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# Biological Habitat Assessment

## Blankenship Subdivision Development Project

**Assessor Parcel Number 123-400-001 and 123-400-005**
**Caldwell Avenue and Santa Fe Street in Visalia, California**

*Prepared for*
San Joaquin Valley Homes
5607 Avenida de los Robles
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*Prepared by*

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**January 20, 2025**

# Executive Summary

Soar Environmental Consulting Inc. (Soar Environmental) was retained by San Joaquin Valley Homes (Client) to conduct a literature review and reconnaissance-level survey for the proposed Andover Place Unit 1. The project is located within the City of Visalia, California, south of Caldwell Avenue between Santa Fe Street and Burke Street, USGS 7.5 Minute Quad: Visalia, NW Corner Section 8 Township 19S, Range 25E (Project). The survey identified vegetation communities and the potential for the occurrence of special-status species or habitats that could support special-status wildlife species, and recorded all plants and animals observed or detected within the Project boundary. This Habitat Assessment is designed to address potential effects of the proposed project on any species currently listed or formally proposed for listing as endangered or threatened under the Federal Endangered Species Act (ESA) or the California Endangered Species Act (CESA) or species designated as sensitive by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) or the California Native Plant Society (CNPS). The information in this document is in accordance with accepted scientific and technical standards and is consistent with the requirements of the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and CDFW. Additionally, the site was surveyed for drainage features that would meet the definition of the Waters of the U.S. (WOUS), Waters of the State (WOS), or CDFW jurisdiction.

This Habitat Assessment was conducted in accordance with CEQA guidelines §15060. The objectives of the assessment are to 1) provide a general characterization of biological resources for the property; 2) inventory plant and wildlife species; 3) evaluate the potential for federally listed plant and animal species to occur or be adversely affected; and 4) describe the property's sensitive biological resources.

This Habitat Assessment provides information about the biological resources within the Project area. Prior to field activities, Soar Environmental researched the California Natural Diversity Database (CNDDB), the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) Information for Planning and Consultation (IPaC), and the California Native Plant Society's (CNPS) Inventory of Rare and Endangered Plants of California, to compile a list of special-status species that could potentially be present in the vicinity of the Project area. Soar Environmental researched specific species and habitat requirements for the species noted in the CNDDB, IPaC, and CNPS databases and included species listing status and proximal species observations in this report.

Based on documented occurrences of special-status species from the data record search and analysis of current environmental conditions, it was determined there is potential for Nuttall's woodpecker (*Picoides nuttallii*) to occur within the vicinity of the Project area. No other special-status plant or wildlife species were observed in the Project area during the Habitat Assessment, and no other listed species were found likely to occur. With the implementation of appropriate mitigation measures, the proposed development of this property is unlikely to have any permanent impact on Nuttall's woodpecker or any other listed species identified in this report.

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# 1. Introduction

The proposed Project is a residential housing development on a 62.54-acre property located at East Caldwell Avenue and Santa Fe Street in the city of Visalia, Tulare County, California. Soar Environmental Consulting Inc. (Soar Environmental) has been tasked to prepare technical studies to support the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) compliance on behalf of the City of Visalia, Tulare County, CA.

The Project area consists entirely of disturbed, agricultural, and ruderal habitat types. The property contains walnut orchards and is permeated by non-native grasses. The site is surrounded by paved roadways except for the southern boundary, which is bordered by an irrigation canal and vineyards. Large, sparsely distributed valley oak trees line the project site on the south and eastern borders of the project. Surrounding vegetation includes both native and non-native ornamental trees and shrubs, and ruderal weeds associated with urbanized landscapes.

This Habitat Assessment presents the findings of our Literature Review (**Section 3.1**) based on the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) Natural Diversity Data Base (CNDDB), the California Native Plant Society (CNPS) online electronic inventory of rare and endangered California plants, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) Information for Planning and Consultation (IPaC) for reported occurrences of special-status vegetation communities, plants, and animals.

Based on the proximity of documented occurrences of special-status species from the Literature Review and Habitat Assessment, the following special-status species were identified as having the potential to occur in the vicinity of the Project area and were considered for further analysis:

***Potentially Occurring Special-Status Wildlife Species***

***Species with Low Potential for Occurrence:***

1) California gull (*Larus californicus*)
2) Crotch's bumblebee (*Bombus crotchii*)
3) Oak titmouse (*Baeolophus inornatus*)
4) San Joaquin kit fox (*Vulpes macrotis mutica*)
5) Swainson's hawk (*Buteo swainsoni*)
6) Western pond turtle (*Emys marmorata*)
7) Western yellow-billed cuckoo (*Coccyzus americanus occidentalis*)
8) Nuttall's woodpecker (*Picoides nuttallii*)

**Tables 3 & 4 provide a complete list of special status species considered in this report's analysis.*

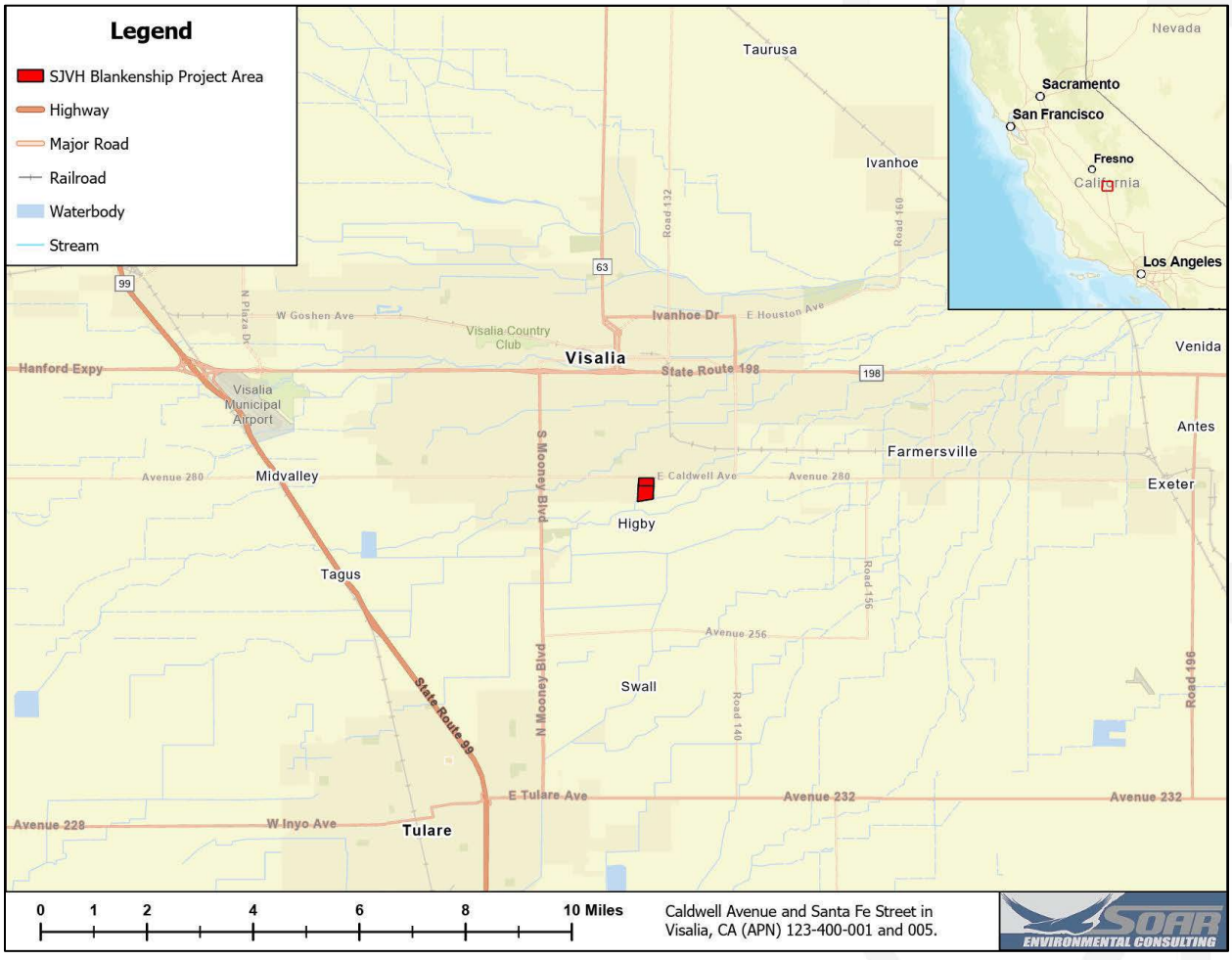
A qualified biologist from Soar Environmental conducted a habitat assessment on December 13, 2024. During the assessment, one special-status wildlife species, Nuttall's woodpecker (*Picoides nuttallii*), was observed near the property. No special-status plant species were observed in the Project area. Suitable habitat features on the project site included Valley Oak Woodland Habitat, largely composed from heritage-size valley oak trees. Other potential nesting bird habitats surrounding the site, including Walnut orchards, ornamental trees and shrubs, and utility poles.

Based on the findings of the Habitat Assessment, the proposed development of this Project is not likely to adversely affect any of the special-status species identified in the Literature Review section of this report through the use of appropriate Avoidance and Minimization Measures.

## 1.1 Project Location

The project is located on the southern edge of the City of Visalia, California, south of Caldwell Avenue between Santa Fe Street and Burke Street. It is comprised of Assessor Parcel Numbers (APN) 123-400-001 and 123-400-005, at an elevation of approximately 325 feet. The Project area is on the southeastern side of the city, approximately two miles south of California State Route (SR) 198. The Project area is in the U.S.G.S. 7.5 Minute Quad: *Visalia*, NW Corner Section 8, Township 19S, Range 25E.

Figure 1. Project Location

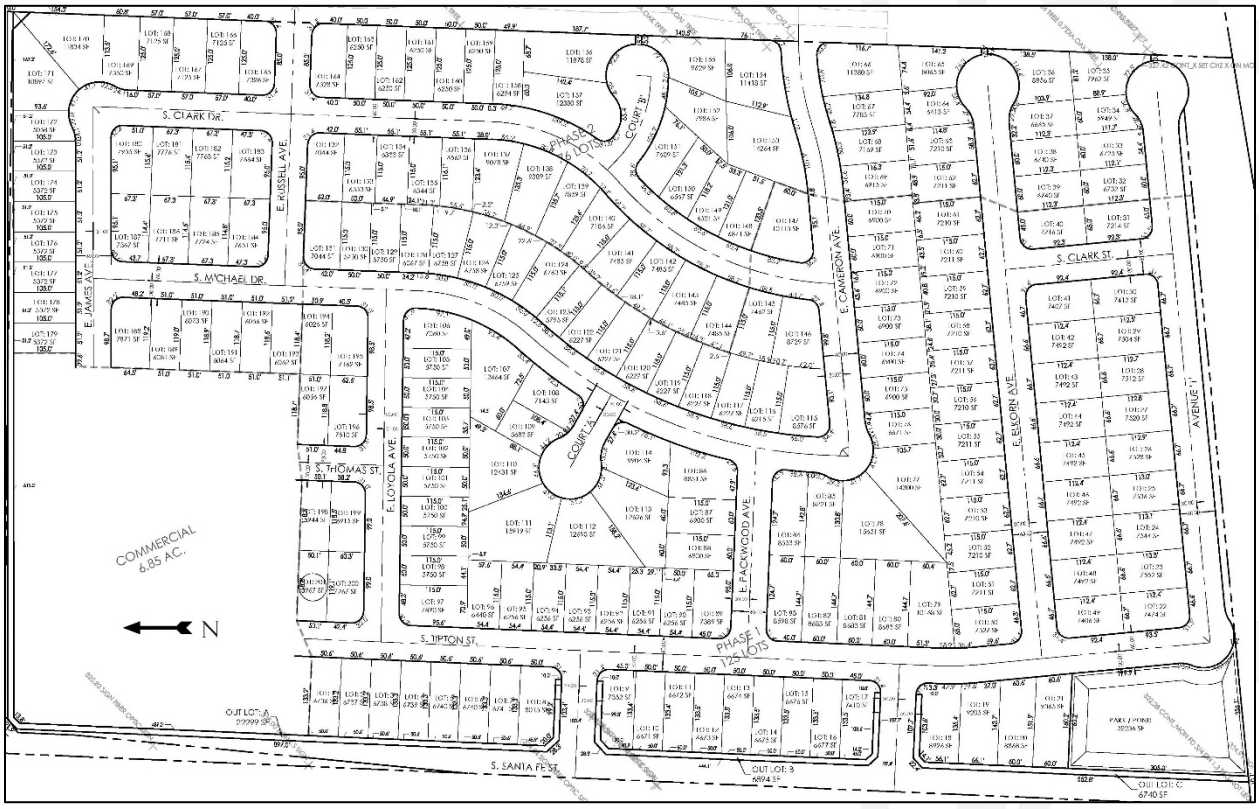



*Caldwell Avenue and Santa Fe Street in Visalia, California Assessor Parcel Number (APN) 123-400-001 and 123-400-005.*

## 1.2 Project Description

The proposed project is a housing development comprising 201 units, including a 6.85-acre lot zoned for commercial use. The Project site is a 62.54-acre agricultural orchard consisting of Assessor Parcel Numbers (APN) 123-400-001 and 123-400-005. Project activities will be limited to the property boundary. Upon completion, the development site will be bordered by decorative landscaping, including the existing Valley oak trees around the parcel boundary's perimeter. Ground-disturbing activities are expected to commence outside of the nesting bird breeding season (February 1 and September 15). Therefore, no impact on nesting bird species will result from project-related activities.

Figure 2. Site Plan




*A detailed site plan is shown in Appendix F.*

## 1.3 Regulatory Background

### 1.3.1 Federal Endangered Species Act

The Federal Endangered Species Act (ESA) prohibits the "take" of federally listed endangered or threatened wildlife species. "Take" is defined to include harassing, harming (including significantly modifying or degrading habitat), pursuing, hunting, shooting, wounding, killing, trapping, capturing, or

collecting wildlife species or any attempt to engage in such conduct (16 USC 1532, 50 CFR 17.3). Actions that result in take can result in civil or criminal penalties. The federal ESA and Section 404 guidelines prohibit the issuance of wetland permits for projects that would jeopardize the existence of threatened or endangered species. The US Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE or Corps) must consult with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and possibly the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) when threatened or endangered species may be affected by the proposed project to determine whether issuance of a Section 404 permit would jeopardize the continued existence species. In the context of the project site, the federal ESA would be triggered if development resulted in the take of a threatened or endangered species or if the issuance of a Section 404 permit or other federal agency action could adversely affect or jeopardize a threatened or endangered species.

