



San Felipe Valley Wildlife Area Vertebrate Inventory

MAMMALS

Mammal diversity and population dynamics on the wildlife area are distinct and inherently interesting because the site represents an important zone of intergradation for many of the occurring species. Most species are represented by two distinct subspecies or morphs. Typically, one subspecies is characteristic of a mountain race (for example, in darkness of pelage, exemplified by *Peromyscus maniculatus gambellii*) and the other of a desert race (for example, in lightness of pelage as exemplified by *P. m. sonoriensis*). The same is true for subspecies of the desert woodrat (*Neotoma lepida*) and the San Diego pocket mouse (*Chaetodipus fallax*). Two subspecies of the little pocket mouse (*Perognathus longimembris*) coexist within this valley. The two subspecies (*P. l. brevinasus*, the Los Angeles pocket mouse and *P. l. internationalis*, the Jacumba pocket mouse) typically occupy distinct habitats. *Internationalis* is found in sage scrub and moderate altitude desert habitats and occupies the more southerly portion of the species' range. *Brevinasus* is found in lower elevation grasslands, sand riparian edge, and alluvial sage scrub habitats and is the more northerly occurring species. Both subspecies have been found in the wildlife area. Both subspecies are designated as California Species of Special Concern by CDFW.

The Jacumba pocket mouse has been captured in two separate locations. Specimens have been trapped in desert scrub on the east side of Hwy S2 as well as in the fallow agricultural field along San Felipe Creek west of Hwy S2. Little pocket mice have also been observed throughout the fallow agricultural field. Alteration of the soil type or cover at this site may adversely affect the population of this rodent on site.

Summary: Thirty-one (31) mammal species have been documented on the wildlife area, 2 species of rabbits/hares, 4 species of bats, 17 species of rodents, 7 species of carnivore and 1 species of hoofed mammal. Five species detected are California Species of Special Concern.

BIRDS

San Felipe Valley is potentially one of, if not the most important inland flyways for migratory birds in San Diego County (W. Haas, P. Unitt field notes). It is also a very important breeding locale for several protected species including federal and state endangered least Bell's vireos (*Vireo bellii pusillus*) and southwestern willow flycatchers (*Empidonax traillii extimus*). Both species breed on or adjacent to the wildlife area. State endangered northwestern willow flycatchers (*E. t. brewsteri*) and possibly the Sierran breeding *E. t. adastus* move through the valley in large numbers during spring migration. Numerous state Species of Special Concern also breed within the wildlife



area including yellow warbler (*Dendroica petechia*), gray vireo (*Vireo vicinior*), long-eared owl (*Asio otus*), and loggerhead shrike (*Lanius ludovicianus*).

Summary: Ninety-seven (97) bird species have been documented on the wildlife area. Two of these species are fully protected. Three species are protected by law and 10 are California Species of Special Concern.

REPTILES AND AMPHIBIANS

Because of the proximity of San Felipe Valley to the Volcan and Palomar Mountains there is the potential for a differentiated population (= subspecies) of the slender salamander (*Batrachoseps major*) on site. The CSSC large blotched salamander (*Ensatina eschscholtzi klauberi*) has been detected just north of the village of San Felipe. This species is also expected to occur in Arkansas Canyon (a component of CDFW's Expansion I and II acquisitions within the valley). Silvery legless lizards (*Aniella pulchra*), another CSSC is common in sandy soil along the edge of the San Felipe Creek riparian habitat. Another interesting phenomenon is the distribution of the three common species of rattlesnakes in the valley. Speckled rattlesnakes (*Crotalus mitchellii*) appear to be more common on the west-facing slopes, red diamond rattlesnakes (*C. exsul*) in cooler locations along the mountain slope, and the generally more ubiquitous western rattlesnake (*C. viridis*) distributed throughout the area but more common in area of disturbance and along the bottom of the valley.

Summary: Twenty-three (23) reptile and amphibian species have been documented on the wildlife area, including 2 species of amphibians, 10 species of lizards, and 11 species of snakes. Five of these species are California Species of Special Concern.