All plants observed were documented. Unknown species were keyed out using *The Jepson Manual: Vascular Plants of California, Second Edition* (Baldwin et al. 2012). Full coverage plant surveys were conducted on at least one of the four corners of each intersection. Informal visual surveys from across the street were conducted at the other corners. A master plant list of all species observed within the Study Area is shown in Table 2.15-1.

A total of 105 plant species were observed during plant surveys within the Study Area. This included 44 ornamentals, 42 non-native weeds, and 19 native species. The Study Area does not contain suitable habitat for any special status plant species.

Of 105 plant species, 65 species of plants were found growing within the banks of Santiago Creek; however, many of the species are escaped ornamentals (19 species) or non-native weeds (31 species).

2.17.3 Environmental Consequences

2.17.3.1 Temporary Impacts

Build Alternative

No special status plant species were identified within the project Study Area. No direct or indirect temporary impacts would occur to any special status plant species, including the three covered plant species as identified in the NCCP/HCP (Table 2.17-2).

No Build Alternative

The No Build Alternative would not result in the construction or improvements within the project area and, therefore, would not result in direct or indirect temporary impacts on plant species.

2.17.3.2 Permanent Impacts

Build Alternative

No special status plant species were identified within the project Study Area. No direct permanent impacts would occur to any special status plant species, including the three covered plant species as identified in the NCCP/HCP (Table 2.17-2). Indirect or secondary impacts are not anticipated to occur.

No Build Alternative

The No Build Alternative would not result in the construction or improvements within the project area and, therefore, would not result in permanent impacts on plant species. No indirect or secondary impacts on plant species would result from implementation of the No Build Alternative.

2.17.4 Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures

No impacts to special status plants will occur. No mitigation measures are required.