GRASSLAND BIRD SPECIES, SLO AND CEQA

Mandatory Findings of Significance

15065 (a) (1) The project has the potential to: …substantially reduce the habitat of a fish or wildlife species; cause a fish or wildlife population to drop below self-sustaining levels; threaten to eliminate a plant or animal community; substantially reduce the number or restrict the range of an endangered, rare or threatened species…

IMPORTANT SOURCES OF LITERATURE

SPECIES OF SPECIAL CONCERN

http://www.dfg.ca.gov/wildlife/species/ssc/index.html

PRBO GRASSLAND CONSERVATION PLAN

http://www.prbo.org/calpif/plans.html

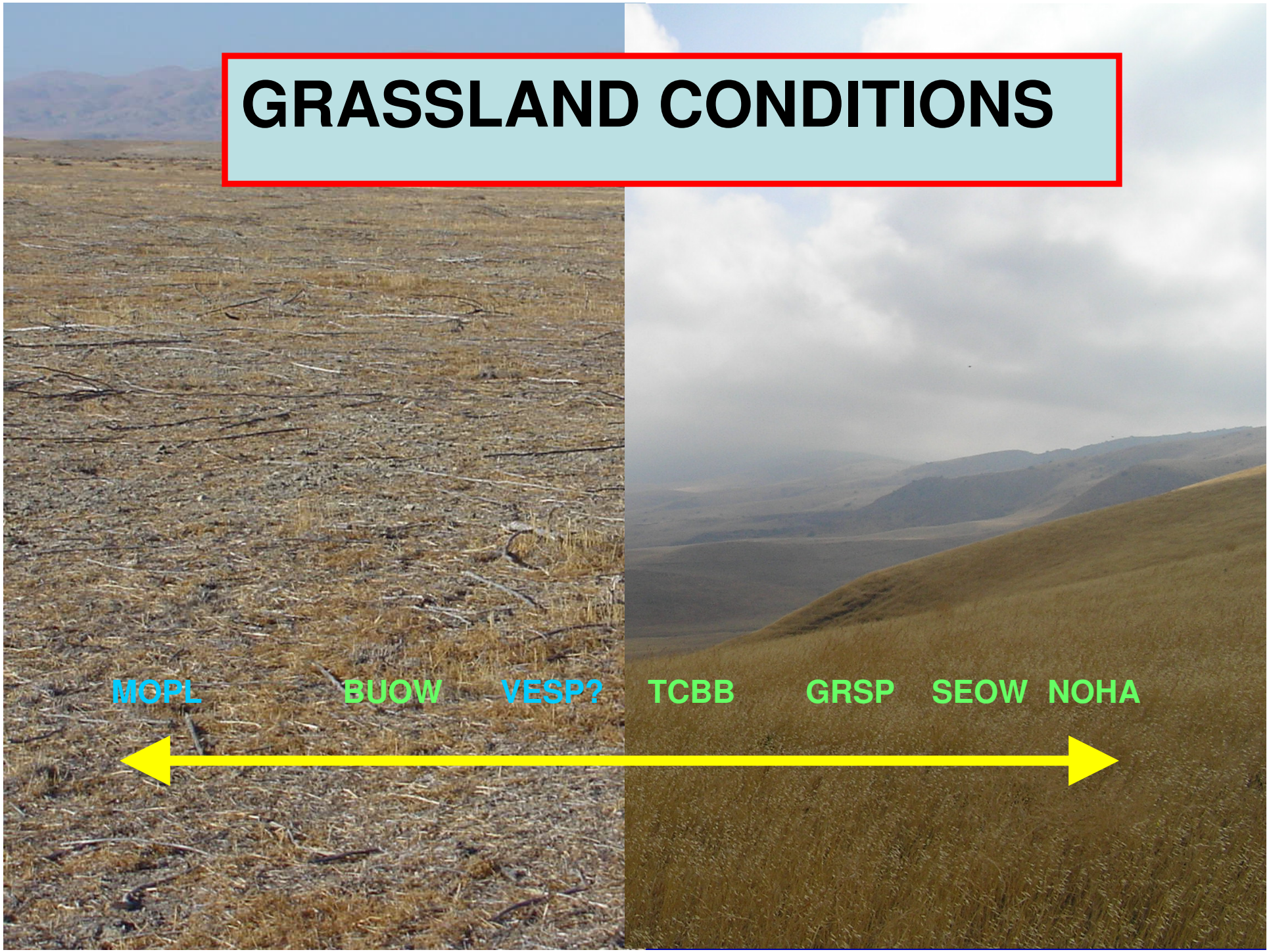
WILDLIFE ACTION PLAN

http://www.dfg.ca.gov/wildlife/wap/report.html

GRASSLAND BIRD SPECIES OF SPECIAL CONCERN

- MOUNTAIN PLOVER
- BURROWING OWL
- GRASSHOPPER SPARROW
- OREGON VESPER SPARROW
- NORTHERN HARRIER
- SHORT-EARED OWL
- TRICOLORED BLACKBIRD
- LESSER SANDHILL CRANE

