

Agency/Organization: SWCA Environmental Consultants

Project Name: Parasitism Control and Evaluation

Project Number: 2019-SWCA-1935A

Reporting Period: April 1 through June 30, 2025

Project Contact Name and Information:

Sarah Nichols, Project Manager

(734) 216-2048

sarah.nichols@swca.com

QUESTION 1: What did you accomplish during this reporting period?

How did these accomplishments help you reach the goal of your project?

If relevant, what indicators or benchmarks were used to determine your progress?

From April 1 through June 30, 2025, SWCA completed one on-call avian survey, began southwestern willow flycatcher (*Empidonax traillii extimus*) (hereafter flycatcher) surveys on the western portion of Mesquite West, began flycatcher territory and nest monitoring efforts at Mesquite West and Mormon Mesa Parcel 5-A, and began brown-headed cowbird (*Molothrus ater*) (hereafter cowbird) treatment at Mesquite West.

On-call Work Authorization Form 003 included nesting bird surveys ahead of vegetation treatment at Bunkerville West and Muddy River. This work was completed on April 1. Cowbird netting at Mesquite West began on May 5 and continued twice per week through May 31. Cowbird netting was conducted once per week in June. The first flycatcher detection at Mesquite West was recorded during brown-headed cowbird netting activities, and the first flycatcher monitoring visit at Mesquite West took place on May 18. Flycatcher surveys on the western portion of Mesquite West began on May 21. Flycatcher surveys at Mormon Mesa Parcel 5-A began on May 28 and the first flycatcher was detected during surveys on June 9; flycatcher monitoring began immediately following detection.

The goals of this project are to maintain and/or improve habitat for flycatcher and to help identify lands where habitat enhancement may be implemented to expand habitat for the flycatcher. Flycatcher surveys and monitoring, conducting cowbird control procedures at Mesquite West to decrease parasitism, and providing on-call services directly align with the stated project objectives. Flycatcher territory and nest monitoring at Mesquite West and Mormon Mesa includes documenting nest successes and failures and parasitism by cowbirds, which are also project objectives. SWCA anticipates that cowbird control will decrease parasitism rates and improve flycatcher nest success at Mesquite West. Through June 30, 14 female cowbirds have been captured and euthanized. One of eight (12.5%) flycatcher nests has been parasitized at Mesquite West. Assessment of parasitism and nest success rates is ongoing.

QUESTION 2: What, if any, problems were encountered? Briefly describe those problems and the manner in which they were dealt.

No problems have been encountered so far in 2025. The standard access route to Mormon Mesa from Overton remains somewhat risky due to disturbance along a sandy portion of the road on the north side of the gravel pit near the Virgin River. On June 22, a recreational vehicle (RV) was stuck in the sand when an SWCA biologist drove into Parcel 5-A early in the morning. The RV appeared to have been there for some time, as the biologist observed tire tracks from other vehicles that had previously driven around the RV. On the way out of the site later in the morning, the biologist observed an additional vehicle, a sedan, stuck in the sand just west of the RV. Due to the difficulty in safely traversing this section of road, SWCA utilized only Gold Butte Road for access to Mormon Mesa Parcel 5-A after June 22.

QUESTION 3: What, if any, proposed activities were not completed? Briefly describe those activities, the reasons they were not completed and your plans for carrying them out.

All proposed activities have been completed.

QUESTION 4: What is the calculated percent of work completed?

As of June 30, SWCA estimates that approximately 60% of work required for this project for 2025 has been completed.

QUESTION 5: Do you foresee any upcoming problems with future project activities? If so, how do you propose to overcome those problems?

No, we do not foresee any upcoming problems with this project.

QUESTION 6: Is there anything else you want to tell the DCP about this project?

No, not at this time.

QUESTION 7: What was produced during the reporting period?

For this reporting period, SWCA produced a Work Plan & Schedule (D22) which was submitted to the DCP on April 10 and a Data Deliverable (D24) which was submitted on June 5. SWCA also provided the DCP with the applicable Permits (D23) for the project on May 1 and field notes from the on-call nesting bird survey (M33) on May 12.