### 1.3.2 California Endangered Species Act

The state ESA is similar to the federal ESA but pertains to state-listed endangered and threatened species. It required state agencies to consult with the California Department of Fish and Game when preparing California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) documents to ensure that the state lead agency actions do not jeopardize the existence of listed species. It directs agencies to consult with DFG on projects or actions that could affect listed species, directs DFG to determine whether jeopardy would occur, and allows DFG to identify "reasonable and prudent alternatives" to the project consistent with conserving the species. Agencies can approve a project that affects a listed species if they determine that there are "overriding considerations"; however, the agencies are prohibited from approving projects that would result in the extinction of a listed species. The state ESA prohibits the taking of state-listed endangered or threatened plant and wildlife species. DFG exercises authority over mitigation projects involving state-listed species, including those resulting from CEQA mitigation requirements. DFG may authorize "take" if an approved habitat management plan or management agreement that avoids or compensates for possible jeopardy is implemented. DFG required preparation of mitigation plans in accordance with published guidelines.

### 1.3.3 California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA)

CEQA applies to public agencies in California with discretionary authority over project approvals and permits. CEQA requires that the impacts of proposed projects be assessed before the project is approved. Projects with significant environmental impacts can only be approved with adequate mitigation or compensation unless a finding of overriding consideration is made. Discretionary approval from public agencies may require avoidance measures or compensatory mitigation. CEQA also provides that less than significant impacts of an individual project can be treated as significant if they contribute to significant cumulative impacts on the environment.

### 1.3.4 Migratory Bird Treaty Act

The Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA) was first enacted in 1918 and authorized the Secretary of the Interior to regulate the "taking" of migratory birds. Specifically, the MBTA states that it shall be unlawful, except as permitted by regulations, to "at any time, by any means, or in any manner, to pursue, take, kill, possess, sale, purchase, ship, transport, carry, or export, at any time, or in any manner, any migratory bird, or any part, nest, or egg of any such bird" (16 USC 703). The current list of species protected by the MBTA is located in Title 50, CFR Section 10.13.

### 1.3.5 City of Visalia Oak Tree Mitigation Policy

As described in the City of Visalia Valley Oak Tree Protection Ordinance; It is unlawful for any person to willfully remove, destroy, damage, mutilate, poison, or attempt to kill an oak tree in the city, except as may be allowed pursuant to a removal permit as provided for in Section 12.24.030, or as designated in a notice to prune an oak tree that satisfies of Article 3.

Any person desiring to destroy or remove an oak tree on private or public property must apply for and obtain a removal permit. Such application shall be in writing to the city clerk, who shall forward such application to the city manager of the city. The application shall contain the number, size, and location of the oak trees and a brief statement of the reason for the requested action. The city manager shall charge a fee for said permit, established by the city council's annual designation of city fees.

## 2. Existing Conditions

The Project area is a 62.54-acre rectangular-shaped inactive walnut orchard located on the city's southern edge at an elevation of approximately 325 feet above mean sea level (AMSL). Ground cover on the property is mostly bare ground, with ruderal weeds and grasses dominating the edges of the property. Paved roadways border the north and west sides of the Project site, with East Caldwell Avenue to the north and Santa Fe Street to the west. A city bike path and fence along the railroad and Santa Fe Street occurs on the western boundary of the project and contains several ornamentally planted trees, including western Sycamore (*Platanus racemosa*), western redbud (*Cercis occidentalis*), and olive (*Olea europaea*). Agricultural land dominates the landscape to the south, with an urban environment to the north. There is ongoing residential development to the north, east, and west.

The project site is bordered by several large-diameter valley oak *(Quercus lobata*) trees along its southern and eastern boundaries. A riverine feature known as the Tulare Irrigation Canal also borders the southern boundary of the project site, and there is a large grape vineyard south of the canal and project site. The *Visalia* U.S.G.S. quadrangle map shows that the Tulare Irrigation Canal connects to Packwood Creek and Cameron Creek as a riverine habitat. Cameron Creek is approximately 0.18 miles south of the Project site.

### Valley Oak Woodland

Valley Oak (*Quercus lobata*) Woodland habitat supports breeding, foraging, and shelter habitat for several wildlife species. Species observed in this habitat during the biological assessment include Nuttal's woodpecker (*Picoides nuttallii*). Evidence was observed of cache trees for the Acorn woodpecker (*Melanerpes formicivorus*), and there is potential for use by oak titmouse (*Baeolophus inornatus*) and other avian wildlife species.

As mentioned previously, the project site contains scattered large-diameter heritage sized valley oak trees bordering the southern border of the Project site along the Tulare Irrigation Canal and along the eastern boundary of the project. The City of Visalia Valley Oak Tree Protection Ordinance regulates oak tree removals or impacts. The Valley Oak Tree Protection Ordinance generally describes preservation criteria for oak trees within designated open space areas. Oak tree removal, revegetation, and mitigation will be in accordance with the Valley Oak Tree Protection Ordinance framework.

### Wetland Habitats

According to the National Wetland Inventory, a riverine habitat, the Tulare Irrigation Canal runs adjacent to the property's southern boundary (**Appendix E**). This canal appears to be part of a matrix of the Kaweah Delta watershed and is connected to various tributaries within the watershed, including Cameron Creek and Packwood Creek, and is controlled and maintained by the Tulare County Irrigation District. During the Habitat Assessment field survey, this drainage was completely dry and sparsely covered with ruderal weeds. During the site visit, it was noted that the natural habitat around this canal was mostly disturbed, with dirt roads running along both sides of the canal. Several large-diameter valley oak trees bordered the canal along the Project Boundary (**Photos 1, 3, 4, 27, 28, 36, & 38**).

# 3. Methods

## 3.1 Literature Review

Before performing the Habitat Assessment, Soar Environmental searched for threatened or endangered species that could occur near the Project area. The records search included a review of the California Natural Diversity Database (CNDDB), the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) Information for Planning and Consultation (IPaC), and the California Native Plant Society (CNPS) Online Rare Plant Inventory. The area covered by the data records search included the USGS 7.5-minute quadrangles of *Visalia, Cairn's Corner, Exeter, Goshen, Ivanhoe, Monson, Paige, Traver,* and *Tulare.* These sources generated a list of special-status plant and animal species. Proximal locations of special-status plant and animal species located within 5 miles of the Project Site are shown in (**Figure 5**).

An analysis of special-status species from CNDDB records identified eight State and/or federally listed wildlife species that historically occurred near the Project area. These eight wildlife species were considered for further analysis. The CNPS Online Rare Plant Inventory identified twenty-one regionally occurring special-status plant species historically occurring near the Project area. However, an analysis of habitat and existing conditions determined that all special-status plant species identified are absent from or unlikely to occur within the Project area due to long-term ongoing disturbance from active agriculture and/or the absence of suitable habitat within the Project area and were excluded from further analysis (**Section 5**).

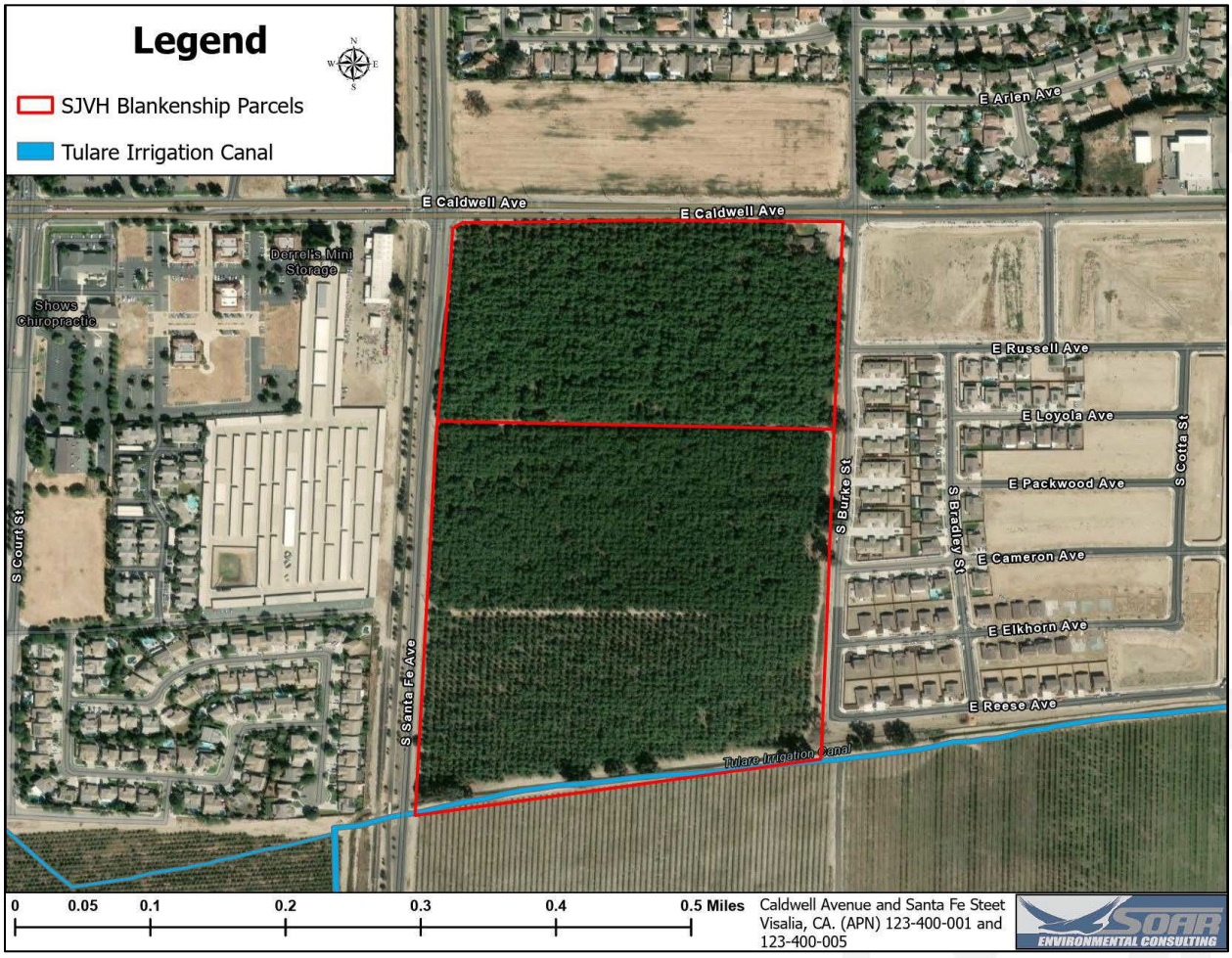
## 3.2 Field Reconnaissance Methodology

The Habitat Assessment is a diurnal, non-protocol survey. The purpose of the Habitat Assessment Survey was to search for the presence or suitable habitat for special-status species that have historically been known to occur in the area. The Habitat Assessment site visit includes observing and noting the plant and wildlife species occurring on and around the Project site, habitat suitability for the species named in the Literature Review, present environmental conditions, and habitat, including microhabitat (only observable from the ground level).

The Habitat Assessment was conducted on December 13, 2024, by Soar Environmental biologist Lucas Knox in order to assess the habitat quality for species listed in **Section 5**. Survey efforts emphasized the search for suitable habitats or the presence of special-status species that had documented occurrences in

the data records search of the CNDDB, IPaC, and CNPS databases. The site visit involves walking the property's perimeter and meandering transects throughout the Project area. During the site visit, the surveyor identified vegetation and searched for bird nests, possible small mammal dens, vernal pools, and other signs of wildlife occupancy or associated suitable habitat features. The biologist also surveyed the surrounding area by vehicle where accessible within 0.5 miles of the Project Site to look for biological resources and features that may be conducive to the suitable habitats for the identified special-status species. During the surveys, the biologist collected photos of the Project boundaries and other points of interest depicting the habitat and potential biological resources (**Appendix A**).

Figure 3. Project Site Map




*Project area: 62.54 acres*

## 4. Habitat Assessment Results

Paved roadways surround the project site with East Caldwell Avenue to the north, Santa Fe Street to the west, and Burke Street to the east. During the site visit, a sizeable vacant field with new herbaceous non-native ruderal plant growth was present north of the project site and Caldwell Avenue. The project site is bordered by several large-diameter valley oak (*Quercus lobata*) trees along the southern and

eastern boundaries of the project. The entire Project site consists of agricultural walnut orchards (*Juglans* species), which were actively being removed and placed in piles during the site visit. Groundcover along the boundaries of the Project site and portions of the walnut orchard are dominated by ruderal weeds and grasses, with large areas of bare ground. Commercial and residential properties with ornamental trees and shrubs are present north, east, and west of the Project site. A riverine feature known as the Tulare Irrigation Canal is adjacent to the southern boundary. During the site visit, the Tulare Irrigation Canal was dry and had sparse ruderal weeds growing in it.

The Project site is transected by two lateral farm roads between the walnut orchards from east to west, as well as an overhead utility line and irrigation systems to the property. During the site visit, twenty-two common bird species and thirty-three common plant species were observed within and adjacent to the Project site (**Tables 1 & 2**). Powerline poles and large trees in the vicinity were inspected for raptor nests and cavities. No large stick nests were observed. However, several cavities were present within the large valley oak trees along the southern and eastern edges of the project area.

Due to the predominantly agricultural ground cover, no small mammal burrows were present within the Project site; however, a few were present along the outskirts of the southern and eastern boundaries and the banks of the Tulare Irrigation Canal. Rodent control poison tube traps were observed along the irrigation canal and vineyard south of the Project, presumably targeting California ground squirrels (Otospermophilus beecheyi).

The survey was conducted by a qualified biologist outside of the blooming period for most of the sensitive plant species listed in **Table 4** and outside the normal nesting bird season. However, no special-status plant species were seen within or near the Project area, and conditions for these species do not appear conducive due to the loss of a native seed bank from implementation of long-term agricultural practices.

During the site visit, one special-status wildlife species, Nutall's woodpecker *(Dryobates nuttallii),* was present during the survey, and no other special-status plants or wildlife species were observed. Wildlife and plant species observed on or near the property are listed below in **Tables 1 & 2**.

