

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

FY09 Estimates	FY09 Actual	Cumulative Accomplishment Through FY09	FY10 Approved Estimate	FY11 Proposed Estimate	FY12 Proposed Estimate	FY13 Proposed Estimate
\$540,000	\$526,939.86	\$1,958,567.46	\$540,000	\$550,000	\$550,000	\$550,000

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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): Data collected in this work task will be utilized in the YBCU modeling being conducted under C24.

Project Description: Yellow-billed cuckoos 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.

FY09 Accomplishments: Monitoring and research activities were conducted system-wide and at all restoration sites. Activities included presence/absence surveys, vegetation monitoring, microclimate data collection, telemetry, nest searching, and monitoring and prey studies.

Call-playback surveys were conducted for yellow-billed cuckoos at 58 sites within the LCR MSCP area in potentially suitable habitat. Cuckoos were detected 178 times during surveys, estimated to represent 44 potential breeding pairs. Breeding was confirmed at four sites: Bill Williams River NWR; Palo Verde Ecological Reserve, Phase 2; Cibola Valley Conservation Area, Phase 1; and Cibola NWR. Ten cuckoos were mist-netted and banded, including nine at restoration sites. One bird captured at Palo Verde Ecological Reserve was banded as a nestling in 2008 at the Cibola Valley Conservation Area, 35 km to the south of PVER. This is the first time such a capture has been noted at any restoration site or conservation area along the LCR. Populations appear to be stable along the LCR, and more detailed results, as well as vegetation, habitat, microclimate, and prey selection data will be included in the 2009 annual report.

FY10 Activities: Activities in FY10 will be similar to what was done in previous years of this project. Surveys will be conducted system-wide and at all restoration sites that are suitable habitat for yellow-billed cuckoos. As many cuckoos as possible will be captured, banded, and tracked using telemetry. Nest searching will be conducted and nests found will be monitored. Vegetation and microclimate data will be collected.

Proposed FY11 Activities: Activities in FY11 will be similar to what was done in previous years of this project. Surveys will be conducted system-wide and at all restoration sites that are suitable habitat for yellow-billed cuckoos. As many cuckoos as possible will be captured, banded, and tracked using telemetry. Nest searching will be conducted and nests found will be monitored. Vegetation and microclimate data will be collected.

Pertinent Reports: *Yellow-billed Cuckoo Distribution, Abundance, and Habitat Use on the Lower Colorado River and Tributaries, 2009 Annual Report* will be posted to the LCR MSCP Web site.