

Work Task C51: Vermilion Flycatcher Detectability and Distribution Study

FY14 Estimate	FY14 Actual Obligations	Cumulative Expenditures Through FY14	FY15 Approved Estimate	FY16 Proposed Estimate	FY17 Proposed Estimate	FY18 Proposed Estimate
\$150,000	\$0	\$42,560.10	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0

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Start Date: FY12

Expected Duration: FY14

Long-Term Goal: Monitor distribution and abundance of vermilion flycatcher on the LCR and identify habitat characteristics for the species in LCR MSCP habitat creation areas

Conservation Measures: VEFL1, MRM1, MRM2, MRM4, CMM1, and CMM2 (VEFL)

Location: LCR MSCP system-wide and habitat creation sites

Purpose: To identify the best field method for monitoring population abundance and locations of vermilion flycatcher within the LCR MSCP planning area.

Connections with Other Work Tasks (Past and Future): Information obtained through this work task will be used in conjunction with data collected during post-development monitoring of habitat conservation areas (F2) and system-wide surveys conducted under Work Task D6. Information obtained through this work task will also be used in association with Work Task C24 to help define habitat requirements for riparian obligate bird species.

Project Description: The vermilion flycatcher is highly visible when present due to its bright coloration, active behavior, and distinct vocalizations. However, general bird surveys conducted under Work Task D6 in habitats previously occupied by vermilion flycatcher (Bill Williams River NWR) have not detected them in the numbers expected. Surveys for cuckoos (D7) and willow flycatchers (D2) are also lacking in incidental reports of this species. Vermilion flycatcher may begin courtship as early as February, much earlier than many other species on the LCR; thus, a presence/absence survey protocol is needed specifically for this species and should begin in February. A literature review will be conducted, and a preliminary, system-wide search for the species will be used to develop a site list and survey protocol.

Previous Activities: A review was conducted of the 1980–2012 literature and historical records on vermilion flycatchers along the LCR. Based on this information, site visits were conducted in 2012 at areas on the LCR where vermilion flycatchers were documented previously. Site visits involved casual observations (not structured surveys). Data collected included a general description of the site, location, and, if birds were located, additional information such as evidence of breeding, behavior, age, and sex of individuals.

A total of 40 sites from Yuma, Arizona, to Needles, California, were visited between February 2 and April 19, 2012. Vermilion flycatchers were documented at nine locations between Yuma and Lake Havasu City, Arizona, and nesting was documented at five locations. The site visits confirmed the existing knowledge regarding the habitat the species uses. Vermilion flycatchers are found foraging and breeding in broad-leaf riparian woodlands, mesquite bosques, along the margins of agricultural fields, and in other open grassy areas near accessible water (including irrigated areas) and includes golf courses, cemeteries, and park-like habitats in urban areas.

Following confirmation of the habitat used by vermilion flycatchers along the LCR, it was determined that no research was necessary to inform habitat requirements for this species. Habitat created, which included scattered honey mesquites with an understory of grass adjacent to cottonwood and willow and agriculture, and accessible water (the river channel or irrigation) will be similar to habitat being used by vermilion flycatcher currently or in the recent past on the Bill Williams River NWR and at restored habitat at the ‘Ahakhav Tribal Preserve.

FY14 Accomplishments: This work task was closed in FY14.

FY15 Activities: This work task was closed in FY14.

Proposed FY16 Activities: This work task was closed in FY14.

Pertinent Reports: The report titled *Vermilion Flycatchers on the LCR: A Summary of Data from 1970–2012* is available on the LCR MSCP Web site.