## Table 1. Wildlife Species Observed in the Project Area

| Common/ Scientific Name | Listing Status | Common/ Scientific Name | Listing Status |
|---|---|---|---|
| American Bushtit *(Psaltriparus minimus)* | MBTA | Lesser Goldfinch (*Spinus psaltria)* | MBTA |
| American Pipit *(Anthus rubescens)* | MBTA | Merlin (*Falco columbarius)* | MBTA |
| Anna's Hummingbird *(Calypte anna)* | MBTA | Mourning dove (*Zenaida macroura)* | MBTA |
| Black Phoebe *(Sayornis nigricans)* | MBTA | Nuttall's woodpecker *(Dryobates nuttallii)* | BCC, MBTA |
| California Scrub Jay (*Aphelocoma californica)* | MBTA | Red-tailed hawk *(Buteo jamaicensis)* | MBTA |
| Cedar Waxwing (*Bombycilla cedrorum)* | MBTA | Ruby-crowned kinglet *(Regulus calendula)* | MBTA |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Common Raven *(Corvus corax)* | MBTA | Say's phoebe (*Sayornis saya*) | MBTA |
| Eurasian Collared Dove (*Streptopelia decaocto)* | MBTA | Turkey vulture *(Cathartes aura)* | MBTA |
| European Starling (*Sturnus vulgaris)* | None | White-crowned sparrow *(Zonotrichia leucophrys)* | MBTA |
| House Finch (*Haemorhous mexicanus)* | MBTA | Yellow-rumped warbler *(Setophaga coronata)* | MBTA |
| Killdeer (*Charadrius vociferus)* | MBTA | Lesser goldfinch *(Spinus psaltria)* | MBTA |

## Table 2. Plant Species Observed in the Project Area

| Common / Scientific Name | Listing Status | Common/ Scientific Name | Listing Status |
|---|---|---|---|
| Annual Bluegrass *(Poa annua)* | None | Mexican sprangletop *(Leptochloa fusca ssp. uninervia)* | None |
| Canadian Horseweed *(Erigeron canadensis)* | None | European olive (*Olea europaea*) | None |
| Cheeseweed *(Malva parviflora)* | None | Pigweed *(Amaranthus sp.)* | None |
| Chickweed *(Stellaria media)* | None | Prickly lettuce (*Lactuca serriola)* | None |
| Chinese Elm *(Ulmus parvifolia)* | None | Redstem filaree *(Erodium cicutarium)* | None |
| Chinese Pistache (*Pistacia chinensis*) | None | Ripgut brome (*Bromus diandrus)* | None |
| Common Knotweed *(Polygonum arenastrum)* | None | Russian thistle (*Salsola tragus)* | None |
| Fan Palms *(Washingtonia)* | None | Saltgrass (*Distichlis spicata)* | None |
| Fern Grass *(Catapodium rigidum)* | None | Silverleaf nightshade (*Solanum elaeagnifolium)* | None |
| Foxtail grass (*Alopecurus)* | None | Slender Russian thistle (*Salsola collina)* | None |
| Goosefoot *(Chenopodium album)* | None | Common sowthistle (*Sonchus oleraceus)* | None |
| Grapes *(Vitis californica)* | None | Stinging nettle (*Urtica dioica*) | None |
| Iris (*Iris species)* | None | Western sycamore (*Platanus racemosa*) | None |
| Jerusalem thorn *(Parkinsonia aculeata)* | None | Valley Oak (*Quercus lobata*) | None |

| | |
|---|---|
| Jimsonweed *(Datura stramonium)* | None |
| Lesser swinecress *(Lepidium didymum)* | None |
| Mexican feathergrass *(Nassella tenuissima)* | None |

| | |
|---|---|
| Walnut *(Juglans sp.)* | None |
| Western redbud (*Cercis occidentalis)* | None |

# 5. Special-Status Species

Special-status plants and animals that have a reasonable possibility to occur in the Project area based on habitat suitability and requirements, elevation and geographic range, soils, topography, surrounding land uses, and proximity of known occurrences in the CNDDB, IPaC, and CNPS databases to the Project area are listed in **Tables 2** & **3**. The likelihood of the occurrence of special-status species was assessed using information from the various listed sources in **Section 3.1** Literature Review and Habitat Assessment. Narratives are provided for species with land use planning and regulatory implications.

Results from the data records search identified 46 special-status species: 22 wildlife and 33 plant species. However, an analysis of recent occurrences, habitat suitability, and proximity within 5 miles of the Project site indicated 6 special-status species with low potential for occurrence and one special status wildlife species that was present during the site survey. Special-status species for which there are no regulatory implications (i.e., lack of suitable habitat or no record of historical occurrences within 5 miles) are excluded from further analysis.

***Species with Low Potential for Occurrence:***

1) California gull (*Larus californicus*)
2) Crotch's bumblebee (*Bombus crotchii*)
3) Oak titmouse (*Baeolophus inornatus*)
4) San Joaquin kit fox (*Vulpes macrotis mutica*)
5) Swainson's hawk (*Buteo swainsoni*)
6) Western pond turtle (*Emys marmorata*)
7) Western yellow-billed cuckoo (*Coccyzus americanus occidentalis*)

***Species Present during the Site Survey:***

1) Nuttall's woodpecker (*Picoides nuttallii*)

Special-status species and sensitive habitats include plant and wildlife taxa, or other unique biological features afforded special protection by local land use policies and/or state and federal regulations. Special-status plant and wildlife species are those listed as rare, threatened, or endangered under the state or federal Endangered Species Acts. Vegetation communities may warrant special status if they are of limited distribution, have high wildlife value, or are particularly vulnerable to disturbance. Listed and special-status species are defined as:

- Listed or proposed for listing under the state or Federal Endangered Species acts.

- Protected under other regulations (e.g., Migratory Bird Treaty Act).
- California Department of Fish & Wildlife (CDFW) Species of Special Concern.
- Listed as species of concern by CNPS or USFWS; and
- Receive consideration during environmental review under CEQA.

Below are listed all species from the Section 3.1 search results, including common and non-listed species. The analysis and following determination are based on Habitat Assessment results and the most recent occurrence and proximity to the Project site (**Tables 1 & 2**).

- **Present**: Species known to occur on the site, based on CNDDB records, and/or were observed on the site during the field survey.
- **High**: Species known to occur on or near the site (based on CNDDB record within 5 miles), and/or there is suitable habitat on the site.
- **Low**: Species known to occur on or near the site (based on CNDDB record within 5 miles), but there is no suitable habitat onsite. Or potential habitat occurs onsite, but the species is not known to occur within 5 miles.
- **None**: The species is not known to occur within 5 miles of the site, and there is no suitable habitat on the site. OR—The Species was surveyed during the appropriate season with negative results.

## Table 3. Potentially Occurring Listed Wildlife Species

| Common/ Scientific Name | Listing Status *Fed/State/ Other* | Habitat Requirements | Potential for Occurrence |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Birds** | | | |
| Belding's savannah sparrow *(Passerculus sandwichensis beldingi)* | -/SE/BCC MBTA | Inhabits coastal salt marshes, from Santa Barbara south through San Diego County. Nests in Salicornia on and about margins of tidal flats. | **None**: The species is not known to occur within 5 miles of the site, and there is no suitable habitat on the site |
| Bullock's oriole *(Icterus bullockii)* | -/-/BCC MBTA | Generally arid west, riparian or streamside, woodlands in cottonwood trees and other hardwoods where they forage in the outer branches. | **None**: The species is not known to occur within 5 miles of the site, and there is no suitable habitat on the site |
| Burrowing owl (*Athene cunicularia*) | -/CCE/SSC | Subterranean nesters depend upon burrowing mammals, most notably the California ground squirrel. | **None**: The species is not known to occur within 5 miles of the site, and there is no suitable habitat on the site |

| Common/ Scientific Name | Listing Status *Fed/State/ Other* | Habitat Requirements | Potential for Occurrence |
|---|---|---|---|
| California gull (*Larus californicus*) | BCC, MBTA | Breeds in colonies on islands and levees in lakes and rivers. Often found in pastures, scrublands, and garbage dumps. Will forage miles from the colony, eating everything they can find from mayflies to garbage. | **Low**: Species known to occur on or near the site (based on CNDDB record within 5 miles), but there is no suitable habitat onsite. The species has the potential to occur as a transient forager. |
| Lawrence's goldfinch *(Carduelis lawrencei)* | BCC, MBTA | Oak-pine woods, chaparral. Breeds locally in a variety of habitats including streamside trees, oak woodland, open pine woods, pinyon-juniper woods, chaparral | **None:** The species is not known to occur within 5 miles of the site, and there is no suitable habitat on the site |
| Marbled godwit *(Limosa fedoa)* | BCC, MBTA | Shortgrass prairies near wetlands. | **None**: The species is not known to occur within 5 miles of the site, and there is no suitable habitat on the site |
| Northern harrier (*Circus hudsonius*) | BCC, MBTA | Prefers open habitats with large tracts of contiguous grassland and wetlands for nesting and foraging. | **None:** Species is not known to occur within 5 miles of the site and there is no suitable habitat on the site. |
| Nuttall's woodpecker *(Dryobates nuttallii)* | MBTA | Wooded canyons and foothills, river woods. In much of range almost always around oaks, especially where oaks meet other trees along rivers, also in pine-oak woods in foothills. | **Present:** The species was present on the site during the field survey. Potential nest cavities exist within the oak trees surrounding the project site. |
| Oak titmouse (*Baeolophus inornatus*) | BCC, MBTA | Woodland dominated by oaks, riparian habitats and coast live oak trees within, nests in tree cavities | **Low**: Potential nest cavities exist within the valley oak trees surrounding the project site. |
| Santa Barbara Song sparrow (*Melospiza melodia graminea*) | BCC, MBTA | Prefers riparian, fresh or saline emergent wetland, and wet meadow habitats. | **None:** Species is not known to occur within 5 miles of the site and there is no suitable habitat on the site. |

| Common/ Scientific Name | Listing Status *Fed/State/ Other* | Habitat Requirements | Potential for Occurrence |
|---|---|---|---|
| Swainson's hawk (*Buteo swainsoni*) | -/CT/- | Nests in isolated trees or riparian woodlands adjacent to suitable foraging habitat (agricultural fields, grasslands, etc.). | **Low**: The species is not known to occur within 5 miles of the site, and there is limited potential nesting habitat onsite in the form of large valley oak trees. |
| Tricolored blackbird (*Agelaius tricolor*) | -/CT/SSC | Found in areas near water, such as marshes, grasslands, and wetlands. They require some sort of substrate nearby to build nests. | **None**: Species is not known to occur within 5 miles of the site and there is no suitable habitat on the site. |
| Western yellow-billed cuckoo (*Coccyzus americanus occidentalis*) | FT/CE/ MBTA | Woodlands near streams or lakes, abandoned farmland, old fruit orchards, successional shrubland, and dense thickets. | **Low:** Species known to occur on or near the site (based on CNDDB record within 5 miles), but there is limited fragmented suitable woodland habitat onsite. |
| **Amphibians** | | | |
| California tiger salamander *(Ambystoma californiense)* | FT/ST/- | Grasslands, oak savannah riparian woodlands and lower elevations of coniferous forests, ditches, vernal pools, and wetlands. | **None**: There is no suitable habitat for this species onsite. Possibly Extirpated (CNDDB). |
| Western spadefoot *(Spea hammondii)* | FPT/-/SSC | Rivers with sandy banks, willows, cottonwoods, and sycamores; loose, gravelly areas of streams in drier parts of range. | **None**: There is no suitable habitat for this species onsite. Possibly Extirpated (CNDDB). |
| **Invertebrates** | | | |
| Crotch's bumblebee (*Bombus crotchii*) | -/CCE/- | Interior dunes, grasslands, and shrublands, with food sources: milkweeds, dusty maidens, lupines, clovers, phacelias, sages, clarkias, poppies, and wild buckwheat. | **Low:** Species known to occur on or near the site (based on CNDDB record within 5 miles), but there is no suitable nectar native wildflower field habitat onsite. |
| Monarch butterfly *(Danaus plexippus)* | FC/-/- | Winter roost sites extend along the coast from northern Mendocino to Baja California, Mexico. Roosts located in wind-protected tree groves (eucalyptus, Monterey pine, | **None:** No roosting, foraging (nectar-flowers) or reproductive host plant habitat (Milkweed, *Asclepias* |

| Common/ Scientific Name | Listing Status *Fed/State/ Other* | Habitat Requirements | Potential for Occurrence |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | cypress), with nectar and water sources nearby. | *sp.)* is present in the Project Area. |
| Valley elderberry longhorn beetle *(Desmocerus californicus dimorphus)* | -/FT/- | Occurs only in the Central Valley of California, in association with blue elderberry (Sambucus mexicana), in riparian scrub | **None**: There is no suitable habitat for this species onsite. Possibly Extirpated (CNDDB). |
| Vernal pool fairy shrimp *(Branchinecta lynchi)* | -/FT/- | Endemic to the grasslands of the Central Valley, Central Coast mountains, and South Coast mountains, in valley foothills grasslands, vernal pools, and wetlands. | **None**: There is no suitable habitat for this species onsite. Possibly Extirpated (CNDDB). |
| Vernal pool tadpole shrimp *(Lepidurus packardi)* | -/FE/- | Vernal pools, (hardpan, duripan, or claypan), grassland. Pools commonly found in grass-bottomed or mud-bottomed swales. | **None**: There is no suitable habitat for this species onsite. Possibly Extirpated (CNDDB). |
| **Mammals** | | | |
| Buena Vista Lake Ornate Shrew *(Sorex ornatus relictus)* | -/FE/- | Preferred habitat is riparian, but it can also be found in other areas, including wetlands, forests, scrublands, drier grassland and desert scrub. | **None**: There is no suitable habitat for this species onsite. Possibly Extirpated (CNDDB). |
| San Joaquin kit fox (*Vulpes macrotis mutica)* | FE/SE/- | Arid flat grasslands, scrublands, and alkali meadows with short vegetation. | **Low:** Species known to occur on or near the site (based on CNDDB record within 5 miles), but there is no suitable habitat onsite. |
| Tipton kangaroo rat *(Dipodomys nitratoides nitratoides)* | FE/SE/- | Arid and alkaline plains under shrub and grass vegetation, coastal scrub, open stages of chaparral, and desert scrub habitats, and in conifer woodlands. | **None**: There is no suitable habitat for this species onsite. Possibly Extirpated (CNDDB). |
| **Reptiles** | | | |
| Blunt-nosed leopard lizard *(Gambelia sila)* | FE/SE | Semi-arid grasslands, alkali flats, and washes, utilize shrubs and small mammal burrows. | **None:** Species is not known to occur within 5 miles of the site and there is no suitable habitat on the site. |

| Common/ Scientific Name | Listing Status *Fed/State/ Other* | Habitat Requirements | Potential for Occurrence |
|---|---|---|---|
| Western pond turtle *(Actinemys marmorata)* | FPT/-/SSC | A thoroughly aquatic turtle of ponds, marshes, rivers, streams, and irrigation ditches, usually with aquatic vegetation. Found elevations below 6,000 feet. Needs basking sites and suitable upland habitat such as sandy banks or grassy open field within 0.5 kilometers from water for egg-laying. | **Low:** Species known to occur on or near the site (based on CNDDB record within 5 miles), but there is no suitable pond habitat within the Project area. |