GRASSLAND CONDITIONS

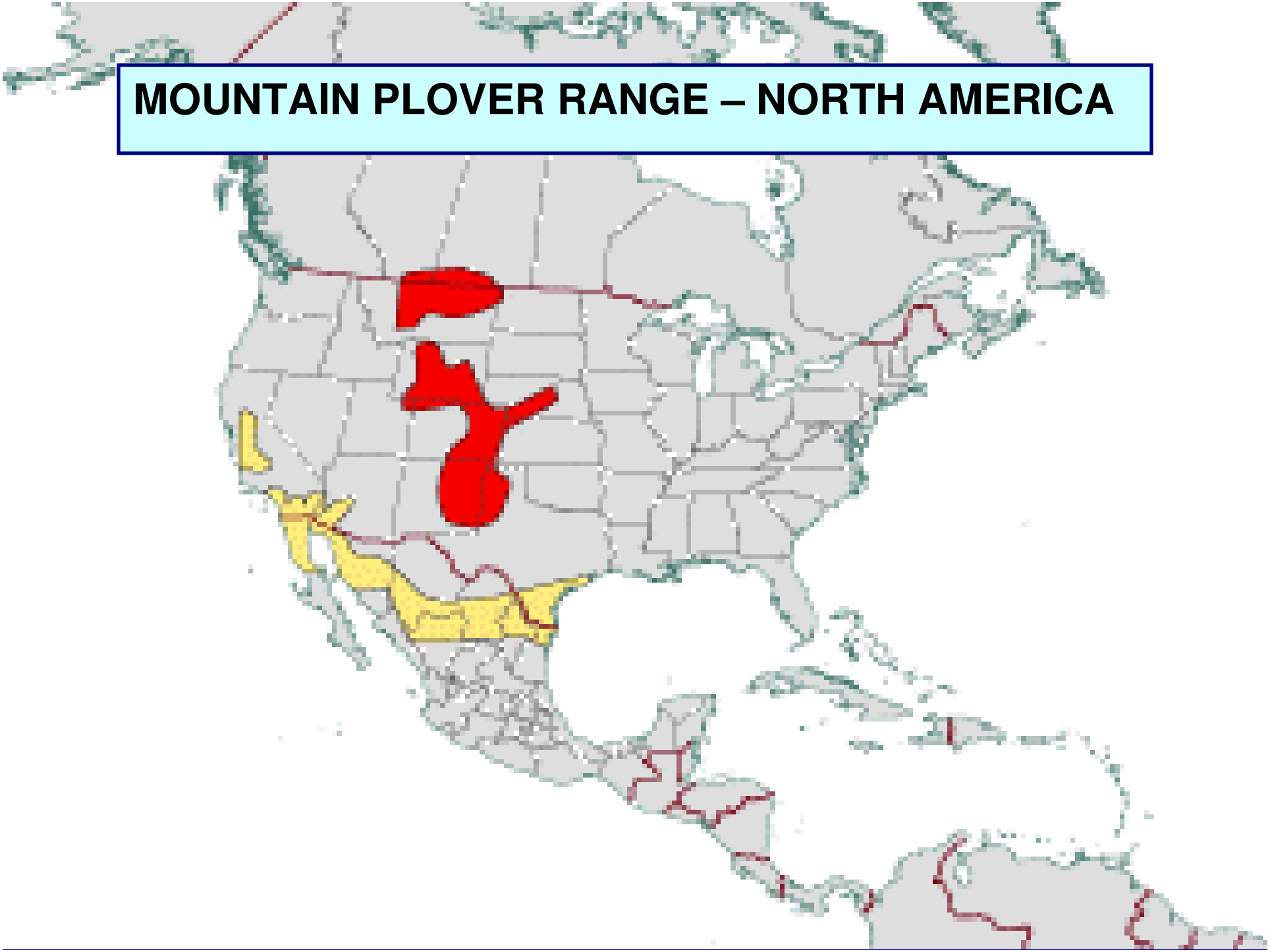


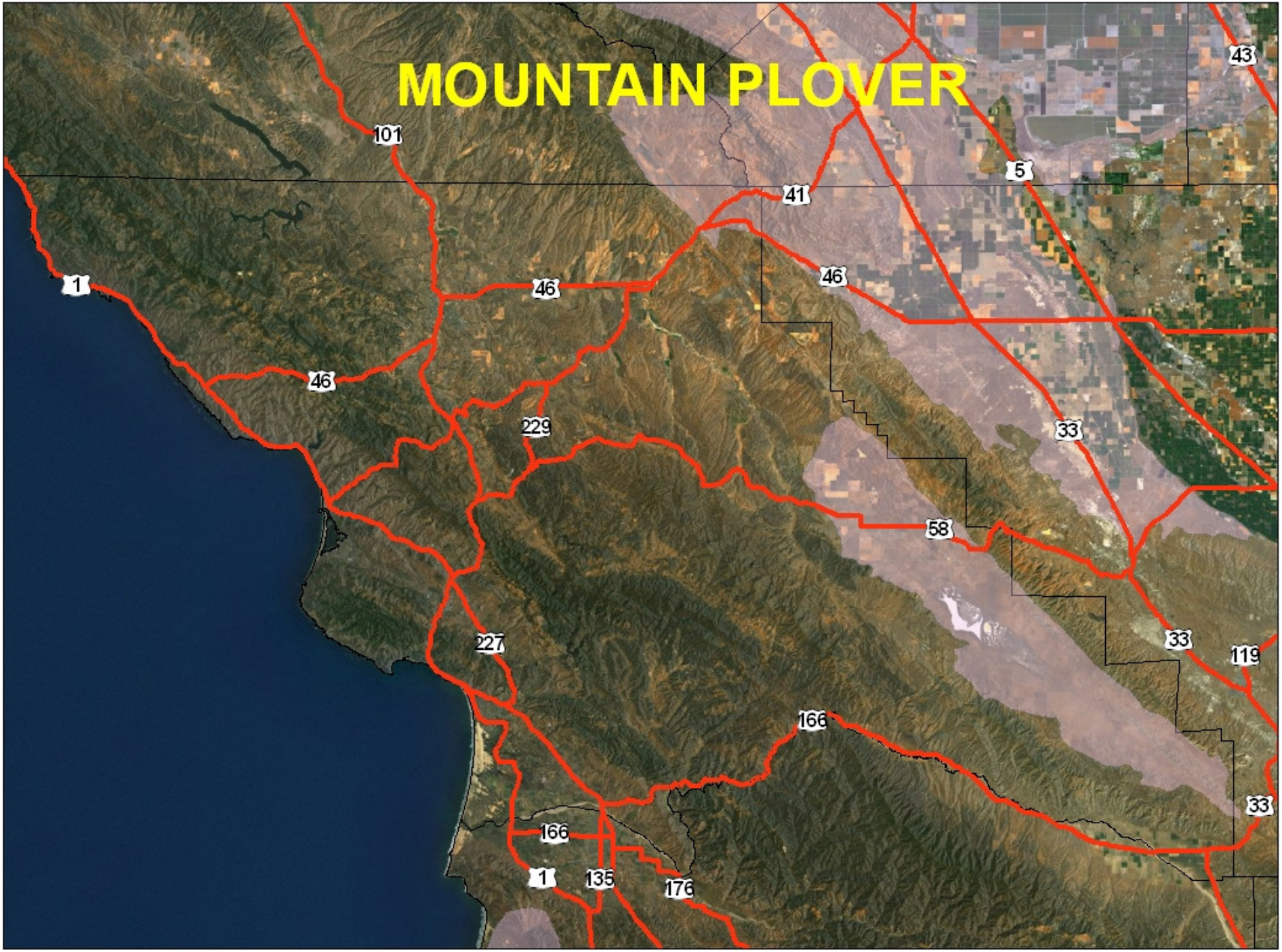
MOUNTAIN PLOVER

(***Charadrius montanus***)

- BREEDS IN HIGH PLAINS
- 50% WINTER IN CALIFORNIA
- ARRIVES OCTOBER – LEAVES MARCH
- HIGH MORTALITY POST BREEDING
- FEEDS ON INSECTS
- THREATS – UNSUITABLE HABITAT
- LISTING PACKAGES?

MOUNTAIN PLOVER RANGE – NORTH AMERICA




MOUNTAIN PLOVER
101
41
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166
1
135
176

MOUNTAIN PLOVER HABITAT

- <10% SLOPE (<5% BEST)
- BARE GROUND >=30 %
- VEGETATION < 7.5 CM
- USES ALKALI FLATS, GRASSLANDS, AND TILLED FIELDS
- FRESHLY BURNED AREAS

MOPL SURVEY/MITIGATION

- SURVEY DEC-FEB (3+ DAYS)
- COVER ENTIRE AREA
- NO NET LOSS OF OCCUPIED HABITAT
- CREATE HABITAT (GRAZING, BURNING)
- TIMING

CONSERVATION PLAN FOR THE MOUNTAIN PLOVER
