
**Priest, J., "Documentation of California Gnatcatcher Observation at Newhall,
Valencia Commerce Center Project on 10/5/07" (October 8, 2007; 2007A)**

MEMORANDUM

October 8, 2007

3738-145

TO: Dave Crawford, Compliance Biology, Inc.
Ron Francis, Compliance Biology, Inc.

CC: Matt Carpenter, Newhall
Sam Rojas, Newhall
Glenn Adamick, Newhall
Sherri Miller, Dudek
Brock Ortega, Dudek

FROM: Jeff Priest, Dudek

RE: *Documentation of California Gnatcatcher Observation at Newhall, Valencia Commerce Center Project on 10/5/07*

At approximately 0915 on 10/5/07, a single California gnatcatcher (*Polioptila californica californica*; CAGN) was observed for approximately 8 to 10 minutes at the Newhall Valencia Commerce Center project site by Dudek biologist Jeff Priest and biologist Ron Francis, as a sub-consultants to Dave Crawford, Compliance Biology, Inc.

Jeff Priest clearly observed the CAGN through binoculars (10x42) displaying the characteristic non-breeding plumage (*i.e.*, black-dominated tail feathers), tail-flipping behavior, and mew calls. The CAGN was responsive to the taped CAGN calls, and was observed in sage scrub habitat located on the hills in the north-central portion of the site, on an easterly-facing slope (*map attached*). The CAGN was observed briefly interacting with a blue-gray gnatcatcher (*Polioptila caerulea*) before flying to the south away from the blue-gray gnatcatcher. The blue-gray gnatcatcher clearly displayed the white tail feathers visible along the tail margins on the dorsal side while in flight. The white tail feathers also visibly dominated the ventral side of the tail while perched.

The blue-gray gnatcatcher differs from CAGN in flight behavior. Blue-gray gnatcatchers typically have a more direct flight pattern, and may use all heights of the vegetation column,

Dave Crawford, Ron Francis

RE: Documentation of California Gnatcatcher Observation at Newhall, Valencia Commerce Center Project on 10/5/07

including tops of taller trees. They commonly move through many types of vegetation communities during fall months. In contrast, CAGN typically have a slower, more indirect, bouncing flight pattern, and tend to stay low in the vegetation of sage scrub habitat. These differences in flight pattern also were observed during this survey.

After confirming the species identification and presence of CAGN, Jeff Priest and Ron Francis left the area to minimize disturbance to the individual. The observation occurred during the first of nine protocol visits scheduled for the project.

CAGN 10-5-07
1 individual



- VCC SCP Boundary**
- Vegetation**
- AGR = Agriculture
 - CGL = California Annual Grassland
 - CSB = California Sagebrush Scrub
 - CSB-CB = California Sagebrush Scrub - California
 - CSB-PS = California Sagebrush Scrub - Purple Sage
 - CWRF = Southern Cottonwood/Willow Riparian Fore
 - DEV = Developed
 - DL = Disturbed Land
 - HW = Herbaceous Wetlands
 - MFS = Mulefat Scrub
 - RW = River Wash
 - SWS = Southern Willow Scrub
 - VOW = Valley Oak Woodland
 - dCSB = Disturbed California Sagebrush Scrub
 - dMFS = Disturbed Mulefat

DUDEK
 Santa Barbara GIS Division
 621 Chapala Street
 Santa Barbara, CA 93101
 (805) 963-8651



FIGURE
1

Newhall Ranch
 Valencia Commerce Center SCP Boundary