*Listing Status Notes:

Federal:

| | |
|---|---|
| **FE** | Federally listed Endangered |
| **FT** | Federally listed Threatened |
| **FCE** | Federal Candidate Endangered species |
| **FCT** | Federal Candidate Threatened species |
| **FPT** | Federal Proposed Threatened |
| **FWL** | USFWS Watch list |
| **BCC** | USFWS Bird of Conservation Concern |
| **BGEAC** | Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act |
| **MBTA** | Migratory Bird Treaty Act |

State:

| | |
|---|---|
| **CE** | State-listed Endangered |
| **CT** | State-listed Threatened |
| **CCE** | State Candidate Endangered species |
| **CCT** | State Candidate Threatened species |
| **CR** | State Rare Species |
| **CA** | State Special Animal |
| **FP** | CDFW Fully Protected Species |
| **SSC** | CDFW Species of Special Concern |
| **CWL** | CDFW Watch List |

## Table 4. Regionally Occurring Special-Status Plant Species

| Common/ Scientific Name | Listing Status *Fed/CA/CNPS/* Bloom Period | Habitat Description | Habitat Present/ Absent | Rationale |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Alkali-sink goldfields *(Lasthenia chrysantha)* | -/-/1B.1 Feb-May | Vernal pools, alkaline soils. Found at elevations between 0 - 655 feet. | Absent | There is no suitable habitat for this species on site. |
| Bitterscale *(Atriplex depressa)* | 1B.2/ Apr-Oct | Chenopod scrub, alkaline soils/<1100 ft elevation | Absent | There is no suitable habitat for this species on site. |
| California alkali grass (*Puccinellia simplex)* | 1B.2/ Mar-May | Chenopod scrub, meadows, alkaline flats/<2800 ft elevation | Absent | There is no suitable habitat for this species on site. |
| California jewelflower *(Caulanthus californicus)* | FE/CE/1B.1/ Feb-May | Chenopod scrub, pinyon-juniper woodland, valley and foothill grassland | Absent | There is no suitable habitat for this species on site. |

| Common/ Scientific Name | Listing Status *Fed/CA/CNPS/* Bloom Period | Habitat Description | Habitat Present/ Absent | Rationale |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| California satintail *(Imperata brevifolia)* | 2B.1/ Sep-May | Chaparral, Coastal scrub, Mojavean desert scrub, meadows and seeps (often alkali), riparian scrub | Absent | There is no suitable habitat for this species on site. |
| Earlimart orache *(Atriplex cordulata var. erecticaulis)* | -/-1B.2 Aug-Nov | Valley and foothill grassland. Found at elevations below 330 feet elevation | Absent | There is no suitable habitat for this species on site. |
| Ewan's larkspur *(Delphinium hansenii ssp. Ewanianum)* | -/-4.2 Mar-May | Cismontane woodland Valley and foothill grassland/195 - 1970 ft elevation | Absent | There is no suitable habitat for this species on site. |
| Heartscale *(Atriplex cordulata var. cordulata)* | 1B.2/ Apr-Oct | Chenopod scrub, saline or alkaline soils/ <230 ft elevation | Absent | There is no suitable habitat for this species on site. |
| Hoover's spurge *(Euphorbia hooveri)* | 1B.2/ June-Oct | Vernal pools/<800 ft elevaiton | Absent | There is no suitable habitat for this species on site. |
| Lesser saltscale *(Atriplex minuscula)* | 1B.1/ May-Oct | Chenopod scrub, alkaline playa/<330 ft elevation | Absent | There is no suitable habitat for this species on site. |
| Recurved larkspur *(Delphinium recurvatum)* | 1B.2/ Mar-June | Cismontane woodland, chenopod scrub, desert scrub, alkaline soils/100- 1,900 ft elevation | Absent | There is no suitable habitat for this species on site. |
| Sanford's arrowhead *(Sagittaria sanfordii)* | -/-/1B.2 May-Nov | Marshes, ponds, ditches and swamps (freshwater) at elevations between 0 - 2135 feet | Absent | There is no suitable habitat for this species on site. |
| San Joaquin adobe sunburst *(Pseudobahia peirsonii)* | FT/CE/1B.1 Feb-Apr | An annual herb found in cismontane woodland, valley and foothill grassland. Adobe or clay microhabitat. Found at elevations between 295 and 2,625 feet. | Absent | There is no suitable habitat for this species on site. |
| San Joaquin Orcutt grass *(Orcuttia inaequalis)* | FT/CE/1B.1 Apr-Sep | Vernal pools | Absent | There is no suitable habitat for this species on site. |

| Common/ Scientific Name | Listing Status *Fed/CA/CNPS/* Bloom Period | Habitat Description | Habitat Present/ Absent | Rationale |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Spiny- sepaled button celery (*Eryngium spinosepalum)* | FT/1B.2/ Apr-June | Valley and foothill grassland, vernal pools/330-4,000 ft elevation | Absent | There is no suitable habitat for this species on site. |
| Subtle orache *(Atriplex subtilis)* | -/-/1B.2 May-Oct | Valley and foothill grassland, often on alkaline and clay/<220 ft elevation. | Absent | There is no suitable habitat for this species on site. |
| Vernal barley poaceae *(Hordium intercedens)* | -/-/3.2 May-Jun | Coastal dunes, Coastal scrub, Valley and foothill grassland (depressions, saline flats), Vernal pools/15-3,280 ft elevation. | Absent | There is no suitable habitat for this species on site. |
| Vernal pool smallscale *(Atriplex persistens)* | 1B.2/ June-Oct | alkaline vernal pools/<380 ft elevation | Absent | There is no suitable habitat for this species on site. |
| Watson's amaranth *(Amaranthus watsonii)* | -/-/4.3/ Apr-Sept | Mojavean desert scrub Sonoran desert scrub/65 - 5580 ft elevation. | Absent | There is no suitable habitat for this species on site. |
| Winter's sunflower *(Helianthus winteri)* | 1B.2/ Jan-Dec | Openings in cismontane woodland, valley and foothill grassland/360-7500 ft elevation | Absent | There is no suitable habitat for this species on site. |

*Listing Status Notes:

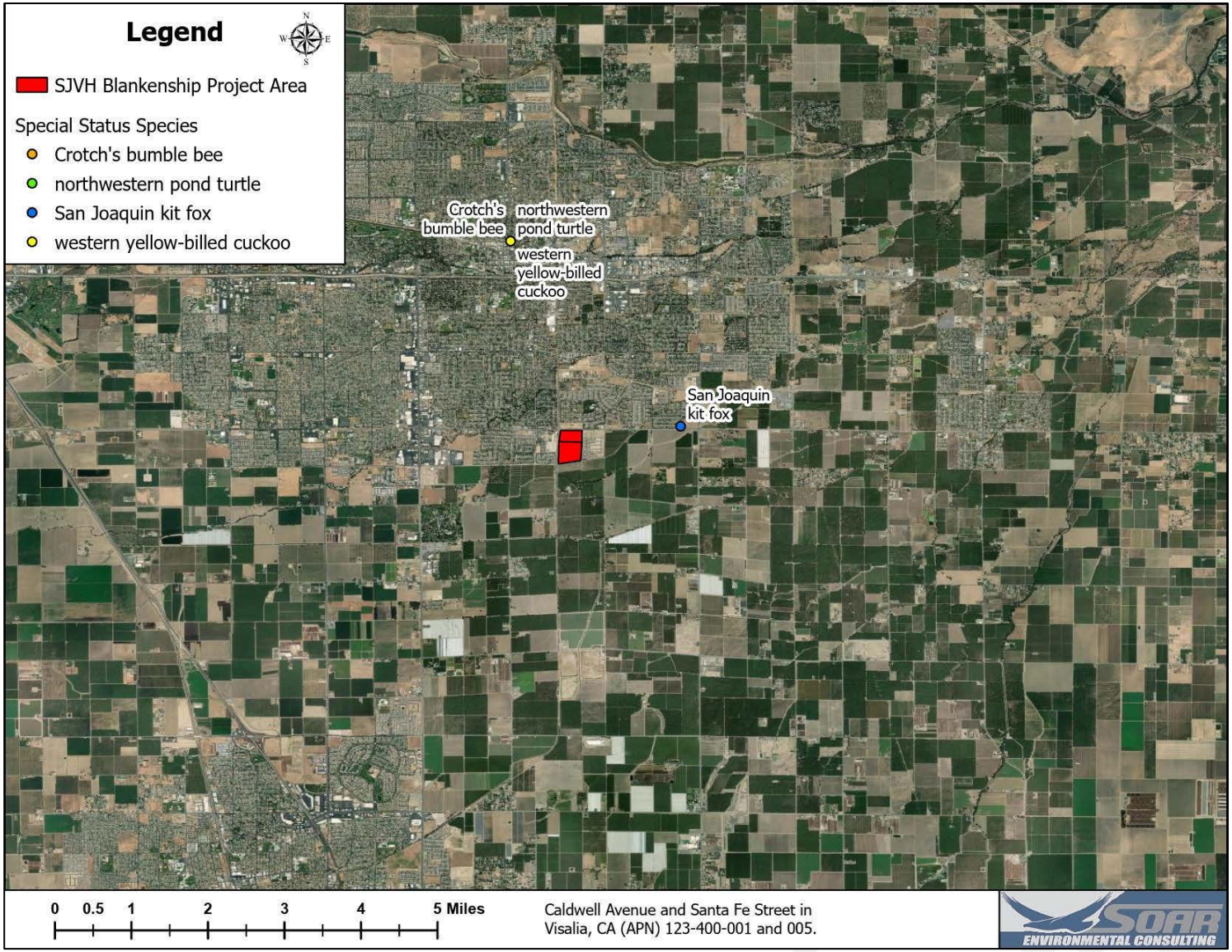
Federal:
- **FE** Federally listed Endangered
- **FT** Federally listed Threatened
- **FC** Federal Candidate Species

State:
- **CE** State Listed Endangered
- **CT** State-listed Threatened
- **CC** State Candidate Species
- **CR** State Rare Species

CRPR: California Native Plant Society Rare Plant Rank
- **1A** Considered extirpated in CA
- **1B** Rare, threatened, or endangered in CA and elsewhere
- **2** Rare, threatened, or endangered in CA but common elsewhere
- **4** Limited distribution (Watch-list)

CRPR Extensions
- **0.1** Seriously endangered in California
- **0.2** Fairly endangered in California
- **0.3** Not very endangered in California

Figure 4. Map of CNDDB Occurrences




*This map shows the closest and most recent special-status species locations from the California Natural Diversity Database (CNDDB).*

## 5.1 Special-Status Wildlife Species Descriptions

This section describes identifiable physical characteristics and habitat requirements for special-status species identified in the Literature Review that may have potential to occur in the vicinity of the Project area. These species were considered for further analysis.

### Bird Species

**California gull (*Larus californicus*)**

California gulls are listed as USFWS Birds of Conservation Concern. They breed in colonies on islands and levees in lakes and rivers. They are often found in pastures, scrublands, and garbage dumps while foraging miles from the colony, eating everything from mayflies to garbage. There is no suitable habitat for California gull in the vicinity of the project area.

**Nuttall's Woodpecker (*Dryobates nuttallii*)**

Nuttall's woodpecker is a Bird of Conservation Concern (BCC) only in particular Bird Conservation Regions in the continental USA. They are a non-migratory species with a geographic range confined to northern California extending south towards the northwest region of Baja California, Mexico. Habitat includes wooded canyons, foothills, and river woods. There are almost always oaks in much of its range, especially where oaks meet other trees along rivers. This species nests in cavities of live or dead trees, usually cottonwood, willow, or sycamore, near oak woodlands. Sometimes nesting in utility poles or fence posts. Cavities are usually 3-35 feet above ground, sometimes up to 60 feet or higher. Males do most of the excavating, creating a new cavity every year.

Nuttall's woodpecker has black wings and tail feathers with white barring. On the ventral surface, the color is white, with black spots and bars. It has a black forehead with white streaks on the sides and an unbarred black region at the top of the back. Adult males have a distinguishable red crown which females do not. However, this physical feature is present in the juveniles of both sexes. They have zygodactyl feet and stiff tail feathers, which allow them to maintain a vertical position on trees, typical of woodpeckers.

This species was present during the site visit. Nesting habitat is present within the California life oak trees around the perimeter of the Project site and surrounding area. There was no CNDDB is record found for this species.

**Oak Titmouse (*Baeolophus inornatus*)**

Oak titmouse is listed as a USFWS Bird of Conservation Concern and a species under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act. This relatively common species is year-round resident throughout much of California including most of the coastal slope, Central Valley and western Sierra Nevada foothills. Its primary habitat is woodland dominated by oaks. Local populations have adapted to woodlands of pines or junipers in some areas. The oak titmouse nests in tree cavities, usually natural cavities or those excavated by woodpeckers, though they may partially excavate their own. Seeds and arboreal invertebrates make up the birds' diet.

Oak titmouse was not observed during the Habitat Assessment. Suitable habitat was observed in the oak woodland around the Project site. However, no CNDDB record was found within 5 miles of the Project site for this species.

**Swainson's Hawk (*Buteo swainsoni*)**

Swainson's hawk is listed as threatened at the state level and is a listed species under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act. However, due to its common distribution throughout the country, it is not listed at the Federal level. This species favors open habitats for foraging, such as agricultural fields, pastures, and row crops. They nest in scattered stands of eucalyptus, willow, oak, cottonwood, and conifers. Swainson's hawk will occasionally nest on a power pole or transmission tower. The location of Swainson's hawk nests is typically on the tallest point in or near an open field, giving this species a full view of its foraging area while nesting.

