



July 28, 2026

DESERT CONSERVATION PROGRAM PROJECT COMPLETION SUMMARY
Habitat Functionality Workshop
2023-ALTA-2355B

The work for the above referenced project has been completed. Below is a summary of project related information.

The purpose of the above referenced project was:

The Desert Conservation Program (DCP) is developing new habitat functionality models to support impact assessment, Reserve System design, and adaptive management decision-making under the amended Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan (MSHCP). These models represent a significant advancement from the 2001 MSHCP analytical framework by incorporating updated species-habitat relationships, improved spatial datasets, and new approaches capable of more accurately characterizing habitat condition and ecological function. The County sought an in-depth, external scientific review to evaluate model structure, underlying assumptions, and model outputs. The workshop served as a critical step in ensuring that the habitat functionality models meet the scientific standards required to support the MSHCP Amendment, withstand regulatory review by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and are legally defensible.

The major accomplishments or findings of this project include:

The goal of the workshop was to review the habitat functionality analysis to ensure it is scientifically defensible, suggest necessary revisions, and confirm that the model aligns with the DCP's Permit Amendment package. DCP compiled a list of covariates used in the species distribution models (SDMs) for comparison to the covariates used in the habitat models. In Workshop Session 2, in-depth discussions continued regarding covariates for each habitat model to determine their weight or use in the habitat model. Following the work group sessions, multiple recommendations were made regarding the habitat functionality models. A recommendation was to select a different method for integrating the SDMs in the models, either using the raw stacked SDM data or calibrating individual SDMs using observations and generalized additive models, then stacking them into a single 'expected species richness' layer. The workshop also produced many



recommendations regarding SDM covariates, including which covariates to add, remove, or reweight.

For more information about this project and/or for other Project Reports or Symposium Reports, please visit our [website](#).

If you have any questions about this project, please contact Kimberley Goodwin, at (702) 455-5529.

