

August 19, 2019

Mr. Chase Keys, PE
City of Jurupa Valley
8930 Limonite Avenue
Jurupa Valley, California 92509

VIA EMAIL
ckkeys@jurupavalley.org

Subject: Results of Focused Presence/Absence Surveys for Least Bell's Vireo for the Limonite Avenue Widening – Bain to Homestead Project Site, City of Jurupa Valley, California

Dear Mr. Keys:

This Letter Report presents the results of focused surveys for the least Bell's vireo (*Vireo bellii pusillus*) for the Limonite Avenue Widening – Bain to Homestead Project (hereinafter referred to as "the project site"), located in the City of Jurupa Valley, California. The purpose of the focused surveys was to determine the presence or absence of the least Bell's vireo on the project site. Surveys were conducted by biologists familiar with the vocalizations and plumage characteristics of both adults and juveniles of the species.

PROJECT LOCATION AND DESCRIPTION

The approximately 9.4-acre project site is located along Limonite Avenue in the City of Jurupa Valley approximately 2.4 miles east of the I-15 Freeway and 1.0 mile west of Van Buren Avenue (Exhibit 1 and 2). The project site is split between the U.S. Geological Survey's (USGS') Corona North (to the west), and Riverside West (to the east) 7.5-minute quadrangle (Exhibit 3). The project site is located north of the Santa Ana River Public/Quasi-Public Conserved Lands. Topography on the project site is generally flat with elevations on the project ranging from approximately 650 feet above mean sea level (msl) with a slight raise in elevation at 698 msl in the east. Low density residential space, undeveloped fallow fields, and small livestock operations are located to the north of the project site. A golf course, wastewater treatment facility, and various other institutional and commercial properties are located to the south.

Vegetation and other areas on the project site consist of non-native grassland, ruderal, riparian scrub, ornamental/mulefat scrub, flood control channel, lined basin, disturbed, livestock feedyard, parks/ornamental, developed/ornamental, and developed.

BACKGROUND

The least Bell's vireo was formerly a common, even locally abundant summer resident of Southern California's lowland riparian woodlands (Grinnell and Miller 1986). The substantial population decline of this avian species over the latter half of the twentieth century is attributable to the loss and degradation of riparian habitats and, perhaps more importantly, brood parasitism by the brown-headed cowbird (*Molothrus ater*). As a result, the least Bell's vireo was listed by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) as Endangered on October 2, 1980, and by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) as Endangered on May 2, 1986.

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The least Bell's vireo is a Neotropical migrant that breeds in central and southwestern North America from northern Mexico to Southern California, Nevada and Utah; east to Louisiana; and north to North Dakota, Wisconsin, and Indiana in the central U.S. (AOU 1998). The winter range of the Bell's vireo, although not well known, is believed to be the west coast of Central America from southern Sonora south to northwestern Nicaragua, including the cape region of Baja California, Mexico (Brown 1993). Of the four Bell's vireo subspecies, only two breed in California. The least Bell's vireo and the Arizona Bell's vireo (*V. b. arizonae*) breed in the Colorado River Valley (Garrett and Dunn 1981; Rosenberg et al. 1991). The least Bell's vireo was formerly considered a common breeder in riparian habitats throughout the Central Valley and other low elevation riverine systems in California and Baja California, Mexico (Franzreb 1989).

Least Bell's vireo breeding habitat primarily consists of riparian habitats dominated by willows with dense understory vegetation. Shrubs such as mule fat (*Baccharis salicifolia*) and California rose (*Rosa californica*) are often a component of the understory (Goldwasser 1981). The least Bell's vireo is often found in areas that include trees such as willow (*Salix* spp.), sycamore (*Platanus racemosa*), or cottonwood (*Populus* sp.), particularly where the canopy is within or immediately adjacent to an understory layer of vegetation (Salata 1983). The least Bell's vireo generally nests in early successional stages of riparian habitats, with vireo nest sites frequently located in willows that are between four and ten years of age (RECON 1988; Franzreb 1989). The most critical factor in habitat structure is the presence of a dense understory shrub layer from approximately two to ten feet above the ground (Goldwasser 1981; Salata 1983; Franzreb 1989).

