

**Draft FOCUSED SURVEY FOR THE LEAST BELL'S VIREO
EASTSIDE WATER TREATMENT FACILITY AND BRINELINE PROJECT
CITY OF ONTARIO IN SAN BERNARDINO COUNTY, CALIFORNIA**



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1.0 INTRODUCTION

At the request of Albert A. Webb Associates (Webb), Wood Environment & Infrastructure Solutions, Inc. (Wood) conducted a focused survey for the least Bell's vireo (*Vireo bellii pusillus*, "LBVI"). The survey was conducted in support of the proposed Eastside Water Treatment Facility and Brineline Project (project) and its alternative. The biological study area (BSA) includes the project site plus a 500 foot buffer around it and is within portions of the Cities of Chino and Ontario in San Bernardino County, California (see Figure 1). Potential LBVI habitat, however, is present only within the Eastside Water Treatment Facility (EWTF) in the City of Ontario (see Figure 2).

2.0 PROJECT BACKGROUND/SITE DESCRIPTION

The proposed project includes a four-mile dual six-inch brine pipeline between the EWTF and the Chino I Desalter Facility (CIDF). The pipeline would generally follow existing roads and previously disturbed areas, utilizing a route that would follow Kimball Avenue east from the CIDF, Euclid Avenue north, Merrill Avenue east, Bon View Avenue north, and Schaefer Avenue west to the EWTF. An alternative would have one of the dual pipelines leave Bon View at Edison Avenue, heading west, then north to the EWTF on conceptual Campus Avenue, an undeveloped street. The project also includes upgrades to the CIDF, which is on the south side of Kimball Avenue, west of Euclid Avenue in Chino. The EWTF is on the south side of Schaefer Avenue, west of Bon View Avenue in Ontario.

Project elevations range from approximately 590 feet (180 meters) at the CIDF to 755 feet (230 meters) at the EWTF. Despite the elevational change, the slope is gentle with the project area appearing flat. The alignment passes through a wide variety of conditions, from undeveloped to agriculture and vacant lots and from residential to commercial and industrial areas, but is dominated by dairy farms.

3.0 BACKGROUND ON THE LEAST BELL'S VIREO

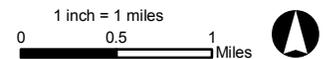
LBVI is a small, migratory, insectivorous bird which occurs in riparian habitats. Although this bird is drab in plumage and can be secretive within its densely vegetated habitat, males are easy to detect on the breeding grounds due to their conspicuous, frequently given, and diagnostic song. Nesting habitat of this species is restricted to willow (*Salix* spp.) and/or mule fat (*Baccharis salicifolia*) dominated riparian scrub along permanent or nearly permanent streams (Grinnell and Miller 1944, Goldwasser 1978, Franzreb 1987, Garrett and Dunn 1981).

LBVI were formerly widespread and common throughout low-lying riparian habitats of central and southern California, but are now restricted to a limited number of locations in southern California. They are still relatively rare in central California. Habitat reduction has contributed to this species' significant population declines. Nest parasitism by brown-headed cowbirds (*Molothrus ater*) has also seriously impacted reproductive success by LBVI, as well as many other species which build cup nests (Goldwasser 1978). The population is recovering as a result of habitat restoration and brown-headed cowbird control efforts. LBVI is listed as Endangered by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) and by the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) (USFWS 1986). A final determination of critical habitat was made in 1994 (USFWS 1994a and 1994b). The project is not located within designated critical habitat for the LBVI.

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- Alternative Alignment
- Preferred Alignment
- Least Bell's Vireo Survey Area

FIGURE 1
Project Vicinity and Regional Location
Eastside Water Treatment
Facility and Brinline Project
San Bernardino County, CA

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-  Alternative Alignment
-  Least Bell's Vireo Survey Area
-  EWTF



1 inch = 60 feet



FIGURE 2

Least Bell's Vireo
Survey Results
Eastside Water Treatment Facility
and Brineline Project
San Bernardino County, CA

WOOD.

Service Layer Credits: Esri, HERE, Garmin, © OpenStreetMap contributors, Esri, DigitalGlobe, GeoEye, Earthstar Geographics, CNES/Airbus DS, USDA, USGS, AeroGRID, IGN, and the GIS User Community

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4.0 HABITAT DESCRIPTION

Suitable habitat onsite includes only a stand of willows (*Salix* sp.) and a few other riparian associated plant species that have grown around an unmaintained basin within the EWTF. Although this is a plant community that occurs in nature, in this case it is present only because of this constructed basin.

5.0 METHODS

The LBVI survey was conducted in appropriate habitat within the project site in accordance with the survey protocol for that species (USFWS 2001). The habitat was surveyed by a single biologist in a single morning. In accordance with the survey protocol, each area was surveyed eight times. Each survey was at least 10 days apart, as required by the protocol. Surveys were conducted by Wood senior biologist John F. Green. During each survey Green walked slowly through or adjacent to any potential habitat looking and listening for LBVIs. All surveys were conducted between 14 May and 29 July. Weather during all LBVI surveys was favorable for detection of the species. The table below contains survey variables. All vertebrate species detected during Wood's 2019 surveys were recorded in field notes and are listed in Appendix I below.

SURVEY VARIABLES

Date (2019)	Biologist	Time (PDT)	Temperature (°F)	Wind (mph)	Cloud Cover (%)
14 May	Green	0650-0750	64-62	1-3	100
24 May	Green	0705-0755	53-54	0-2	0-5
3 June	Green	0700-0745	59-60	0-4	100
13 June	Green	0705-0740	65	0-3	100
24 June	Green	0710-0740	65-66	0-1	100
8 July	Green	0710-0740	64-65	0-1	100
18 July	Green	0720-0800	66-69	0-2	0
29 July	Green	0705-0740	67-68	0-1	25

Abbreviations: PDT = Pacific Daylight Time, °F = degrees Fahrenheit, mph = miles per hour

6.0 RESULTS

6.1 Least Bell's Vireo Detections

No LBVI were detected. It is Wood's conclusion that no LBVIs were present onsite during the 2019 breeding season.