(*CHARADRIUS MONTANUS*)

Version 1.0

May 2009

Brad A. Andres [1]
Kelli L. Stone [2]

© Stephen J. Dinsmore

WHSRN
WESTERN HEMISPHERE SHOREBIRD RESERVE NETWORK

BURROWING OWL

(*Athene cunicularia*)

- NESTS AND WINTERS IN SLO CO.
- NEST SITE FIDELITY
- BURROW SITES LIMITING
- TOOLS???
- FEEDS ON INSECTS/SMALL VERTS
- FORAGES W/IN 600m OF NEST

BURROWING OWL
101
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HABITAT USE

- LOWER GRASS STRUCTURE
- GROUND SQUIRREL BURROWS
- CANAL BANKS (SJV/IMPERIAL Co)
- ARTIFICIAL BURROWS

BUOW SURVEY/MITIGATION

- CALIF. BUOW CONSORTIUM – 1993
- TRANSECTS 30M APART + 150M BUFFER
- NESTING AND WINTER SURVEYS
- MITIGATION 10-20 ACRES/OCCUPIED BURROW
- NEW GUIDELINES…..

http://www.dfg.ca.gov/wildlife/nongame/docs/boconsortium.pdf

GRASSHOPPER SPARROW

(***Ammodramus savannarum***)