Due to their late return to California for the breeding season, Swainson's hawk often uses the same nests for serval breeding seasons and even generations. If a nest is constructed, it is usually built with loose bundles of sticks and debris quickly stacked together. They are also territorial of their nests and will dive bomb any other species attempting to use their nest. Red-tailed hawks and great horned owls, which overlap in habitat, are species known to use Swainson's hawk nests. The incubation period for Swainson's hawk is approximately 35 days, and the nesting period is 17 to 22 days. The breeding season for this species begins in March and ends in September.

Swainson's hawk was not observed during the Habitat Assessment. Although there is suitable habitat for this species, no CNDDB record of it was found within 5 miles of the project site.

**Western yellow-billed cuckoo (*Coccyzus americanus occidentalis*)**

Yellow-billed cuckoos have uniform grayish-brown plumage on their head and back, and dull white underparts. Their tails are long with two rows of four to six large white circles on the underside. The bill of yellow-billed cuckoos is short to medium in length and curved downward with a black upper mandible and a yellow or orange lower mandible. Yellow-billed cuckoos have zygodactylous feet, meaning that of the four toes, the middle two point forward and the outer two point backward.

Yellow-billed cuckoos prefer open woodlands with clearings and a dense shrub layer. They are often found in woodlands near streams, rivers or lakes. In North America, their preferred habitats include abandoned farmland, old fruit orchards, successional shrubland and dense thickets. In winter, yellow-billed cuckoos can be found in tropical habitats with similar structure, such as scrub forest and mangroves.

There were no signs of yellow-billed cuckoos at the time of the Habitat Assessment. There is no suitable habitat for this species within the vicinity of the Project Site. A search of CNDDB records indicate the nearest and most recent occurrence of yellow-billed cuckoos was mapped generally within the City of Visalia. A nest with three eggs was photographed in this vicinity in July 1919. Exact collection location unknown. The occurrence was mapped generally to a given locality. This is a historical occurrence, agriculture and development have eliminated habitat in this area. Due to urbanization of the surrounding area, lack of suitable habitat, and distance of other known occurrences from the site, occurrence of yellow-billed cuckoos within the vicinity of the proposed Project is unlikely to adversely affect populations of this species.

## Invertebrates Species

**Crotch bumble bee (*Bombus crotchii*)**

The Crotch bumblebee (CRBB) can be distinguished by its square-shaped face and rounded ankle on the midleg. Queens and workers (females) have a black head and face and display black color on their mid and bottom thorax and between their wing bases. The appearance of drones (males) varies slightly from queens and workers; drones display yellow hair on their faces, and a black stripe mid thorax. The front of the drone abdomen should have a yellow coloring, and the rest of their abdomen is expected to be predominantly black and red. Workers are active from April to August and queen bees are active for only two months from March until May.

Crotch's bumblebee inhabits grasslands and shrublands and requires a hotter and drier environment than other bumblebee species. It is characterized as a short-tongued species and therefore prefers certain plant species as a food source including milkweeds, dusty maidens, lupines, medics, phacelias, sages, clarkias, poppies, and wild buckwheat.

There were no signs of Crotchs' bumble bee during the Habitat Assessment. There is no suitable habitat for this species within the vicinity of the Project Site. A search of CNDDB records indicate the nearest and most recent occurrence of Crotch's mapped within the City of Visalia. One female queen was collected on 1 May 1954, and collections were also made in this vicinity on 29 July 1961. Due to agriculture and urbanization of the surrounding area, lack of suitable habitat, and distance of other known occurrences from the site, occurrence of Crotchs' bumble bee within the vicinity of the project site, the proposed Project is unlikely to adversely affect populations of this species.

## Mammal Species

**San Joaquin Kit Fox (*Vulpes macrotis mutica*)**

The San Joaquin kit fox is listed as Threatened at the Federal level and Endangered at the State level. They are petite, light-colored canids, approximately 50 centimeters (20 inches) in length, with bushy, black-tipped tails, large ears, and pointed snouts.

San Joaquin kit fox is a desert-adapted species which occurs mainly in arid, flat grasslands, scrublands, and alkali meadows where the vegetation structure is relatively short. This species uses dens year-round and needs loose-textured soils suitable for burrowing. They primarily prey on kangaroo rats and other small rodents, as well as large insects and occasionally rabbits. A typical kit fox den is anywhere from four to 10 inches (25 cm) in diameter, and is taller than it is wide, often with a keyhole shape. Dens usually have dirt berms and matted vegetation adjacent to the entrances, and tracks and prey remains will normally be detected nearby. They may also utilize man-made structures such as pipes and culverts as dens.

There were no signs of San Joaquin kit fox at the time of the Habitat Assessment survey. Suitable habitat for this species is poor within the vicinity of the Project Site. A search of CNDDB records indicates the nearest and most recent occurrence of kit fox is approximately one mile away east from the Project site between 1972 and 1975. The occurrence was a roadkill about 3 miles southeast of Visalia, just west of the intersection of Oakdale (Caldwell) Ave and Cameron Creek. Due to agriculture and urbanization of the surrounding area, lack of suitable habitat, a lack of larger burrows that could represent denning

habitat observed onsite and the distance of other known occurrences from the site, the occurrence of San Joaquin kit fox within the vicinity of the proposed Project is unlikely. The proposed project is has a low potential to adversely impact populations of this species.

Reptile Species

**Western Pond Turtle (*Actinemys marmorata*)**

The western pond turtle is Proposed Threatened on the Federal level and is listed as a Species of Special Concern on the State level. It is found throughout California west of the Pacific Crest, and along the Mojave River watershed, ranging from sea level to 4,500 feet (1,372 meters). The western pond turtle's diet consists of both plant material and invertebrates, any life forms found near water sources. Mating typically occurs between April and May, but this species has been observed relocating to find new food sources or breeding locations between March and June. This species requires basking sites and suitable upland habitat for egg-laying.

The habitat on the Project site is not suitable for western pond turtles as there are no ponds, basins, canals, or ditches present on the Project footprint. The nearest potential habitat is the Tulare irrigation Canal that runs along the southern border of the project boundary and there are no suitable sites for basking and other components of the species habitat requirements. The canal was dry at the time of the site visit. There were no signs of western pond turtles during the Habitat Assessment. There is no suitable habitat for this species within the vicinity of the Project Site. A search of CNDDB records indicate the nearest and most recent occurrence of western pond turtle was mapped generally within the city of Visalia. An observation was made in 1879. This is a historical occurrence, agriculture and development have eliminated habitat in this area. Due to agriculture and urbanization of the surrounding area, lack of suitable habitat, and distance of other known occurrences from the site, occurrence of western pond turtle within the vicinity of the project site, the proposed Project is unlikely to adversely affect populations of this species.

## 5.2 Special-Status Plant Species

All identified special-status plant species are unlikely to occur within the Project impact area because no natural vegetation communities are present, and the Project area lacks any native seed bank due to agriculture, urban development, and landscaping.

# 6. Findings

From the information gathered in the data records search and analysis of the habitat on site, the following eight special-status species were found to have low potential for occurrence within the vicinity of the Project impact area and were considered for further analysis. These special-status species include: 1 insect- Crotch's bumblebee; 1 mammal- San Joaquin kit fox; 1 reptile- western pond turtle; and 5 Bird species- California gull, oak titmouse, Nuttall's woodpecker, yellow-billed cuckoo, and Swainson's hawk. The Habitat Assessment determined there is no suitable habitat for Crotch's bumblebee and western pond turtle or any listed plant species identified in the Literature Review, largely due to urbanization, agricultural practices, and the loss of native seed banks.

One species was present during the survey, Nuttall's woodpecker (*Picoides nuttallii*), which is a USFWS Bird of Conservation Concern (BCC). There is no suitable nesting habitat within the project boundary, except for the valley oak trees around the perimeter, which are not required to be removed for the development of the Project. Several cavities were observed in the surrounding oak trees indicating Nuttall's woodpecker may nest in these trees during the nesting season (February 15 – September 15). This species constructs new cavities each year, so they are not likely to occupy these cavities outside the nesting season. No raptor nests were observed in the oak trees or on powerline poles. Although there are no CNDDB records of Swainson's hawk within 5 miles of the Project site, there is low-quality nesting and foraging habitat for Swainson's hawk and other nesting bird species in the surrounding area. Habitat is marginal due to current development in the immediate vicinity of the proposed Project site.

Due to habitat quality and proximity of historical occurrences, the San Joaquin kit fox has potential to disperse through the area. Although the most recent record of this species is from 2003, numerous historical records from the 1970s report this species in the area. There were no signs of San Joaquin kit fox occupancy during the habitat assessment, indicating low potential for occurrence.

No small mammal burrows were observed within the proposed Project site; however, a few burrows were present within the banks of the Tulare Irrigation Canal along the southern boundary and ruderal areas on the eastern boundary of the property. This irrigation canal is identified as a riverine feature in the National Wetland Inventory (NWI). The irrigation canal has a bare-ground bottom substrate and would not provide suitable habitat for any of the special-status aquatic species identified in the Literature Review.

### Project Impacts

The proposed Project will not likely adversely impact native plant or wildlife species. Project activities would not result in the loss of nesting bird habitat because there is no suitable nesting habitat within the Project site, except for the Valley oak trees around the perimeter, which are not required to be removed for the project's development.

Nuttall's woodpecker is a protected species listed under the USFWS BCC and MBTA, and present near the Project Site. This species, its nesting cavities, eggs, and young are protected under the MBTA. Active woodpecker nesting cavity should not be disturbed during project activities. Where feasible, avoidance and minimization measures should be employed. If minimization measures cannot be utilized, then avoidance measures should be implemented. If the take of a Nuttall's woodpecker, its nesting cavity, egg, or young cannot be avoided, then a consultation with USFWS, application for a permit from USFWS or both may be needed to continue with the proposed project.

## 7. Conclusion

Based on an analysis of current habitat conditions in and near the Project area, the proposed development of the property is not likely to have any permanent impacts on the special-status species or associated habitats identified in this report. Through the implementation of appropriate avoidance and minimization measures, the proposed Project will not impact the Valley Oak woodland habitat surrounding the property and the associated nesting birds and special-status species that may occur.

# 8. Recommendations

During the assessment, one special-status wildlife species, Nuttall's woodpecker (*Picoides nuttallii*), was observed in the Project area. The species is not threatened or endangered on the State or federal level but is listed as a USFWS Bird of Conservation Concern (BCC) because the population is declining. Suitable habitat features on the project site included Valley Oak Woodland Habitat and other potential nesting bird habitats surrounding the site, including ornamental trees and shrubs, and utility poles.

In order to avoid impacts to nesting migratory birds and raptors, construction will commence outside the nesting season, prior to February 15. Soar Environmental Consulting, Inc. recommends that if any special status species are observed during construction activities, work be stopped immediately, and CDFW is contacted.

**Nesting Bird and Raptor Avoidance and Minimization Measures (AMM)**

To the extent practicable, construction shall be scheduled to avoid the nesting season, which extends from February through September. If it is not possible to initiate construction between September and February, a pre-construction survey for nesting birds shall be conducted by a qualified biologist to ensure that no active nests will be disturbed during the implementation of the Project. A pre-construction survey shall be conducted no more than 14 days prior to the initiation of construction activities. During this survey, the qualified biologist shall inspect all potential nest substrates in and immediately adjacent to the impact areas. If an active nest is found close enough to the construction area to be disturbed by these activities, the qualified biologist shall determine the extent of a construction-free buffer to be established around the nest. If work cannot proceed without disturbing the nesting birds, work may need to be halted or redirected to other areas until nesting and fledging are completed or the nest has otherwise failed for non-construction related reasons.

**Avoidance and minimization measures for woodpecker damage:**

- If it doesn't cause structural damage, remove or fill in ledges, cracks, and crevices near the site of the inactive woodpecker holes with non-toxic substances.
- Cover inactive woodpecker holes with shiny aluminum flashing. Do not cover an existing nest.
- Install statuette of their predators such as eagles or owls
- Trees with woodpecker damage will be observed for woodpecker activity before each tree is removed.

**Avoidance measures for active woodpecker cavity:**

- No project activities in or near active woodpecker cavities during nesting season from February 15 to September 15.
- Work in other areas with no wildlife issues during nesting season.
- Observe from a distance periodically to check woodpecker activity near the cavity.
- Treat every cavity as if it is an active nest. Only a qualified biologist should be making the determination whether the cavity is inactive and if the area used by the woodpecker, is a nest.

## 9. Study Limitations

This Report has been prepared in accordance with generally accepted environmental methodologies and contains all the limitations inherent in these methodologies. The Report documents site conditions observed during field reconnaissance and do not apply to future conditions. No other warranties, expressed or implied, are made as to the professional services provided under the terms of our contract and included in this Report.

