

December 22, 2023

Stacey Love
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
2177 Salk Avenue
Carlsbad, CA 92008

[Delivered via email: stacey_love@fws.gov]

SUBJECT: Results of protocol surveys for Coastal California Gnatcatcher (*Polioptila californica*) at the ISKCON Cultural Center property within the City of Escondido, San Diego County, California

Dear Stacey,

Bloom Biological, Incorporated (BBI) was retained by Phil Martin and Associates to assess the presence of Coastal California Gnatcatcher (*Polioptila californica californica*) on the land proposed as the ISKCON Cultural Center located at 1315 and 1356 Rincon Avenue, Escondido, California (APN 224-100-84 & APN 224-100-85). The project proposes to construct a temple and ten single-family residences within approximately 7 acres of the 24.5-acre property. Permittees Dana Kamada (TE-799568-9) and Karly Moore (TE-02484A-3) conducted 9 surveys for Coastal California Gnatcatcher within the Survey Area from 15 August through 18 December 2023 following the current protocol established by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The results of the surveys indicate that Coastal California Gnatcatcher was absent from the Survey Area in 2023. The following letter documents the methods, results, and conclusions of the surveys.

SURVEY AREA DESCRIPTION

The Survey Area in this report comprises approximately 24.5 acres containing potential Coastal California Gnatcatcher habitat in the form of disturbed and undisturbed coastal sagescrub within the subject parcels at 3115 and 1356 Rincon Ave., Escondido, California. The Survey Area is within the western region of San Diego County in the southern portion of the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) 7.5-minute *Valley Center* quadrangle. Elevations in the Survey Area range from approximately 760 to 940 feet (231 to 287 meters) above mean sea level (amsl).

Vegetation within the survey area consists of coastal sagescrub (both intact and disturbed), Engelmann oak woodland, and non-native grassland. An existing single-family residence, livestock pens and enclosures, and a garden are present within the central region of the Survey Area. The majority of the property is undeveloped and contains areas which experience routine weed abatement as well as relatively undisturbed native vegetation.

The location of the Survey Area relative to the state and county is shown below in Figure 1. The limits of the Survey Area are shown in Appendix A.



Figure 1. Survey Area relative to the state (left) and county (right).

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The project proposes to demolish the existing outbuildings and build ten single-family detached residential units on approximately 4.2 acres adjacent to and south of Rincon Avenue. The residential lots range from 0.31 to 0.63 acres in size. The project also includes the proposed development of a 6,500 square foot Krishna Temple, an adjacent 5,143 square foot residence associated with the temple and a 964 square foot restroom/change room/janitor closet. The project proposes 88 parking spaces for the Krishna temple and meets the number of parking spaces required by the City of Escondido parking code. A 56-foot-wide and 600-foot-long paved cul de sac would be constructed extending south from Rincon Avenue to serve the single-family homes. The project is scheduled to start construction in the first quarter of 2024 and be completed in the first quarter of 2025.

CALIFORNIA GNATCATCHER NATURAL HISTORY SUMMARY

The California Gnatcatcher “is a local, uncommon, obligate resident of arid coastal scrub below about 500 m (1,500 ft) from eastern Orange and southwestern Riverside Cos. south through the coastal foothills of San Diego Co.; along the immediate coast at Palos Verdes Peninsula, Los Angeles Co.; at Camp Pendleton and in Tijuana River Valley, San Diego Co. may still occur along lower, coastal slopes of San Gabriel and San Bernardino Mts., Los Angeles and San Bernardino Cos., but status uncertain (Grinnell and Miller 1944, Garrett and Dunn 1981, Atwood 1990, 1993).”¹

The California Gnatcatcher was listed as Threatened under the Federal Endangered Species Act in 1993 (58 FR 16742-16757) with Critical Habitat designated in 2000 (65 FR 63680-63743). Critical Habitat was revised in 2007 (72 FR 72010-72213).

¹ California Department of Fish and Game. 2010. CWHR version 8.1 personal computer program. California Interagency Wildlife Task Force, Sacramento.

METHODS

A total of nine (9) presence/absence Coastal California Gnatcatcher surveys were conducted by Dana Kamada (Permit # TE-799568-9) and Karly Moore (Permit # TE-02484A-3) in accordance with service protocol for non-NCCP areas (Service 1997). All potential Coastal California Gnatcatcher habitat within the Survey Area was surveyed during the non-breeding season (July 1 to March 14) with at least two weeks between survey visits. The biologist surveyed no more than 24.5 acres per day. The surveys were conducted during the morning hours between 6:00 a.m. and 11:30 p.m. Biologists slowly walked through the survey area, pausing frequently to play Coastal California Gnatcatcher vocalizations from Merlin Bid ID© broadcast from a portable speaker within suitable habitat, the objective being to elicit a response from silent individuals that might not otherwise be detected.