On February 2, 1994, the USFWS published a final critical habitat for the least Bell's vireo, designating approximately 37,560 acres of land in Santa Barbara, Ventura, Los Angeles, San Bernardino, Riverside, and San Diego counties, California (USFWS 1994). The survey area is not located in designated critical habitat for this species. Designated critical habitat abuts the survey area in the south, but the two do not overlap. In Riverside County, least Bell's vireo observations are concentrated along the Santa Ana River corridor located directly south of the project site (CDFW 2019; eBird 2019).

SURVEY METHODS

The USFWS protocol for the least Bell's vireo requires that at least eight surveys be conducted from April 10 to July 31 with a ten-day interval between each site visit. A total of eight surveys were conducted to satisfy the survey requirements for the least Bell's vireo. Psomas Biologist Sarah Thomas conducted the surveys on April 13, 27; May 13, 23; June 10, 20; and July 1 and 11, 2019. All potentially suitable habitat was thoroughly surveyed during each site visit.

Riparian habitats potentially suitable for the least Bell's vireo were identified in Pyrite Creek which runs north-south through the center of the project site. A survey area extending a 500-foot distance from the project impact area was surveyed (Exhibit 4). Suitable riparian habitats were systematically surveyed by walking slowly and methodically along their margins when feasible. Taped vocalizations of least Bell's vireo were not used. All surveys were conducted under optimal weather conditions and during early morning hours when bird activity is at its peak. All bird species were recorded in field notes. Notable observations and any special status species and other birds, such as the brown-headed cowbird were documented. A list of the bird species detected during the survey is included as Attachment A.

SURVEY RESULTS

The least Bell's vireo was not detected within the project's survey area during these surveys.

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Psomas appreciates the opportunity to assist on this project. If you have any comments or questions, please contact Sarah Thomas at Sarah.Thomas@psomas.com or (626) 351-2000.

Sincerely,

P S O M A S



Ann M. Johnston
Vice President/Principal, Resource Management



Sarah Thomas
Biologist

Enclosures: Exhibit 1 – Project Location
 Exhibit 2 – Project Location
 Exhibit 3 – USGS 7.5-Minute Digital Quadrangle
 Exhibit 4 – Survey Area
 Attachment A – Wildlife Compendium

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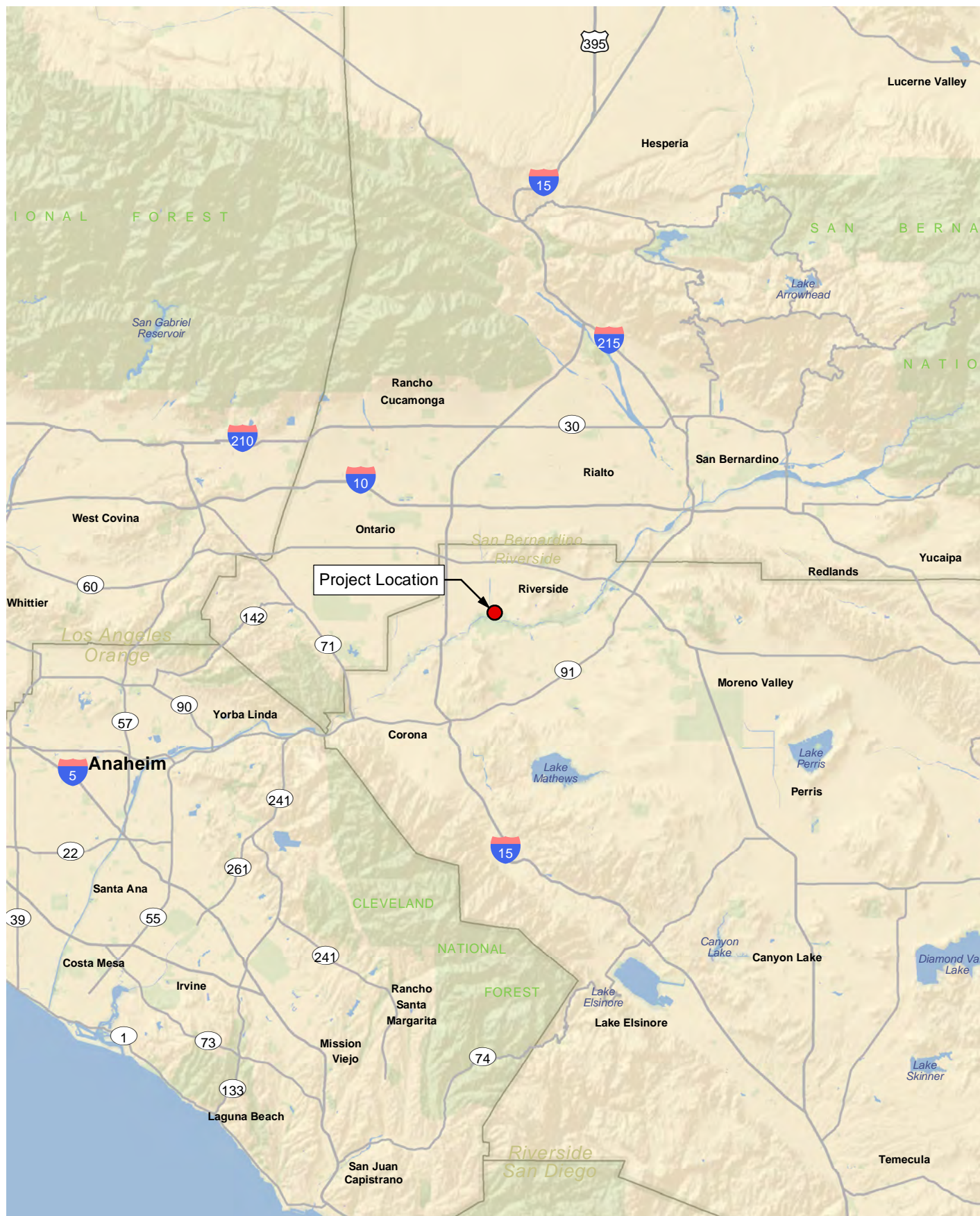
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Regional Location