GRASSHOPPER SPARROW
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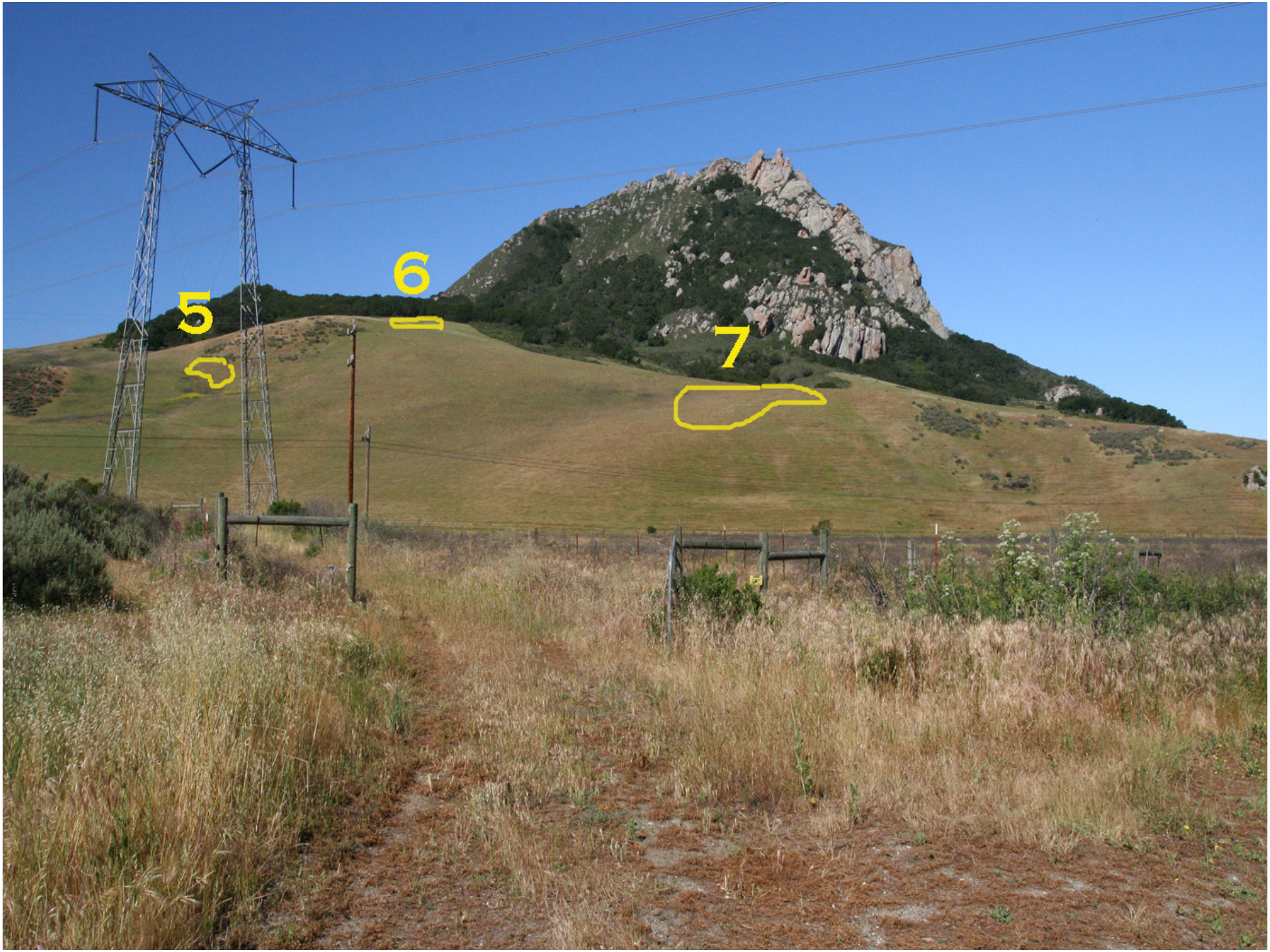
135
176