Weather conditions and time of day were appropriate for maximizing the likelihood of Coastal California Gnatcatcher detection and are presented in Table 1. Temperatures ranged from 53 to 81° F.

Table 1. Field Dates, Times, and Weather Conditions

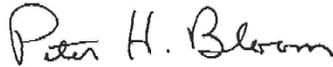
Date	Time	Weather	Biologists
08/15/2023	0730-0950h	Start: 67° F, 100% cloud cover, Calm End: 80° F, 0% cloud cover, Wind 1-3.5 mph Fog in the early morning, cleared by 0800h	Karly Moore
08/31/2023	0630-1030h	Start: 66° F, 0% cloud cover, Calm End: 81° F, 0% cloud cover, Wind 1 mph Haze	Dana Kamada
9/14/2023	0700-1100h	Start: 64° F, 100% cloud cover, Calm End: 70° F, 100% cloud cover, Wind 0-1 mph Patchy fog; Overcast	Dana Kamada
09/28/2023	0800-1130h	Start: 68° F, 100% cloud cover, Calm End: 72° F, 10% cloud cover, Wind 1.7 mph Patch fog; Overcast	Dana Kamada
10/18/2023	0630-1030h	Start: 61° F, 0% cloud cover, Calm End: 77° F, 0% cloud cover, Wind 1.7 mph Clear	Dana Kamada
11/03/2023	0650-1040h	Start: 53° F, 0% cloud cover, Calm End: 75° F, 0% cloud cover, Wind 0.4 mph Clear	Dana Kamada
11/20/2023	0715-1045h	Start: 52° F, 0% cloud cover, Calm End: 69° F, 0% cloud cover, Wind 1.3 mph Clear	Dana Kamada
12/04/2023	0710-1040h	Start: 56° F, 40% cloud cover, Calm End: 67° F, 25% cloud cover, Wind 1 mph Clear	Dana Kamada
12/18/2023	0700-1055h	Start: 57° F, 80% cloud cover, Calm End: 68° F, 85% cloud cover, Wind 1 mph Clear	Dana Kamada

RESULTS & DISCUSSION

Coastal California Gnatcatchers were not detected during the survey. Coastal sagescrub is present primarily along the eastern boundary and southern region of the property (7.81 acres). A small portion of intact coastal sagescrub occurs within the project impact area (0.60 acre) and additional areas of disturbed coastal sagescrub are present within the project impact area (1.34 acres). The disturbed areas have experience clearing for fire suppression. The coastal sagescrub community onsite primarily consists of California buckwheat (*Eriogonum fasciculatum*), California sagebrush (*Artemisia californica*), laurel sumac (*Malosma laurina*), and white sage (*Salvia apiana*).

Photographs of the project site are provided in Appendix B and a list of all wildlife detected during the survey is provided as Appendix C.

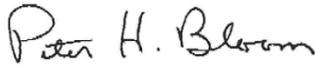
Sincerely,
BLOOM BIOLOGICAL, INC.



Peter H. Bloom
Zoologist/President

CERTIFICATION

We certify that the information in this survey report and attached appendices fully and accurately represents our work. If you have any questions or require additional information, please feel free to contact us at (949) 272-0905 or petebloom@bloombiological.com.



