

JOB PROGRESS REPORT

State: CaliforniaCooperators: Volunteer Observers and U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service Refuge BiologistsProject No.: W-54-R-4 Project Title: Special Wildlife InvestigationsJob No.: III-1 Job Title: Statewide Shorebird SurveyPeriod Covered: July 1, 1971 to June 30, 1972

SUMMARY:

A statewide shorebird survey program was developed by California Department of Fish and Game in July 1968. Surveys at selected sites began in 1969.

The survey program was continued during FY 1971-72. At 42 census sites, censusers conducted 750 shorebird counts. Revised shorebird census instruction sheets and reporting forms were distributed to observers in December 1971. Computer processing of three years of survey data was completed in June 1972.

BACKGROUND:

Wetlands in California provide important feeding and resting areas for large numbers of migrant and resident shorebirds. Economic development of wetland areas, especially in coastal estuaries, has resulted in an alarming reduction in shorebird habitat. Urgently needed is current knowledge of habitat needs, populations, movements and migration of shorebirds in California. Such information is necessary for the preservation and management of this resource.

The shorebird survey program was initiated by California Department of Fish and Game in July 1968. Reporting forms and guidelines for census procedure were developed for distribution to censusers. Censusing began in July 1969. Statistics on the first two years of the survey are listed below:

<u>Survey Period</u>	<u>No. of Counts</u>	<u>No. of Observers</u>	<u>No. of Sites</u>
July 1969 - June 1970	463	76	34
July 1970 - June 1971	446	54	24

Results of these censuses are contained in two reports: "California Shorebird Survey, 1969-1970" and "California Shorebird Survey, 1970-71".

Since July 1970 funding of the shorebird survey and research program has been assumed by the federal Accelerated Research on Shore and Upland Migratory Game Birds. Work was assigned to Ronald M. Jurek, Junior Wildlife Manager-Biologist.

OBJECTIVES:

California Shorebird Survey, 1971-72, is a continuation of a statewide census program that began July 1969. Objectives are to obtain current information on shorebird occurrence and abundance in selected habitats throughout the state.

PROCEDURES:

Forty-two shorebird census sites were established statewide for the 1971-72 survey period. Included were 13 sites which had been censused continually since the program began in 1969. Fourteen other sites were initiated in 1971-72, including a special census route in Carrizo Plain, San Luis Obispo County, to survey mountain plovers.

Observers were provided with census instructions and reporting forms. Most censusers included volunteer bird watchers from local communities. Many of these people had participated in shorebird counts in previous years.

In December 1971 revised survey instruction sheets and census forms were sent to censusers. Revisions in the instruction sheet were made to clarify portions of the original instructions and to aid censusers in filling out revised census forms. Census forms were revised in order to simplify the recording process, to minimize recording and transposition errors and to obtain more detailed information on tidal and nontidal water levels. Revised instruction sheets and forms, and special instructions for the Carrizo Plain Survey Route are appended.

Agreement was made with Fisheries Statistics, Ocean Resources Branch, California Department of Fish and Game, to program shorebird survey data for computer processing and tabulation.

FINDINGS:

Censusers conducted 750 shorebird counts at 42 census sites during the period July 1971 - June 1972.

Census data from July 1969 through June 1972 was key punched on IBM cards. Final printouts were completed in June 1972. For each of the three fiscal years of the survey program, census data was tabulated in two formats: the first, a listing for each site showing the abundance of shorebird species throughout the census period; the second, a listing for each species showing the abundance of individuals at each site throughout the year.

RECOMMENDATION:

Continue California Shorebird Survey during FY 1972-73 at a reduced number of sites.

Prepared by Ronald M. Jurek Date June 18, 1973
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