GRASSHOPPER SPARROW

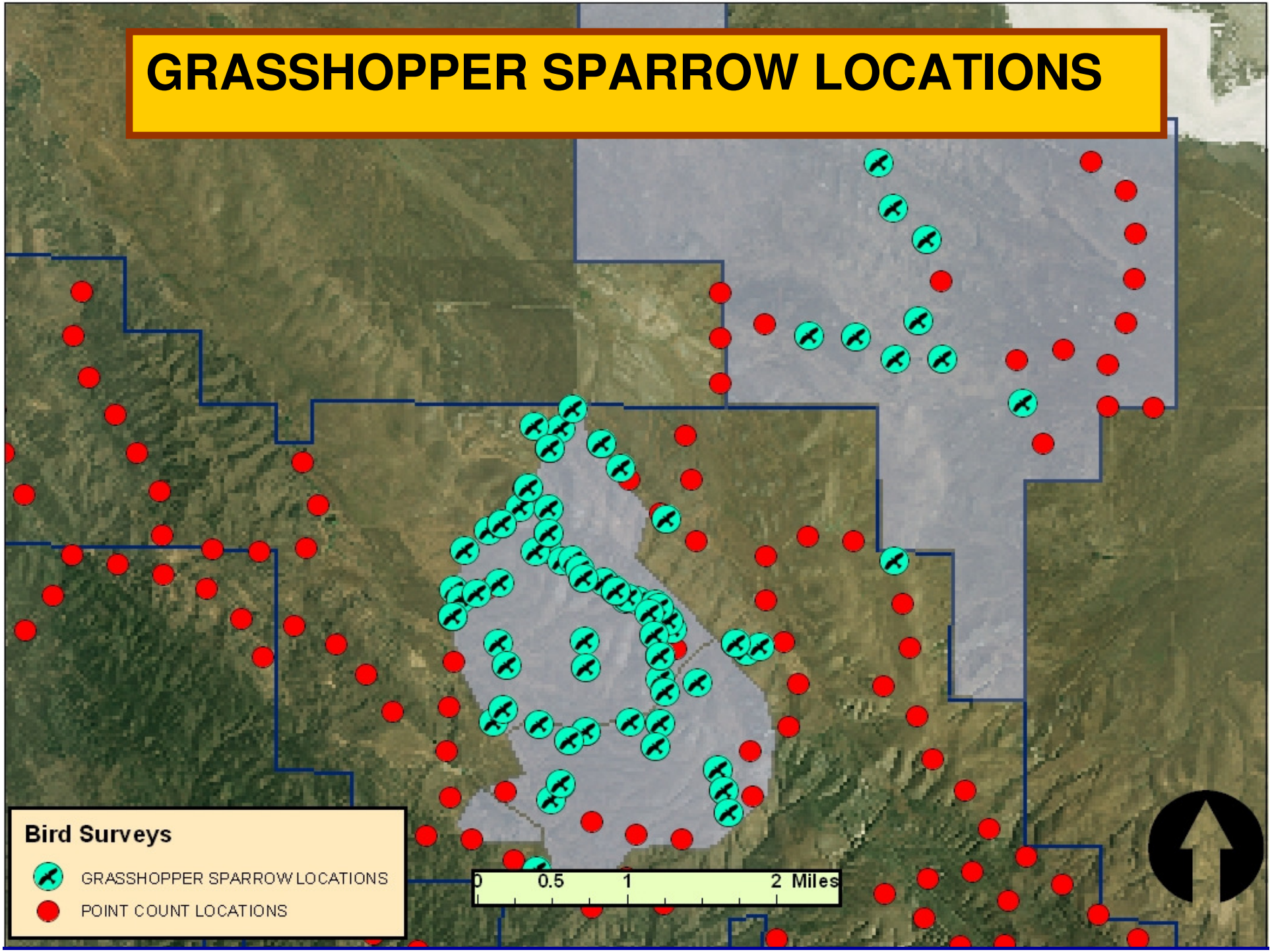
1. SUMMER BREEDER. LEAVES BY AUGUST.
2. GRASSLAND OBLIGATE.
3. BREEDING SEASON – APRIL-MAY E. COUNTY; MAY-JULY COASTAL
4. CAN BE DIFFICULT TO DETECT.
5. MOVING EAST TO WEST?

HABITAT USE

- PREFERS UNGRAZED GRASSLANDS (CARRIZO)
- UNKNOWN PREFERENCES ON COAST
- PERCH SITES FOR SINGING
- SEEMS TO PREFER HILLY AREAS


5
6
7

GRASSHOPPER SPARROW LOCATIONS



GRSP SURVEYS/MITIGATION

- ACOUSTIC SURVEYS (APRIL-MAY)
- MAP TERRITORIES
- AVOID IMPACTS DURING NESTING
- ENHANCE/CREATE HABITAT
- CONSERVE PERCH SITES
- 25 ACRE PATCH SIZE

OREGON VESPER SPARROW

(***Pooecetes gramineus affinis***)

OREGON VESPER SPARROW
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- BREEDS COASTAL PACIFIC NORTHWEST
- WINTERS CENTRAL/SOUTHERN CALIF.
- ARRIVES SEPT. LEAVES BY APRIL.
- FEEDS ON SEEDS/INSECTS
- MIXING OF SUBSPECIES IN SO. CALIF.