6.2 General Survey Results

Fifty-five (55) bird species were detected during the 2019 surveys conducted for this project (see appendix). Also included in the appendix are one species of reptile and four species of mammals which were detected during the surveys.

7.0 REFERENCES AND LITERATURE CITED

- California Bird Records Committee. 2019. Official California Checklist. January. Accessed online at: http://californiabirds.org/ca_list.asp
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Eastside Water Treatment Facility and Brineline Project
Focused Survey for the Least Bell's Vireo
July 2019

APPENDIX
VERTEBRATE SPECIES LIST

VERTEBRATE ANIMALS LIST

This list reports only vertebrate animal species observed during survey visits for this project. Other species may have been overlooked or undetectable due to their activity patterns. Nomenclature and taxonomy for fauna observed on site follows the California Bird Records Committee Official California Checklist (2019) for birds and CDFW (2016) for herpetofauna and mammals.

SYMBOLS AND ABBREVIATIONS:

- * Non-native species
 - ** Sensitive species (State or federally listed as endangered, threatened, or candidate; state species of special concern/watchlist/tracked; USFWS bird of conservation concern; Bureau of Land Management and/or USFS sensitive)
- sp. Identified only to genus; species unknown (plural = spp.)
-

REPTILES

Phrynosomatidae

Sceloporus occidentalis

Spiny Lizards

western fence lizard

BIRDS

Anatidae

Branta canadensis

Spatula cyanoptera

Anas americana

Anas platyrhynchos

Ducks, Geese, and Swans

Canada goose

cinnamon teal

American wigeon

mallard

Columbidae

*Columba livia**

*Streptopelia decaocto**

Zenaida macroura

Pigeons and Doves

rock pigeon

Eurasian collared-dove

mourning dove

Apodidae

Aeronautes saxatalis

Swifts

white-throated swift

Trochilidae

Calypte anna

Selasphorus sasin

Hummingbirds

Anna's hummingbird

Allen's hummingbird

Rallidae

Fulica americana

Rails, Gallinules, and Coots

American coot

Recurvirostridae

Himantopus mexicanus

Stilts and Avocets

black-necked stilt

Charadriidae

Charadrius vociferus

Lapwings and Plovers

killdeer

Scolopacidae

Numenius americanus

Sandpipers, Phalaropes, and Allies

long-billed curlew

Laridae

Larus californicus

Ardeidae

Ardea herodias

Ardea alba

Bubulcus ibis

Threskiornithidae

*Plegadis chihi***

Cathartidae

Cathartes aura

Accipitridae

*Accipiter cooperii***

Buteo jamaicensis

Strigidae

*Athene cunicularia***

Falconidae

Falco sparverius

*Falco peregrinus***

Tyrannidae

Myiarchus cinerascens

Tyrannus vociferus

Tyrannus verticalis

*Empidonax traillii***

Sayornis nigricans

Sayornis saya

Corvidae

Corvus brachyrhynchos

Corvus corax

Hirundinidae

Hirundo rustica

Aegithalidae

Psaltriparus minimus

Troglodytidae

Troglodytes aedon

Thryomanes bewickii

Turdidae

Catharus ustulatus

Mimidae

Mimus polyglottos

Gulls, Terns, and Skimmers

California gull

Hérons and Egrets

great blue heron

great egret

cattle egret

Ibises and Spoonbills

white-faced ibis

New World Vultures

turkey vulture

Hawks and Relatives

Cooper's hawk

red-tailed hawk

Typical Owls

burrowing owl

Caracaras and Falcons

American kestrel

peregrine falcon

Tyrant Flycatchers

ash-throated flycatcher

Cassin's kingbird

western kingbird

willow flycatcher

black phoebe

Say's phoebe

Jays, Crows, Ravens, Magpies

American crow

common raven

Swallows

barn swallow

Long-tailed Tits and Bushtits

bushtit

Wrens

house wren

Bewick's wren

Thrushes

Swainson's thrush

Mockingbirds, Thrashers, and Allies

northern mockingbird

Sturnidae

*Sturnus vulgaris**

Passeridae

*Passer domesticus**

Fringillidae

Haemorhous mexicanus

Spinus psaltria

Passerelliidae

Passerculus sandwichensis

Melospiza melodia

Zonotrichia leucophrys

Icteridae

Sturnella neglecta

Agelaius phoeniceus

Molothrus ater

Euphagus cyanocephalus

Quiscalus mexicanus

Parulidae

*Setophaga petechia***

Setophaga coronata

Cardellina pusilla

Cardinalidae

Passerina caerulea

MAMMALS

Leporidae

Sylvilagus audubonii

Geomyidae

Thomomys bottae

Sciuridae

Otospermophilus beecheyi

Canidae

Canis latrans

Starlings

European starling

Old World Sparrows

house sparrow

Finches

house finch

lesser goldfinch

Towhees, New World Sparrows

savannah sparrow

song sparrow

white-crowned sparrow

Blackbirds, Meadowlarks, Orioles

western meadowlark

red-winged blackbird

brown-headed cowbird

Brewer's blackbird

great-tailed grackle

Wood-Warblers

yellow warbler

yellow-rumped warbler

Wilson's warbler

Cardinals and Allies

blue grosbeak

Rabbits and Hares

Audubon's (desert) cottontail

Pocket Gophers

Botta's pocket gopher

Squirrels

California ground squirrel

Foxes, Wolves and Relatives

coyote