Limonite Avenue Widening Project - Bain Street to Homestead Street

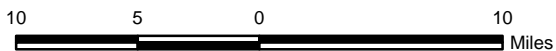


Exhibit 1



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Local Vicinity

Limonite Avenue Widening Project - Bain Street to Homestead Street



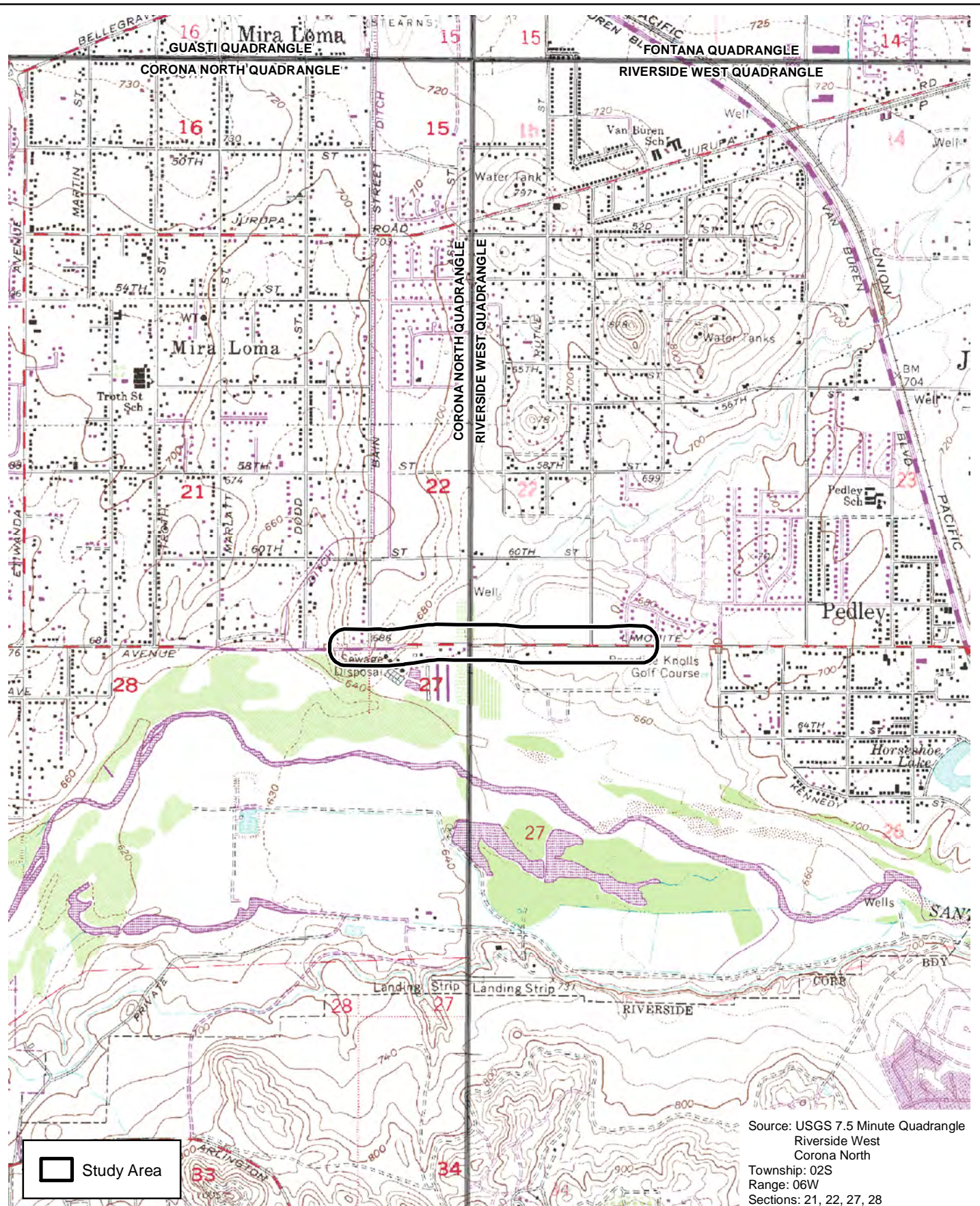
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Feet

