

EMPLOYEE FIELD GUIDE

Guidelines for Maintenance and Construction in Environmentally Sensitive Areas

It is against the Department's Strategic Goals for our actions to threaten sensitive resources within our worksite. In order to fulfill our goals, every worker needs to adopt new approaches for construction and maintenance of facilities. These guidelines provide an environmentally sensitive approach which recognizes that often minor adjustments during planning, construction or maintenance activities can yield major benefits to the Department's goals.



Wetlands

Wetlands are protected throughout the United States and are especially sensitive in southern California due to their rarity and value as wildlife habitat. Wetland vegetation may be obvious, such as in marshes and estuaries, or not so obvious, such as along seasonal drainage washes and vernal pools which may be dry most of the year. Wetlands typically support diverse wildlife communities, and some wetland types in southern California support endangered species found nowhere else.

Riparian refers to vegetation along rivers, streams, and washes. It usually supports the most wildlife in a region. Typical riparian vegetation includes willow shrubs and trees, oak and sycamore trees, and mulefat scrub. Such sensitive species as the endangered least Bell's Vireo and the southwestern willow flycatcher are restricted to this habitat type.

Southwestern Willow Flycatcher

Empidonax traillii extimus

This flycatcher is 13.3 to 17.15 cm (5.25 to 6.75 inches). The species is listed as endangered by the state and the subspecies in San Diego County is listed as federally endangered. Its nesting is restricted to willow thickets in riparian woodland; the local breeding population in San Diego County is now extremely small. Breeding season is generally from May through August. They nest in deciduous trees, 0.61-3m (2 -10 ft) off the ground. The cup-shaped nest can be made of bark, weed stems, grass, hair, plant down, and feathers.



photo: The Audubon Society

It is built by the female. Their diet consists of berries, insects, and some seeds. They feed by hovering and gleaning.



photo: The Audubon Society

Least Bells Vireo

Vireo bellii pusillus

This small, reclusive songbird is listed as endangered by both State and Federal resource agencies. Least Bell's vireos nest primarily in riparian vegetation with dense willows in southern California, and migrate to southern Baja California, Mexico for the winter. Due to their endangered status, these rare birds are protected against harmful actions which include destruction of riparian vegetation or any disturbance of birds during the nesting season - March through September.

How to protect sensitive species

1. No vehicle or foot traffic may enter or cross the sensitive area.
2. No debris or material used in construction or equipment maintenance may enter the water or creekbed. Debris includes construction material, saw-cut and coring run-off, excavated material, and any other pollutant which results from any other associated work.
3. No construction activities including storage of machinery and materials will be allowed in areas designated as Environmentally Sensitive Areas (ESAs).

Resources: California Dept. of Fish and Game
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