Peter H. Bloom
TE-787376-14, SC-000221

Date Signed



Dana Kamada
TE-799568-9, SC-190520011

Date Signed

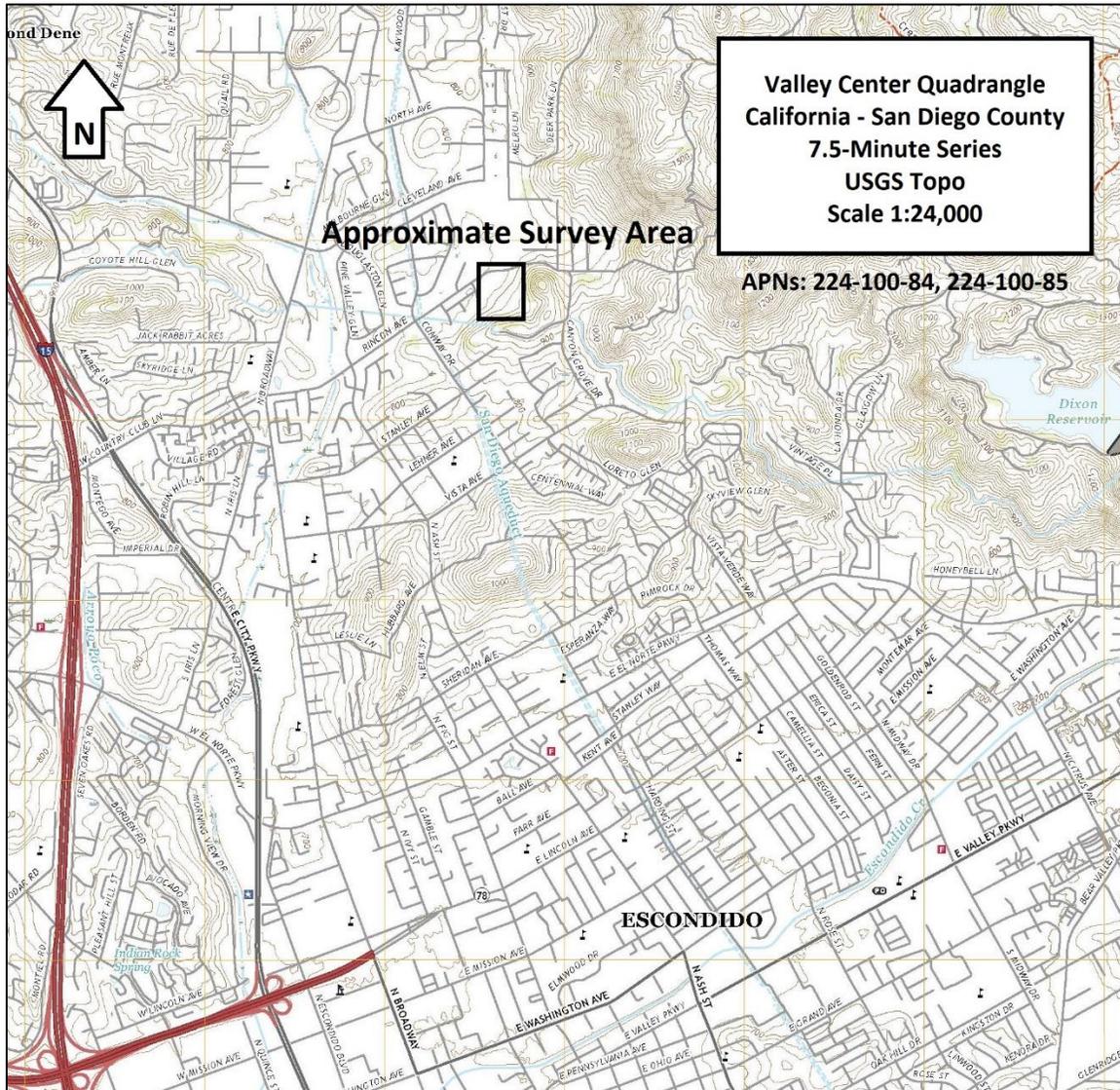
Karly Moore
TE-02484A-3

Date Signed

LITERATURE CITED

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- Grinnell, J., and A. H. Miller. 1944. The distribution of the birds of California. Pac. Coast Avifauna No. 27. 608pp.
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Appendix A. USGS 7.5 Minute Topographical Maps with Survey Area Demarcated 1:24,000



APPENDIX B. SITE PHOTOGRAPHS



Photo 1. Coastal sagescrub vegetation community within the Survey Area.



Photo 2. Coastal sagescrub vegetation community within the Survey Area.



Photo 3. Coastal sagescrub vegetation community within the Survey Area.



Photo 4. Coastal sagescrub vegetation community within the Survey Area.



Photo 5. Coastal sagescrub vegetation community within the Survey Area.



Photo 6. Coastal sagescrub vegetation community within the Survey Area.

