

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

FY10 Estimates	FY010 Actual	Cumulative Accomplishment Through FY10	FY11 Approved Estimate	FY12 Proposed Estimate	FY13 Proposed Estimate	FY14 Proposed Estimate
\$540,000	\$548,459.47	\$2,507,026.93	\$550,000	\$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 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.

FY10 Accomplishments: In FY10, monitoring and research activities continued. Surveys 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 46 sites with the LCR MSCP area in potentially suitable habitat. Cuckoos were detected 272 times during the breeding season, representing an estimated 56 breeding pairs. Breeding was confirmed for 22 pairs at 5 sites: the Beal Riparian Restoration Area at Havasu National Wildlife Refuge, the Bill Williams River National Wildlife Refuge, Palo Verde Ecological Reserve, Phases 2 and 3, Cibola Valley Conservation Area, Phases 1 and 2, the Cibola Nature Trail at Cibola National Wildlife Refuge Unit #1. Seventeen nests were found and monitored. Nesting success was 88% with all but two nests successful and at least 31 young fledged. Twenty-seven adult cuckoos were mist-netted, 25 were banded and 23 were fitted with transmitters. Transmitted birds were followed for a seasonal total of 250 days.

FY11 Activities: Activities in FY11 will be similar to previous years. 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 FY12 Activities: Activities in FY12 will be similar to what was done in previous years of this project. FY12 will be the last year under the existing contract; solicitation for further work will begin in FY12, with award expected by January 2013.

Pertinent Reports: *Yellow-billed Cuckoo Distribution, Abundance, and Habitat Use on the Lower Colorado River and Tributaries, 2009 Annual Report* is posted to the website. *Yellow-billed Cuckoo Distribution, Abundance, and Habitat Use on the Lower Colorado River and Tributaries, 2010 Annual Report* will be posted to the website when final.