HABITAT USE

- **OPEN GRASSLANDS**
- **LITTLE INFORMATION ABOUT STRUCTURE**
- **PATCH SIZE UNKNOWN**

OREGON VESP SURVEYS/MITIGATION

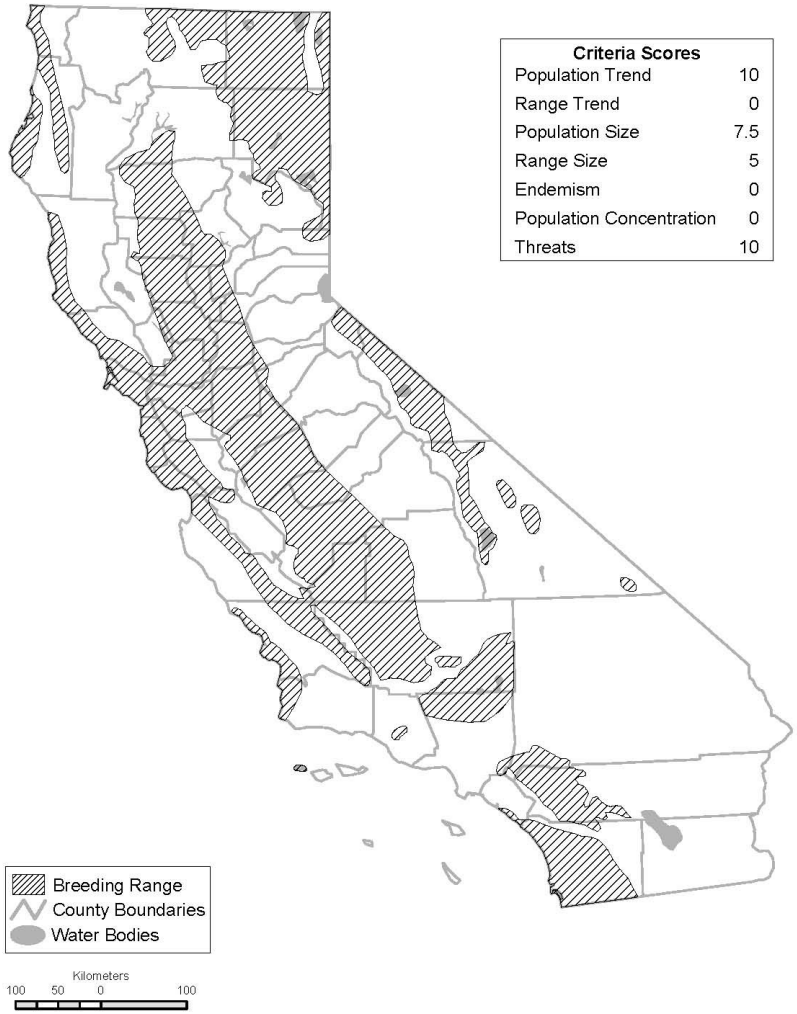
- WINTER AREA SEARCHES (DEC-FEB)
- SUBMIT LOCATION TO CNDDB
- AVOID IMPACTS DURING WINTER
- CONSERVE GRASSLANDS WITH KNOWN USE

NORTHERN HARRIER

(*Circus cyaneus*)

NORTHERN HARRIER (*Circus cyaneus*)

Jeff N. Davis and Chris A. Niemela



Breeding range of the Northern Harrier in California; numbers have declined at least moderately since 1944. Also occupies most remaining lowland areas of the state in the nonbreeding season, when numbers are swelled greatly by out-of-state migrants.

- SEXES DIMORPHIC
- RESIDENT + WINTER MIGRANT
- GROUND NEST
- NESTS APRIL-AUGUST (PEAK MAY)
- VULNERABLE TO HUMAN DIST.
- FEEDS ON BIRDS, VOLES, RABBITS

HABITAT USE

- GRASSLANDS AND MARSHES
- TALL VEG STRUCTURE (>40 cm)
- CAN USE AG LANDS
- DISTURBANCE BY LIVESTOCK
- PERCHES

NORTHERN HARRIER SURVEYS/MITIGATION

- BREEDING SEASON SURVEYS (APR-MAY)
- MAP NEST SITES
- AVOID IMPACTS DURING NESTING
- REDUCE LIVESTOCK IMPACTS
- DELAY HARVESTING UNTIL AUGUST
- MAINTAIN MOSAIC OF UNDISTURBED HABITATS
- MINIMIZE HUMAN DISTURBANCE DURING NESTING

SHORT-EARED OWL

(*Asio flammeus*)

SHORT-EARED OWL
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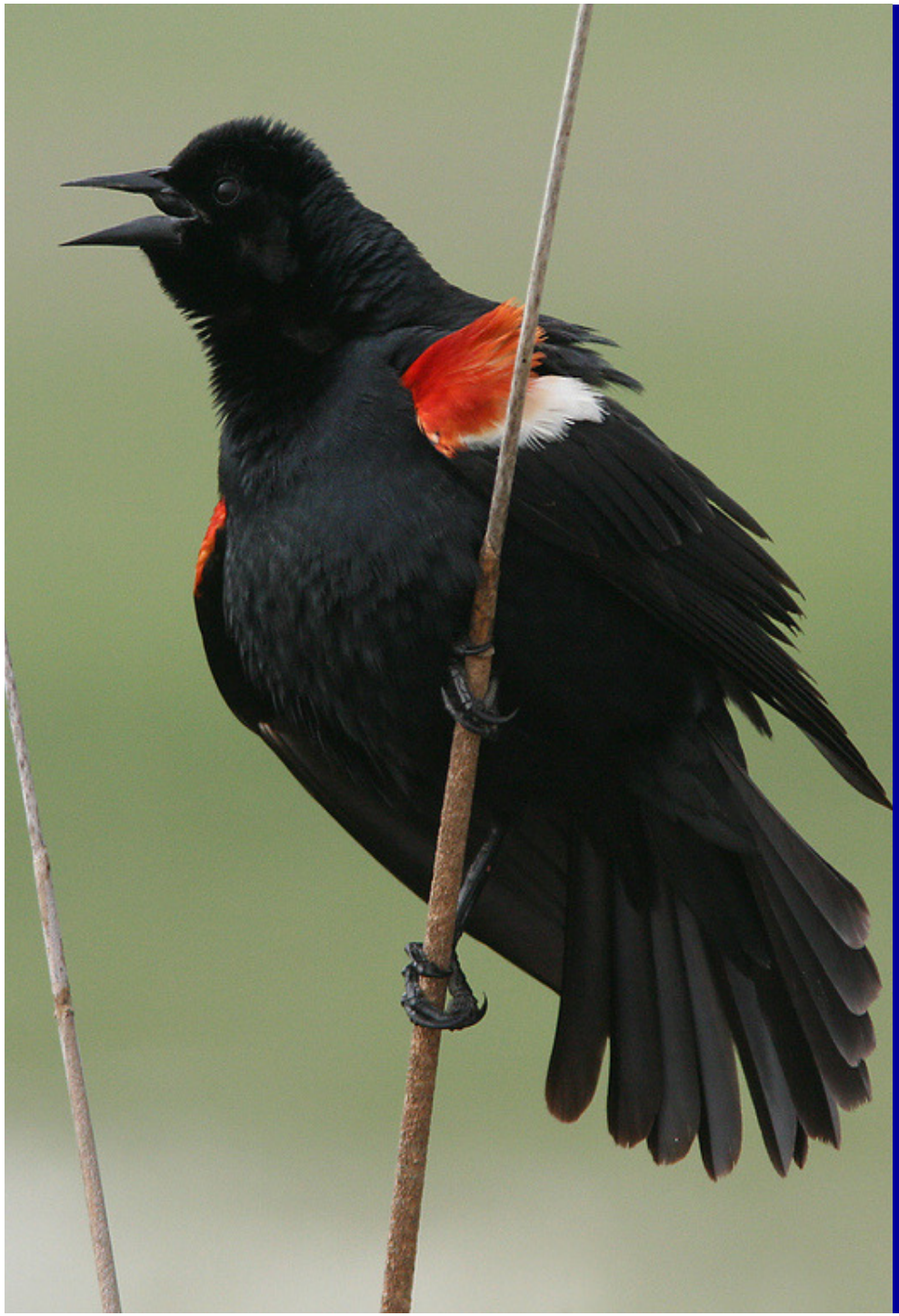
- RESIDENT AND WINTERING
- BREEDS MARCH-JULY
- CYCLIC POPULATIONS
- VOLES PRIMARY PREY
- EPISODIC BREEDING IN SLO CO.