APPENDIX C. SPECIES LIST

FAMILY/SPECIES NAME	COMMON NAME
ORDER LEPIDOPTERA	BUTTERFLIES AND MOTHS
PAPILIONIDAE	SWALLOWTAILS
<i>Papilio eurymedon</i>	pale swallowtail
PIERIDEA	WHITES & ORANGETIPS
<i>Artogeia rapae</i>	cabbage white
<i>Pontia protodice</i>	checkered (common) white
NYMPHALIDAE	Brush Footed Butterflies
<i>Vanessa atalanta</i>	red admiral
<i>Junonia coenia</i>	buckeye
LYCAENIDAE	
PLEBEJINAE/LYCAENIDAE	BLUES
<i>Icaricia acmon</i>	Acmon blue
RIODININAE	METALMARKS
<i>Apodemia mormo virgulti</i>	Behr's metalmark
WASPS	
POMPILIDAE	SPIDER WASPS
<i>Pepsis species</i>	Tarantula hawks
AMPHIBIANS AND REPTILES	
IGUANIDAE	IGUANIDS
<i>Sceloporus orcutti</i>	granite spiny lizard
<i>Sceloporus occidentalis</i>	western fence lizard
BIRDS	
ANATIDAE	SWANS, GEESE & DUCKS
<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>	mallard
CATHARTIDAE	AMERICAN VULTURES
<i>Cathartes aura</i>	turkey vulture
ACCIPITRIDAE	KITES, HAWKS, EAGLES & VULTURES
* <i>Accipiter striatus</i>	sharp-shinned hawk
* <i>Accipiter cooperii</i>	Cooper's hawk
<i>Buteo jamaicensis</i>	red-tailed hawk
<i>Buteo lineatus</i>	red-shouldered hawk
FALCONIDAE	FALCONS
<i>Falco sparverius</i>	American kestrel
COLUMBIDAE	PIGEONS & DOVES
<i>Zenaida macroura</i>	mourning dove
STRIGIDAE	TYPICAL OWLS
<i>Bubo virginianus</i>	great horned owl
TROCHILIDAE	HUMMINGBIRDS
<i>Calypte anna</i>	Anna's hummingbird
<i>Selasphorus sasin</i>	Allen's hummingbird
PICIDAE	WOODPECKERS
<i>Melanerpes formicivorus</i>	acorn woodpecker
<i>Colaptes auratus</i>	northern flicker
<i>Picoides nuttallii</i>	Nuttall's woodpecker
TYRANNIDAE	TYRANT FLYCATCHERS

<i>Tyrannus vociferans</i>	Cassin's kingbird
<i>Sayornis nigricans</i>	black phoebe
<i>Sayornis saya</i>	Say's phoebe
CORVIDAE	CROWS, JAYS
<i>Corvus brachyrhynchos</i>	American crow
<i>Corvus corax</i>	common raven
<i>Aphelocoma coerulescens</i>	scrub jay
AEGITHALIDAE	BUSHTIT
<i>Psaltriparus minimus</i>	common bushtit
SITTIDAE	NUTHATCHES
<i>Sitta carolinensis</i>	white-breasted nuthatch
<i>Certhia americana</i>	red-breasted nuthatch
TROGLODYTIDAE	WRENS
<i>Troglodytes aedon</i>	house wren
<i>Thryomanes bewickii</i>	Bewick's wren
MUSCICAPIDAE	THRUSHES, OLD WORLD WARBLERS
<i>Sialia mexicana</i>	western bluebird
<i>Regulus calendula</i>	ruby-crowned kinglet
<i>Polioptila caerulea</i>	blue-gray gnatcatcher
<i>Chamaea fasciata</i>	wren
MIMIDAE	MOCKINGBIRDS & THRASHERS
<i>Mimus polyglottos</i>	northern mockingbird
<i>Toxostoma crissale</i>	California thrasher
PARULIDAE	WOOD WARBLERS
<i>Dendroica coronata</i>	yellow-rumped warbler
<i>Vermivora celata</i>	orange-crowned warbler
CARDINALIDAE	CARDINALS, GROSBEAKS & ALLIES
<i>Pheucticus melanocephalus</i>	black-headed grosbeak
EMBERIZIDAE	TOWHEES, SPARROWS & LONGSPURS
<i>Zonotricha leucophrys</i>	white-crowned sparrow
<i>Melospiza melodia</i>	song sparrow
<i>Pipilo erythrophthalmus</i>	spotted towhee
<i>Pipilo crissalis</i>	California towhee
<i>Junco hyemalis</i>	dark-eyed junco
ICTERIDAE	BLACKBIRDS & ORIOLES
<i>Icterus cucullatus</i>	hooded oriole
FRINGILLIDAE	OLD WORLD FINCHES
<i>Carpodacus mexicanus</i>	house finch
<i>Carduelis psaltria</i>	lesser goldfinch
MAMMALS	
CANIDAE	DOGS, WOLVES, FOXES
<i>Canis latrans</i>	coyote
SCIURIDAE	SQUIRRELS
<i>Citellus beecheyi</i>	California ground squirrel
LEPORIDAE	HARES, RABBITS
<i>Sylvilagus auduboni</i>	desert cottontail