



United States Department of the Interior



FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
Ventura Fish and Wildlife Office
2493 Portola Road, Suite B
Ventura, California 93003

IN REPLY REFER TO:
PAS 3028.4606.6313

September 29, 2006

Erin Riley
EDAW, Inc.
1420 Kettner Boulevard, Suite 620
San Diego, California 92101

Subject: Species List for the Proposed Golden Valley Bridge Project, City of Santa Clarita, Los Angeles County

Dear Ms Riley:

We are responding to your request, dated August 10, 2006, and received in our office on August 17, 2006, for information on endangered, threatened, proposed, and candidate species that may be present in the vicinity of the proposed Golden Valley Bridge project. The bridge would connect Soledad Canyon Road with the newly extended Newhall Road and span the Santa Clara River in the City of Santa Clarita.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's (Service) responsibilities include administering the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended (Act), including sections 7, 9, and 10. Section 9 of the Act prohibits the taking of any federally listed endangered or threatened species. Section 3(18) of the Act defines take to mean to harass, harm, pursue, hunt, shoot, wound, kill, trap, capture, or collect, or to attempt to engage in any such conduct. Service regulations (50 CFR 17.3) define harm to include significant habitat modification or degradation which actually kills or injures wildlife by significantly impairing essential behavioral patterns, including breeding, feeding or sheltering. Harassment is defined by the Service as an intentional or negligent action that creates the likelihood of injury to wildlife by annoying it to such an extent as to significantly disrupt normal behavior patterns which include, but are not limited to, breeding, feeding, or sheltering. The Act provides for civil and criminal penalties for the unlawful taking of listed species.

Exemptions to the prohibitions against take may be obtained through coordination with the Service through interagency consultation for projects with Federal involvement pursuant to section 7 or through the issuance of an incidental take permit under section 10(a)(1)(B) of the Act. If the subject project is to be funded, authorized, or carried out by a Federal agency and may affect a listed species, the Federal agency must consult with the Service, pursuant to section 7(a)(2) of the Act. If a proposed project does not involve

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a Federal agency but may result in the take of a listed animal species, the project proponent should apply for an incidental take permit, pursuant to section 10(a)(1)(B) of the Act. Once you have determined if the proposed project will have a lead Federal agency, we can provide you with more detailed information regarding the section 7 or 10(a)(1)(B) permitting process.

The federally endangered arroyo toad (*Bufo californicus*), unarmored threespine stickleback (*Gasterosteus aculeatus williamsoni*), least Bell's vireo (*Vireo bellii pusillus*) and the threatened coastal California gnatcatcher (*Polioptila californica californica*) are the listed species that may occur within the area of the proposed project. Designated critical habitat for the coastal California gnatcatcher exists within the proposed project area.

Only listed species receive protection under the Act. However, sensitive species should be considered in the planning process in the event they become listed or proposed for listing prior to project completion. We recommend that you review information in the California Department of Fish and Game's Natural Diversity Data Base. You can contact the California Department of Fish and Game at (916) 324-3812 for information on other sensitive species that may occur in this area.

If you have any questions regarding this letter, please contact Christine Hamilton of my staff at (805) 644-1766, extension 369.

Sincerely,



Carl T. Benz
Assistant Field Supervisor
Southern Santa Barbara/Ventura/Los
Angeles