HABITAT USE

- GRASSLANDS AND MARSHES
- TALL VEG STRUCTURE (>30 cm)
- CAN USE AG LANDS
- DISTURBANCE BY LIVESTOCK

SHORT-EARED OWL SURVEYS/MITIGATION

- BREEDING SEASON SURVEYS (MAR-MAY)
- MAP NEST SITES
- AVOID IMPACTS DURING NESTING
- REDUCE LIVESTOCK IMPACTS
- MAINTAIN MOSAIC OF UNDISTURBED HABITATS W/30-60 cm GRASS HEIGHT

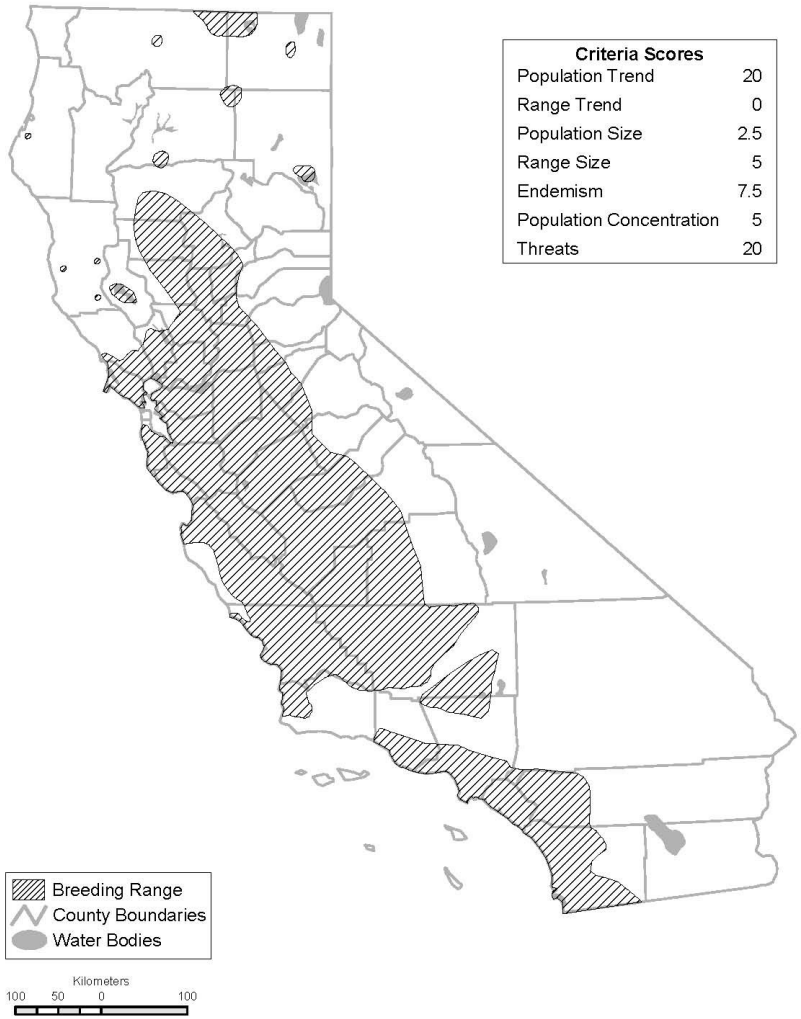


TRICOLORED BLACKBIRD

(***Agelaius tricolor***)