Exhibit 2



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USGS 7.5-Minute Digital Quadrangle

Limonite Avenue Widening – Bain to Homestead Project

Exhibit 3



2,000 1,000 0 2,000
Feet





Aerial Source: Esri, DigitalGlobe 2017

least Bell's vireo survey area

Impact Limits

Survey Area

Limonite Avenue Widening Project - Bain Street to Homestead Street

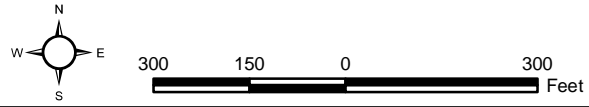


Exhibit 4



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ATTACHMENT A
WILDLIFE COMPENDIUM

BIRD SPECIES DETECTED DURING THE SURVEY

Species	
Scientific Name	Common Name
BIRDS	
COLUMBIDAE - PIGEON AND DOVE FAMILY	
<i>Columba livia</i> *	rock pigeon
<i>Zenaida macroura</i>	mourning dove
TROCHILIDAE - HUMMINGBIRD FAMILY	
<i>Calypte anna</i>	Anna's hummingbird
<i>Selasphorus rufus</i>	rufous hummingbird
CHARADRIIDAE - PLOVER FAMILY	
<i>Charadrius vociferus</i>	killdeer
ARDEIDAE - HERON FAMILY	
<i>Ardea herodias</i>	great blue heron
<i>Butorides virescens</i>	green heron
ACCIPITRIDAE - HAWK FAMILY	
<i>Buteo jamaicensis</i>	red-tailed hawk
PICIDAE - WOODPECKER FAMILY	
<i>Picoides nuttallii</i>	Nuttall's woodpecker
TYRANNIDAE - TYRANT FLYCATCHER FAMILY	
<i>Sayornis saya</i>	Say's phoebe
<i>Tyrannus vociferans</i>	Cassin's kingbird
CORVIDAE - JAY AND CROW FAMILY	
<i>Corvus brachyrhynchos</i>	American crow
HIRUNDINIDAE - SWALLOW FAMILY	
<i>Stelgidopteryx serripennis</i>	northern rough-winged swallow
PASSERIDAE - OLD WORLD SPARROW FAMILY	
<i>Passer domesticus</i> *	house sparrow*
FRINGILLIDAE - FINCH FAMILY	
<i>Haemorhous mexicanus</i>	house finch
<i>Spinus psaltria</i>	lesser goldfinch
PASSERELLIDAE - NEW WORLD SPARROW FAMILY	
<i>Melospiza crissalis</i>	California towhee
<i>Melospiza melodia</i>	song sparrow
ICTERIDAE - BLACKBIRDS AND ORIOLES	
<i>Icterus cucullatus</i>	hooded oriole
CARDINALIDAE - CARDINALS AND ALLIES	
<i>Pheucticus melanocephalus</i>	black-headed grosbeak
* Non-native species	