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# APPENDIX A:

## Project Site Photographs

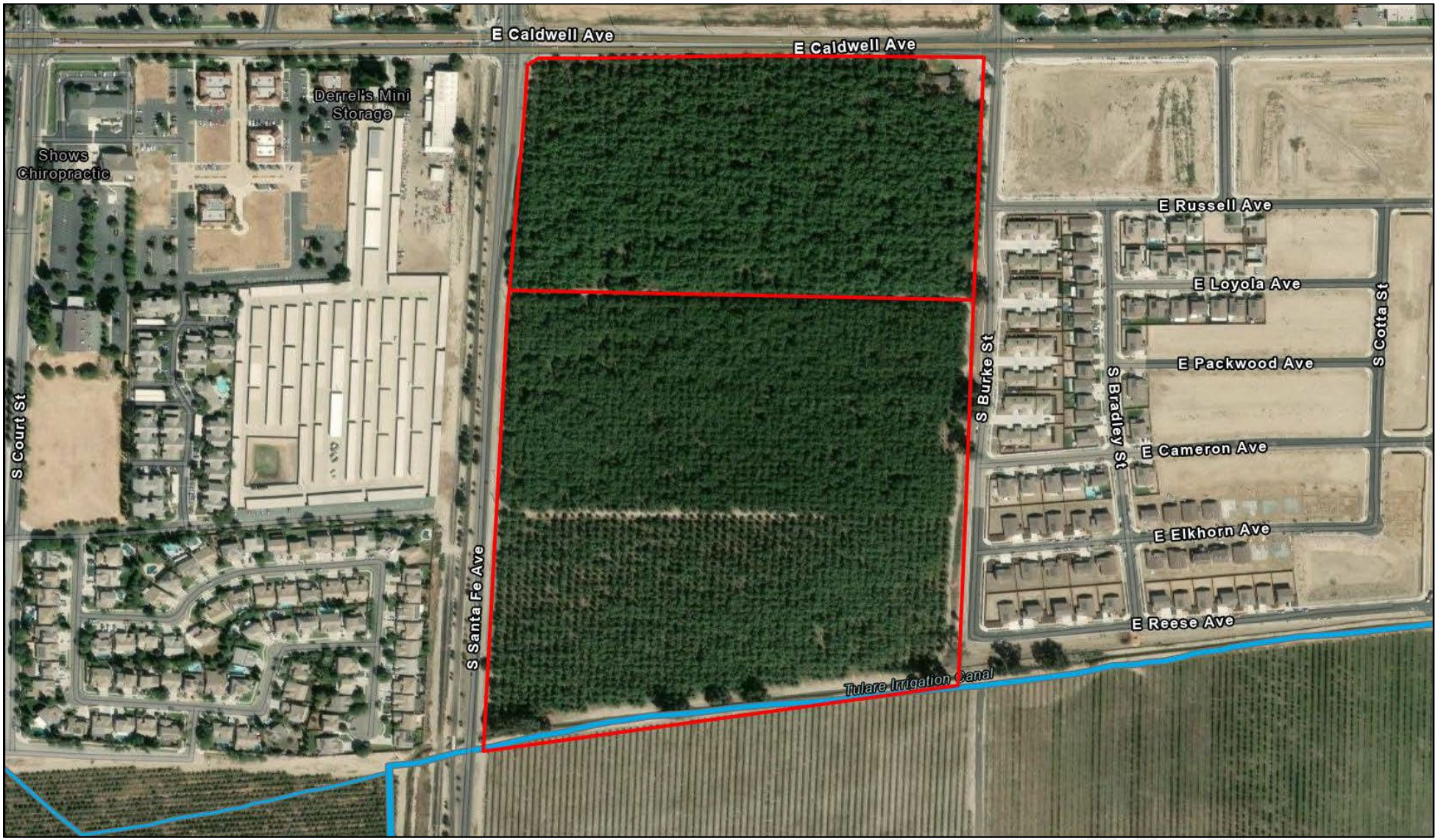



**Photo 1.** View of Tulare Irrigation Canal on the southern boundary of the project area facing east. Photo taken by Lucas Knox on December 13, 2024.


**Photo 2.** View of small mammal burrow on the eastern boundary of the project area facing southwest. Photo taken by Lucas Knox on December 13, 2024.


**Photo 3.** View of valley oak trees on the southern boundary of the project area facing southwest. Photo taken by Lucas Knox on December 13, 2024.


**Photo 4.** View of valley oak trees on the southern boundary of the project area facing west. Photo taken by Lucas Knox on December 13, 2024.


**Photo 5.** View of vacant lot east of the northeast corner of the property on the eastern boundary of the project area facing east.
Photo taken by Lucas Knox on December 13, 2024.


**Photo 6.** View of site conditions and residence on the northeast boundary of the project area facing east.
Photo taken by Lucas Knox on December 13, 2024.


**Photo 7.** View of vacant field and Caldwell Avenue on the northern boundary of the project area facing north. Photo taken by Lucas Knox on December 13, 2024.


**Photo 8.** View of valley oak trees and site conditions on the eastern boundary of the project area facing south. Photo taken by Lucas Knox on December 13, 2024.


**Photo 9.** View of walnut orchard and site conditions on the northern boundary of the project area facing south.
Photo taken by Lucas Knox on December 13, 2024.


**Photo 10.** View of walnut orchard and site conditions on the northern boundary of the project area facing northwest.
Photo taken by Lucas Knox on December 13, 2024.


**Photo 11.** View of residential properties on the eastern boundary of the project area facing east.
Photo taken by Lucas Knox on December 13, 2024.


**Photo 12.** View of walnut orchard and site conditions on the eastern boundary of the project area facing north.
Photo taken by Lucas Knox on December 13, 2024.


**Photo 13.** View of oak trees and site conditions on the eastern boundary of the project area facing south.
Photo taken by Lucas Knox on December 13, 2024.


**Photo 14.** View of walnut orchard and site conditions on the eastern boundary of the project area facing west.
Photo taken by Lucas Knox on December 13, 2024.


**Photo 15.** View of walnut orchard and Santa Fe Street and site conditions on the western boundary of the project area facing north.
Photo taken by Lucas Knox on December 13, 2024.


**Photo 16.** View of walnut orchard and site conditions on the northwestern boundary of the project area facing east.
Photo taken by Lucas Knox on December 13, 2024.

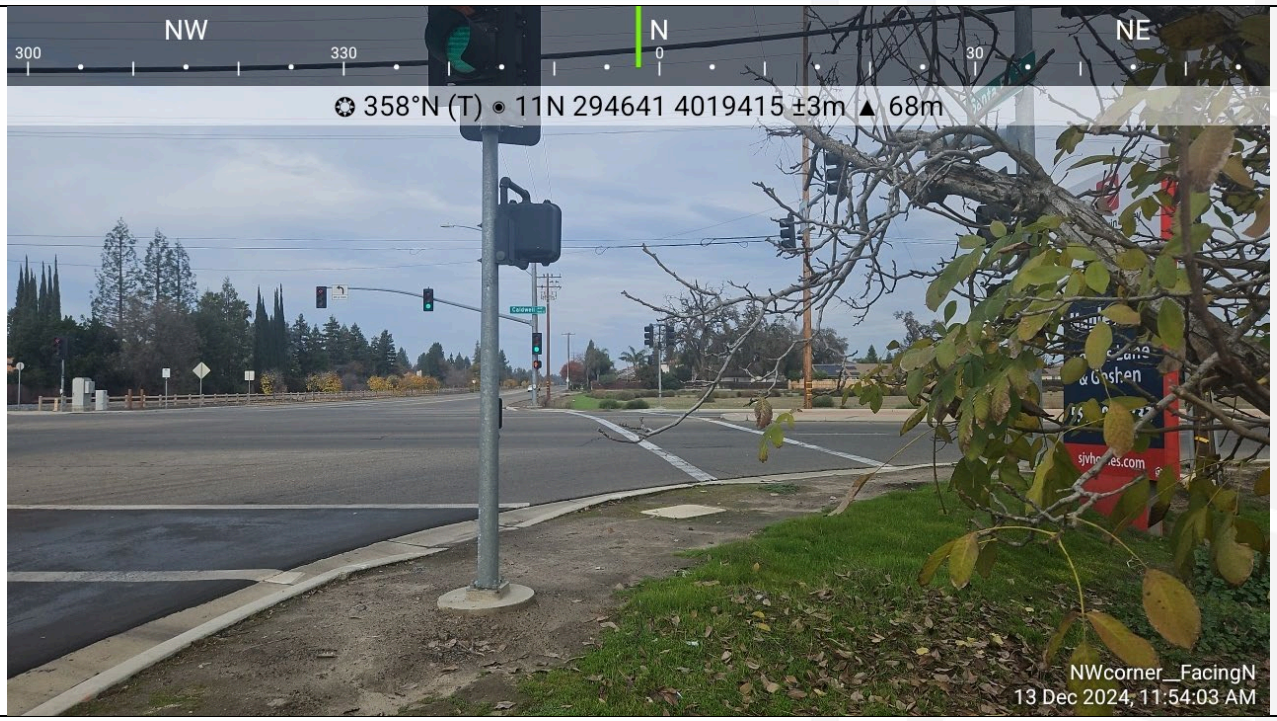



**Photo 17.** View of site conditions on the northwest corner of the project area facing north. Photo taken by Lucas Knox on December 13, 2024.


**Photo 18.** View of site conditions on the northwest corner of the project area facing north. Photo taken by Lucas Knox on December 13, 2024.

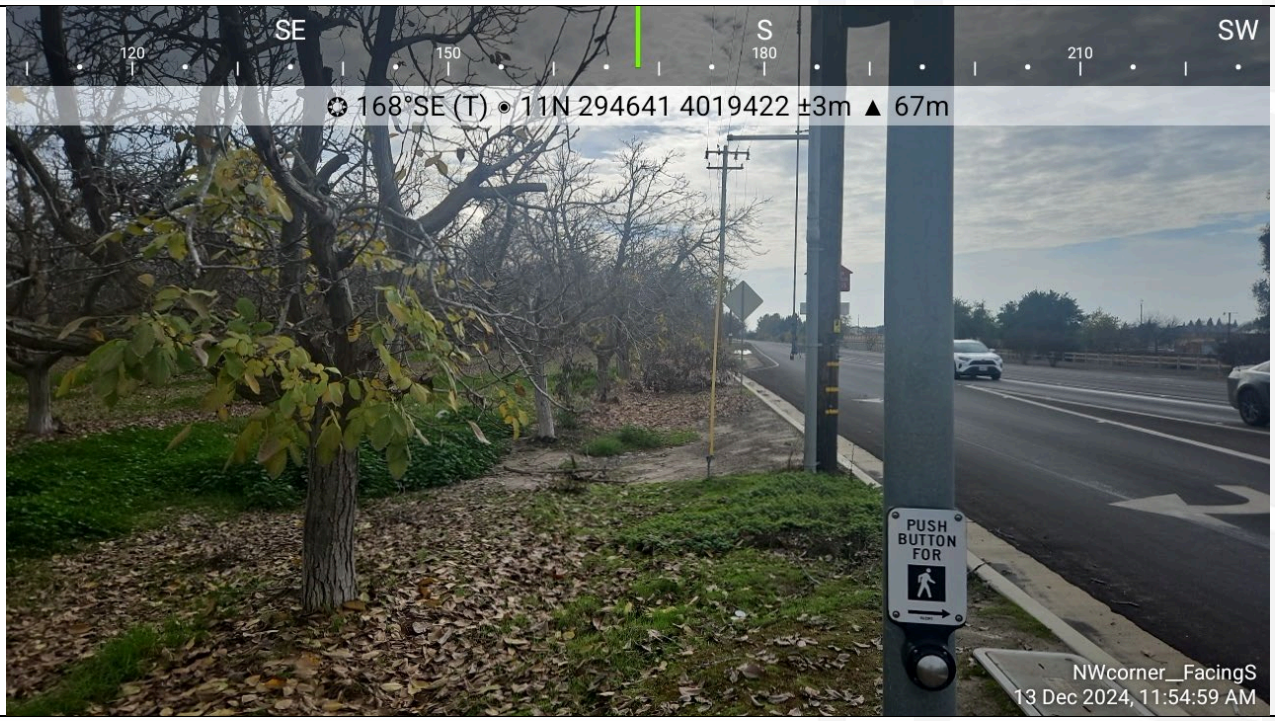



**Photo 19.** View of site conditions on the northwest corner of the project area facing south. Photo taken by Lucas Knox on December 13, 2024.


**Photo 20.** View of site conditions on the northwest corner of the project area facing west. Photo taken by Lucas Knox on December 13, 2024.


**Photo 21.** View of site conditions on the southern boundary of the project area facing north.
Photo taken by Lucas Knox on December 13, 2024.


**Photo 22.** View of site conditions and potential nesting trees on the eastern boundary of the project area facing south.
Photo taken by Lucas Knox on December 13, 2024.


**Photo 23.** View of site conditions and grape brambles on the eastern boundary of the project area facing east. Photo taken by Lucas Knox on December 13, 2024.


**Photo 24.** View of site conditions and oak trees on the eastern boundary of the project area facing north. Photo taken by Lucas Knox on December 13, 2024.


**Photo 25.** View of site conditions and grape brambles on the eastern boundary of the project area facing south. Photo taken by Lucas Knox on December 13, 2024.


**Photo 26.** View of site conditions on the eastern boundary of the project area facing west. Photo taken by Lucas Knox on December 13, 2024.


**Photo 27.** View of Tulare Irrigation Canal on the southern boundary of the project area facing west.
Photo taken by Lucas Knox on December 13, 2024.


**Photo 28.** View of Tulare Irrigation Canal and oak trees on the southern boundary of the project area facing west.
Photo taken by Lucas Knox on December 13, 2024.


**Photo 29.** View of site conditions on the southeast corner of the project area facing east. Photo taken by Lucas Knox on December 13, 2024.


**Photo 30.** View of site conditions and ruderal weeds on the southeast corner of the project area facing north. Photo taken by Lucas Knox on December 13, 2024.


**Photo 31.** View of site conditions and adjacent vineyard on the southeast corner of the project area facing south.
Photo taken by Lucas Knox on December 13, 2024.


**Photo 32.** View of site conditions on the southeast corner of the project area facing west.
Photo taken by Lucas Knox on December 13, 2024.


**Photo 33.** View of site conditions on the southeast corner of the project area facing northwest.
Photo taken by Lucas Knox on December 13, 2024.

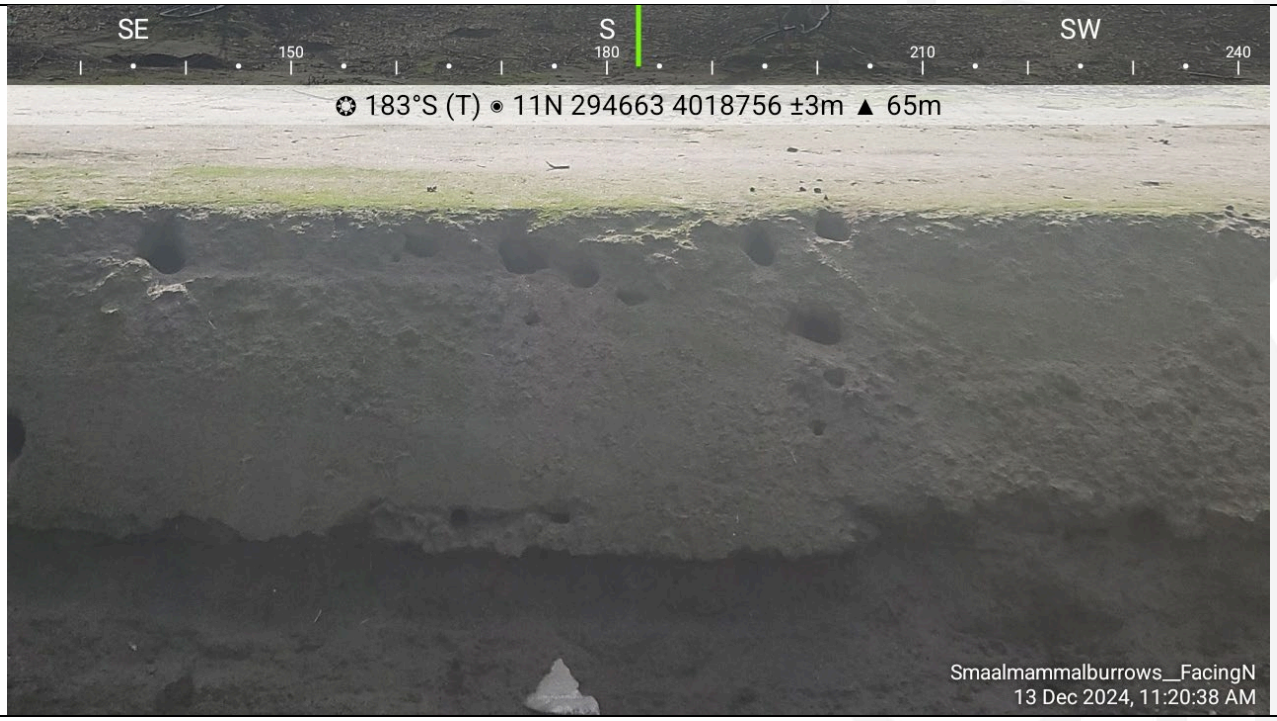



**Photo 34.** View of Tulare Irrigation Canal small mammal burrows on the southern boundary of the project area facing south.
Photo taken by Lucas Knox on December 13, 2024.


