

Work Task D7: Yellow-billed Cuckoo Presence/Absence Surveys

FY08 Estimates	FY08 Actual	Cumulative Accomplishment Through FY08	FY09 Approved Estimate	FY10 Proposed Estimate	FY11 Proposed Estimate	FY12 Proposed Estimate
\$500,000	\$526,687.60	\$1,431,627.60	\$540,000	\$540,000	\$550,000	\$550,000

Contact: Barbara Raulston (702) 293-8396, braulston@usbr.gov

Start Date: FY06

Expected Duration: FY55

Long-term Goal: Acquire yellow-billed cuckoo data as part of the system monitoring program.

Conservation Measures: MRM1, MRM2 (YBCU)

Location: General presence/absence surveys are conducted in approximately 55 sites of suitable habitat within the LCR MSCP project boundary.

Purpose: Conduct surveys to determine existing yellow-billed cuckoo (YBCU) populations along the LCR from the Grand Canyon to the Southerly International Boundary with Mexico and monitor long-term trends.

Connections with Other Work Tasks (past and future): Information obtained from C21 and C22 in FY05 was used to develop the monitoring protocol currently being utilized in D7. Data collected in this work task will be utilized in the YBCU modeling being conducted under C24.

Project Description: Yellow-billed cuckoo utilize cottonwood-willow habitat and may act as an umbrella species for other covered avian species that use these mature habitats. Existing YBCU populations and habitat are being determined along the LCR as systematic surveys are conducted over the project area. This work task assesses existing YBCU populations and evaluates required habitat characteristics. Data collected on vegetation characteristics of occupied sites are used to design habitat creation sites for YBCU and recommend future demographic studies necessary to understand more about the YBCU populations along the LCR.

Previous Activities: The YBCU life history and monitoring studies began in FY06.

FY08 Accomplishments: Five surveys each were conducted at 40 sites between southern Nevada and the U.S.-Mexico border. Cuckoos were detected at least once during the season at all LCR MSCP restoration sites. Approximately 58 birds were observed during the 2008 field season. Habitat, vegetation, and insect (prey) data was also collected.

Cuckoos were detected at Havasu NWR, Bill Williams River NWR, Cibola NWR, Cibola Valley Conservation Area, Palo Verde Ecological Reserve, Colorado River Indian Tribe's 'Ahahkav

Tribal Preserve, Gila River Confluence, Imperial NWR, Limnotroph Division, Mittry Lake/Pratt Restoration Site, Picacho State Recreation Area, and Yuma West Wetlands City Park.

Three nests were found on the Bill Williams River NWR and two nests were found at Cibola Valley Conservation Area. The two confirmed nests on CVCA were believed to be from the same pair of birds, one being a second nesting attempt at a different nest site, but located about 70 feet from the first nest. This first nest fledged three young; the second nest failed due to probable nest predation by a raptor. At a nearby area, nearly ½ mile from the first nesting pair at CVCA, cuckoos were persistently present and a fledgling was observed, but no nest was found. This indicates a third nest at CVCA. Nesting was also suspected, but not confirmed, at CRIT's 'Ahahkav Tribal Preserve, based on the continued presence of cuckoos.

FY09 Activities: In FY09, monitoring and research activities will be continued including presence/absence surveys, vegetation monitoring, and microclimate data collection. Attempts will be made to capture cuckoos to gather additional information on reproductive behavior, nesting, diet, and habitat use.

Proposed FY10 Activities: Activities in 2010 will include presence/absence surveys, habitat data collection such as vegetation measurements, and micro-habitat analysis for areas along the LCR and at habitat creation projects targeting YBCU.

Pertinent Reports: The 2007 annual report by USGS is posted to the LCR MSCP Web site. The 2008 annual report will be posted to the Web site after it is finalized in April 2009.