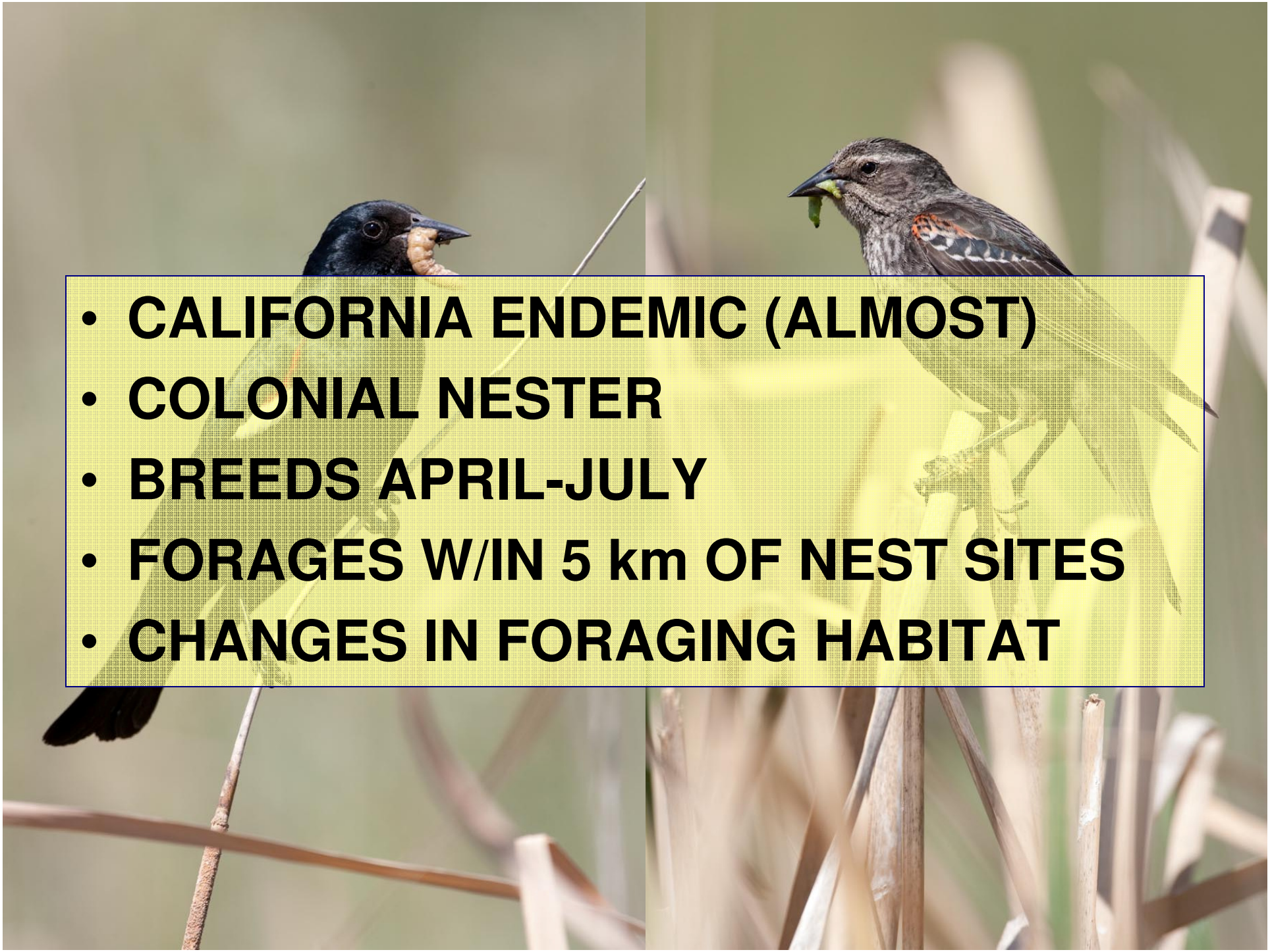
TRICOLORED BLACKBIRD (*Agelaius tricolor*)

Edward C. Beedy



Criteria Scores	
Population Trend	20
Range Trend	0
Population Size	2.5
Range Size	5
Endemism	7.5
Population Concentration	5
Threats	20

Breeding range of the Tricolored Blackbird in California. Overall outline of the range is stable, though numbers of breeders have declined dramatically. Colonies typically are largest in the Central Valley and are patchily distributed throughout, but particularly in the Coast Ranges and on the coastal slope.



- CALIFORNIA ENDEMIC (ALMOST)
- COLONIAL NESTER
- BREEDS APRIL-JULY
- FORAGES W/IN 5 km OF NEST SITES
- CHANGES IN FORAGING HABITAT

HABITAT USE

- MARSHES AND UPLANDS
- OPEN WATER?
- OPTIMAL 15cm HEIGHT IN UPLAND
- CAN USE AG LANDS

TCBB SURVEYS/MITIGATION

- APRIL SURVEYS
- MAP BREEDING COLONY LOCATION
- MAINTAIN WATER SOURCES
- MAINTAIN UPLAND 5km AROUND COLONY

Conservation Plan for the Tricolored Blackbird

(Agelaius tricolor)

Photo by William J. Hamilton III

by

The Tricolored Blackbird Working Group

January 2009

2.0 Update

http://tricolor.ice.ucdavis.edu/files/trbl/Conservation Plan MOA 2009 2.0

QUESTIONS?