**Photo 35.** View of site conditions on the southwest corner of the project area facing north.
Photo taken by Lucas Knox on December 13, 2024.


**Photo 36.** View of Tulare Irrigation Canal and oak trees on the southern boundary of the project area facing east.
Photo taken by Lucas Knox on December 13, 2024.


**Photo 37.** View of site conditions on the southwest corner of the project area facing north. Photo taken by Lucas Knox on December 13, 2024.


**Photo 38.** View of site conditions on the southwest corner of the project area facing west. Photo taken by Lucas Knox on December 13, 2024.


**Photo 39.** View of site conditions and walnut orchard on the southern boundary of the project area facing north.
Photo taken by Lucas Knox on December 13, 2024.


**Photo 40.** View of site conditions on the western boundary of the project area facing east.
Photo taken by Lucas Knox on December 13, 2024.


**Photo 41.** View of site conditions on the western boundary of the project area facing north. Photo taken by Lucas Knox on December 13, 2024.


**Photo 42.** View of site conditions on the western boundary of the project area facing south. Photo taken by Lucas Knox on December 13, 2024.


**Photo 43.** View of site conditions on the western boundary of the project area facing west. Photo taken by Lucas Knox on December 13, 2024.


**Photo 44.** View of site conditions on the western boundary of the project area facing south. Photo taken by Lucas Knox on December 13, 2024.


**Photo 45.** View of site conditions on the western boundary of the project area facing north. Photo taken by Lucas Knox on December 13, 2024.


**Photo 46.** View of site conditions on the western boundary of the project area facing east. Photo taken by Lucas Knox on December 13, 2024.

# APPENDIX B:

United States Fish and Wildlife Service IPaC Resource 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

Tulare County, California


## Local office

Sacramento Fish And Wildlife Office

(916) 414-6600
(916) 414-6713

Federal Building
2800 Cottage Way, Room W-2605
Sacramento, CA 95825-1846

# 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:

# Mammals

| NAME | STATUS |
|---|---|
| Buena Vista Lake Ornate Shrew Sorex ornatus relictus<br>Wherever found<br>There is **final** critical habitat for this species. Your location does not overlap the critical habitat.<br>https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/1610 | Endangered |
| San Joaquin Kit Fox Vulpes macrotis mutica<br>Wherever found<br>No critical habitat has been designated for this species.<br>https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/2873 | Endangered |
| Tipton Kangaroo Rat Dipodomys nitratoides nitratoides<br>Wherever found<br>No critical habitat has been designated for this species.<br>https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/7247 | Endangered |

# Reptiles

| NAME | STATUS |
|---|---|
| Blunt-nosed Leopard Lizard Gambelia silus<br>Wherever found<br>No critical habitat has been designated for this species.<br>https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/625 | Endangered |
| Northwestern Pond Turtle Actinemys marmorata<br>Wherever found<br>No critical habitat has been designated for this species.<br>https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/1111 | Proposed Threatened |

# Amphibians

| NAME | STATUS |
|---|---|

| | |
|---|---|
| Western Spadefoot Spea hammondii<br>Wherever found<br>No critical habitat has been designated for this species.<br>https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/5425 | Proposed Threatened |

## Insects

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

## Crustaceans

| NAME | STATUS |
|---|---|
| Vernal Pool Fairy Shrimp Branchinecta lynchi<br>Wherever found<br>There is **final** critical habitat for this species. Your location does not overlap the critical habitat.<br>https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/498 | Threatened |

## Critical habitats

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

There are no critical habitats at this location.

You are still required to determine if your project(s) may have effects on all above listed species.

# Bald & Golden Eagles

There are no documented cases of eagles being present at this location. However, if you believe eagles may be using your site, please reach out to the local Fish and Wildlife Service office.

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

**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 |
|---|---|

| | |
|---|---|
| Belding's Savannah Sparrow Passerculus sandwichensis beldingi<br>This is a Bird of Conservation Concern (BCC) only in particular Bird Conservation Regions (BCRs) in the continental USA<br>https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/8 | Breeds Apr 1 to Aug 15 |
| Bullock's Oriole Icterus bullockii<br>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<br>This is a Bird of Conservation Concern (BCC) throughout its range in the continental USA and Alaska. | Breeds Mar 1 to Jul 31 |
| Lawrence's Goldfinch Spinus lawrencei<br>This is a Bird of Conservation Concern (BCC) throughout its range in the continental USA and Alaska.<br>https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/9464 | Breeds Mar 20 to Sep 20 |
| Marbled Godwit Limosa fedoa<br>This is a Bird of Conservation Concern (BCC) throughout its range in the continental USA and Alaska.<br>https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/9481 | Breeds elsewhere |
| Northern Harrier Circus hudsonius<br>This is a Bird of Conservation Concern (BCC) only in particular Bird Conservation Regions (BCRs) in the continental USA<br>https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/8350 | Breeds Apr 1 to Sep 15 |
| Nuttall's Woodpecker Dryobates nuttallii<br>This is a Bird of Conservation Concern (BCC) only in particular Bird Conservation Regions (BCRs) in the continental USA<br>https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/9410 | Breeds Apr 1 to Jul 20 |
| Oak Titmouse Baeolophus inornatus<br>This is a Bird of Conservation Concern (BCC) throughout its range in the continental USA and Alaska.<br>https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/9656 | Breeds Mar 15 to Jul 15 |

Santa Barbara Song Sparrow *Melospiza melodia graminea* — Breeds Mar 1 to Sep 5

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/5513

# 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** (■)

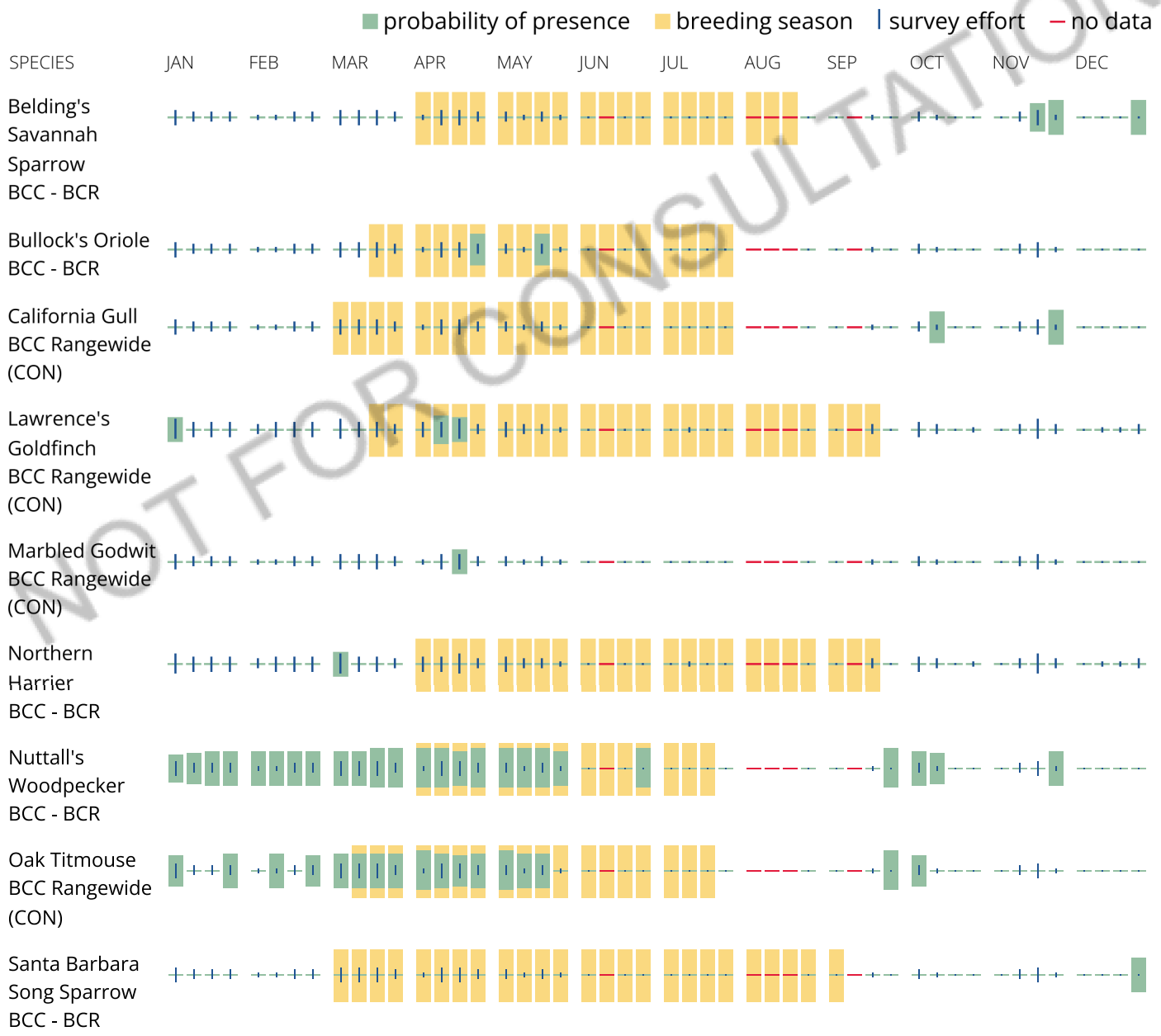
Yellow bars denote a very liberal estimate of the time-frame inside which the bird breeds across its entire range. If there are no yellow bars shown for a bird, it does not breed in your project area.

**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:

RIVERINE

- R4SBCx
- R5UBFx

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.

# APPENDIX C:

California Department of Fish and Wildlife RareFind

# Selected Elements by Common Name

## California Department of Fish and Wildlife

## California Natural Diversity Database

**Query Criteria:** Quad IS (Cairns Corner (3611922) OR Visalia (3611933) OR Tulare (3611923) OR Exeter (3611932) OR Monson (3611943) OR Ivanhoe (3611942) OR Paige (3611924) OR Goshen (3611934) OR Traver (3611944))<br /> AND (Federal Listing Status IS (Endangered OR Threatened OR Proposed Endangered OR Proposed Threatened OR Candidate) OR State Listing Status IS (Endangered OR Threatened OR Rare OR Candidate Endangered OR Candidate Threatened))

| Species | Element Code | Federal Status | State Status | Global Rank | State Rank | Rare Plant Rank/CDFW SSC or FP |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **burrowing owl**<br>*Athene cunicularia* | ABNSB10010 | None | Candidate Endangered | G4 | S2 | SSC |
| **California jewelflower**<br>*Caulanthus californicus* | PDBRA31010 | Endangered | Endangered | G1 | S1 | 1B.1 |
| **California tiger salamander - central California DPS**<br>*Ambystoma californiense pop. 1* | AAAAA01181 | Threatened | Threatened | G2G3T3 | S3 | WL |
| **Crotch's bumble bee**<br>*Bombus crotchii* | IIHYM24480 | None | Candidate Endangered | G2 | S2 | |
| **Hoover's spurge**<br>*Euphorbia hooveri* | PDEUP0D150 | Threatened | None | G1 | S1 | 1B.2 |
| **northwestern pond turtle**<br>*Actinemys marmorata* | ARAAD02031 | Proposed Threatened | None | G2 | SNR | SSC |
| **San Joaquin adobe sunburst**<br>*Pseudobahia peirsonii* | PDAST7P030 | Threatened | Endangered | G1 | S1 | 1B.1 |
| **San Joaquin kit fox**<br>*Vulpes macrotis mutica* | AMAJA03041 | Endangered | Threatened | G4T2 | S3 | |
| **San Joaquin Valley Orcutt grass**<br>*Orcuttia inaequalis* | PMPOA4G060 | Threatened | Endangered | G1 | S1 | 1B.1 |
| **Swainson's hawk**<br>*Buteo swainsoni* | ABNKC19070 | None | Threatened | G5 | S4 | |
| **Tipton kangaroo rat**<br>*Dipodomys nitratoides nitratoides* | AMAFD03152 | Endangered | Endangered | G2T1T2 | S2 | |
| **tricolored blackbird**<br>*Agelaius tricolor* | ABPBXB0020 | None | Threatened | G1G2 | S2 | SSC |
| **valley elderberry longhorn beetle**<br>*Desmocerus californicus dimorphus* | IICOL48011 | Threatened | None | G3T3 | S3 | |
| **vernal pool fairy shrimp**<br>*Branchinecta lynchi* | ICBRA03030 | Threatened | None | G3 | S3 | |
| **vernal pool tadpole shrimp**<br>*Lepidurus packardi* | ICBRA10010 | Endangered | None | G3 | S3 | |
| **western spadefoot**<br>*Spea hammondii* | AAABF02020 | Proposed Threatened | None | G2G3 | S3S4 | SSC |
| **western yellow-billed cuckoo**<br>*Coccyzus americanus occidentalis* | ABNRB02022 | Threatened | Endangered | G5T2T3 | S1 | |

**Record Count: 17**

# APPENDIX D:

California Native Plant Society Rare Plant Inventory

California Native Plant Society

CNPS Rare Plant Inventory

## Search Results

**21** matches found. Click on scientific name for details

Search Criteria: CRPR is one of [**1A:1B:2A:2B:3:4**] , 9-Quad include [**3611922:3611933:3611923:3611932:3611943:3611942:3611924:3611934:3611944**]

| ▲ 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 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Amaranthus watsonii* | Watson's amaranth | Amaranthaceae | annual herb | Apr-Sep | None | None | G5? | S3 | 4.3 | | 2001-01-01 |  © 2003 Debra Valov |
| *Atriplex cordulata* var. *cordulata* | heartscale | Chenopodiaceae | annual herb | Apr-Oct | None | None | G3T2 | S2 | 1B.2 | Yes | 1988-01-01 |  © 1994 Robert E. Preston, Ph.D. |
| *Atriplex cordulata* var. *erecticaulis* | Earlimart orache | Chenopodiaceae | annual herb | Aug-Sep(Nov) | None | None | G3T1 | S1 | 1B.2 | Yes | 2001-01-01 |  © 2009 Robert E. Preston, Ph.D. |
| *Atriplex depressa* | brittlescale | Chenopodiaceae | annual herb | Apr-Oct | None | None | G2 | S2 | 1B.2 | Yes | 1994-01-01 |  © 2009 Zoya Akulova |
| *Atriplex minuscula* | lesser saltscale | Chenopodiaceae | annual herb | May-Oct | None | None | G2 | S2 | 1B.1 | Yes | 1994-01-01 |  © 2000 Robert E. Preston, Ph.D. |
| *Atriplex persistens* | vernal pool smallscale | Chenopodiaceae | annual herb | Jun-Oct | None | None | G2 | S2 | 1B.2 | Yes | 2001-01-01 | No Photo Available |

| | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Atriplex subtilis* | subtle orache | Chenopodiaceae | annual herb | (Apr)Jun-Sep(Oct) | None | None | G1 | S1 | 1B.2 | Yes | 1994-01-01 |  © 2000 Robert E. Preston, Ph.D. |
| *Caulanthus californicus* | California jewelflower | Brassicaceae | annual herb | Feb-May | FE | CE | G1 | S1 | 1B.1 | Yes | 1984-01-01 | No Photo Available |
| *Delphinium hansenii* ssp. *ewanianum* | Ewan's larkspur | Ranunculaceae | perennial herb | Mar-May | None | None | G4T3 | S3 | 4.2 | Yes | 1994-01-01 | No Photo Available |
| *Delphinium recurvatum* | recurved larkspur | Ranunculaceae | perennial herb | Mar-Jun | None | None | G2? | S2 | 1B.2 | Yes | 1988-01-01 | No Photo Available |
| *Eryngium spinosepalum* | spiny-sepaled button-celery | Apiaceae | annual/perennial herb | Apr-Jun | None | None | G2 | S2 | 1B.2 | Yes | 1980-01-01 | No Photo Available |
| *Euphorbia hooveri* | Hoover's spurge | Euphorbiaceae | annual herb | (May-Jun)Jul-Sep(Oct) | FT | None | G1 | S1 | 1B.2 | Yes | 1974-01-01 |  © 2020 Neal Kramer |
| *Helianthus winteri* | Winter's sunflower | Asteraceae | perennial shrub | Jan-Dec | None | None | G2? | S2? | 1B.2 | Yes | 2014-10-15 |  © 2014 Chris Winchell |
| *Hordeum intercedens* | vernal barley | Poaceae | annual herb | Mar-Jun | None | None | G3G4 | S3S4 | 3.2 | | 1994-01-01 | No Photo Available |
| *Imperata brevifolia* | California satintail | Poaceae | perennial rhizomatous herb | Sep-May | None | None | G3 | S3 | 2B.1 | | 2006-12-26 |  © 2020 Matt C. Berger |
| *Lasthenia chrysantha* | alkali-sink goldfields | Asteraceae | annual herb | Feb-Apr | None | None | G2 | S2 | 1B.1 | Yes | 2019-09-30 |  © 2009 California State University, Stanislaus |
| *Lasthenia glabrata* ssp. *coulteri* | Coulter's goldfields | Asteraceae | annual herb | Feb-Jun | None | None | G4T2 | S2 | 1B.1 | | 1994-01-01 |  © 2013 Keir Morse |

| | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Orcuttia inaequalis* | San Joaquin Valley Orcutt grass | Poaceae | annual herb | Apr-Sep | FT | CE | G1 | S1 | 1B.1 | Yes | 1974-01-01 | No Photo Available |
| *Pseudobahia peirsonii* | San Joaquin adobe sunburst | Asteraceae | annual herb | Feb-Apr | FT | CE | G1 | S1 | 1B.1 | Yes | 1974-01-01 | No Photo Available |
| *Puccinellia simplex* | California alkali grass | Poaceae | annual herb | Mar-May | None | None | G2 | S2 | 1B.2 | | 2015-10-15 |  © 2017 Chris Winchell |
| *Sagittaria sanfordii* | Sanford's arrowhead | Alismataceae | perennial rhizomatous herb (emergent) | May-Oct(Nov) | None | None | G3 | S3 | 1B.2 | Yes | 1984-01-01 |  ©2013 Debra L. Cook |

Showing 1 to 21 of 21 entries

**Suggested Citation:**

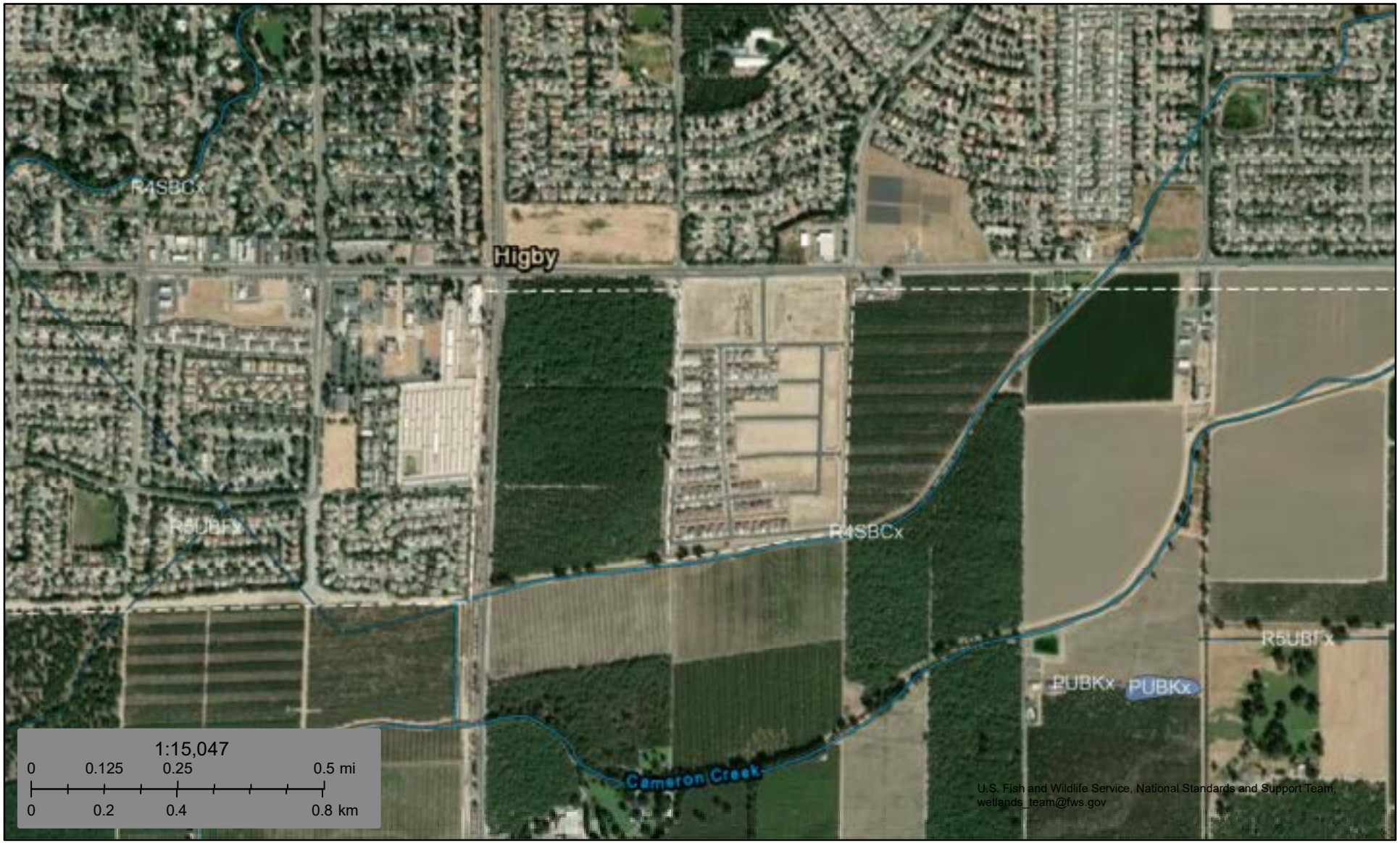
California Native Plant Society, Rare Plant Program. 2024. Rare Plant Inventory (online edition, v9.5). Website https://www.rareplants.cnps.org [accessed 11 December 2024].

# APPENDIX E:

United States Fish and Wildlife Service: National Wetland Inventory Map

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
National Wetlands Inventory

# SJVH Blankenship Development Project




January 21, 2025

**Wetlands**

- Estuarine and Marine Deepwater
- Estuarine and Marine Wetland
- Freshwater Emergent Wetland
- Freshwater Forested/Shrub Wetland
- Freshwater Pond
- Lake
- Other
- Riverine

This map is for general reference only. The US Fish and Wildlife Service is not responsible for the accuracy or currentness of the base data shown on this map. All wetlands related data should be used in accordance with the layer metadata found on the Wetlands Mapper web site.

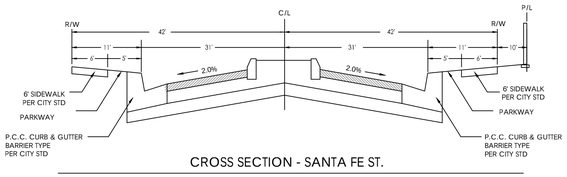
# APPENDIX F:

Project Site Plan

# TENTATIVE PARCEL MAP

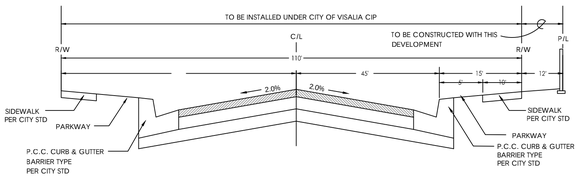
BEING A PORTION OF THE W 1/2 OF THE NE 1/4 OF SECTION 8, TOWNSHIP 19 SOUTH, RANGE 25 EAST, M.D.B.&M IN THE CITY OF VISALIA, COUNTY OF TULARE, STATE OF CALIFORNIA.

OCTOBER, 2024



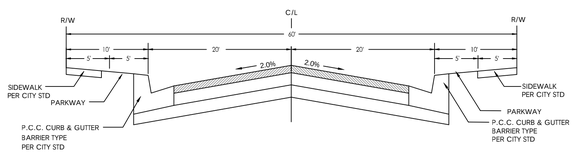

CROSS SECTION - SANTA FE ST.

TO BE CONSTRUCTED PER CITY STD P-3




CROSS SECTION - CALDWELL AVE.

TO BE CONSTRUCTED PER CITY STD P-4




INTERIOR STREETS

TO BE CONSTRUCTED PER CITY STD P-1

OWNERS:

GERALD BLANKENSHIP JR. & JEAN KRISTY BLANKENSHIP
TRUSTEES OF THE BLANKENSHIP FAMILY TRUST UNDER TRUST AGREEMENT DATE FEBRUARY 8, 1996
&
GERALD B. BLANKENSHIP JR.

APPLICANT:

SAN JOAQUIN VALLEY HOMES
5607 AVE DE LAO ROBLES
Visalia, California 93291

ENGINEER:

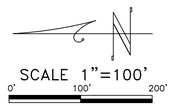
AWEngineering
810 Acequia Ave.
Visalia, California 93291
(559) 713-6139
Awilliams@awe-inc.com

NOTES:

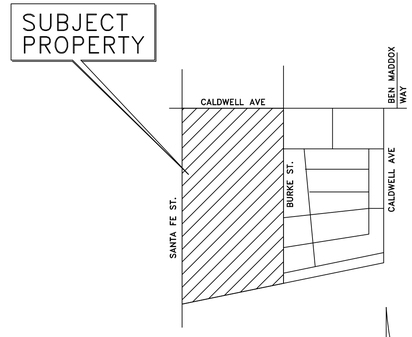
| | |
|---|---|
| EXISTING PROPERTY USE: | AG/RES |
| PROPOSED PROPERTY USE: | RES. |
| A.P.N.: | 123-400-001 & 005 |
| ZONING (E.): | AE-20 |
| ZONING (N.): | R-1-5 |
| WATER: | CAL WATER |
| SEWAGE: | CITY OF VISALIA |
| STORM DRAIN: | CITY OF VISALIA |
| FLOOD ZONE: | AE/X |
| AREA: | 62.54 AC. |

LOT COUNT

| | |
|---|---|
| PHASE 1: | 125 |
| PHASE 2: | 76 |
| TOTAL LOT COUNT: | 201 |








Vicinity Map

NO SCALE

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| SCALE: AS NOTED | NO. | REVISION | INIT / DATE |
| DATE: 11/19/24 | | | |
| DRAWN BY: --- | | | |
| CHECKED BY: --- | | | |

AWEngineering
CIVIL ENGINEERS & LAND SURVEYORS
810 W ACEQUIA AVENUE, VISALIA CA 93291
559-713-6139

APPROVED BY:

JESSE ALLEN WILLIAMS R.C.E. 64742 DATE

APPROVED BY:

DATE

NOT FOR CONSTRUCTION

FOR: SAN JOAQUIN VALLEY HOMES
5607 AVENIDA DE LOS ROBLES
VISALIA, CA 93291

PROJECT: BLANKENSHIP SUBDIVISION
CALDWELL AVE. AND SANTA FE ST.
VISALIA, CA 93245

SHEET TITLE: TENTATIVE SUBDIVISION MAP

SHEET 1

FLOOD ZONE "AE" "X"

JOB NUMBER 24075