

Survey Protocol



PROTOCOL'S INTENDED PURPOSE

- To use repeated tape-playback surveys to confirm PRESENCE or ABSENCE of flycatchers at a site

PRE-SURVEY PREPARATION

- Visit survey site prior to first survey
- Study drawings & photos of Willow Flycatchers (WIFL)
- Learn as many WIFL vocalizations as possible
- Visit known WIFL breeding sites to become familiar with flycatcher appearance, behavior, vocalizations and habitat

PRE-SURVEY PREPARATION

- Identify by sight and sound, other species likely to be confused with WIFLs:
 - Bell's vireo
 - Western Wood Pewee
 - Other Empidonax Flycatchers



Southwestern Willow Flycatcher Identification

- Best identified by vocalization
- Survey protocol based on ID by sound
- Surveyors must be able to hear and recognize WIFL vocalizations: fitz-bew, whitt, interaction call, etc.

Fitz-bew !
whitt...whitt
Brrrtt.....





AVOIDING ADVERSE IMPACTS TO WILLOW FLYCATCHERS

- Obtain all necessary Federal, State and Agency permits.
- Do not play the tape more than necessary and/or needlessly elicit vocal responses once WIFLs have been located and verified.
- Move cautiously while in WIFL habitat, continuously check the area around you to avoid disturbance to nests of WIFLs and other species.

AVOIDING ADVERSE IMPACTS TO WILLOW FLYCATCHERS

- Do not approach known or suspected nests.
- If using flagging to mark an area, make certain the flagging is not near an active nest. Check with the property owner or land management agency to be sure that similar flagging is not being used for other purposes in the area.

TIMING & NUMBER OF VISITS

- **1ST SURVEY PERIOD: May 15 to May 31**
 - Intended to coincide with the period of high singing rates. However, not all territorial males may have arrived by this time, and migrants may be present.
- A minimum of 1 survey is required during this time.

TIMING & NUMBER OF VISITS

- 2nd SURVEY PERIOD: JUNE 1 TO JUNE 24
 - Earliest arriving males may be paired and singing less, but later arriving males should be singing strongly.
 - May find evidence of nesting
- Minimum one survey, BUT two for project related surveys

TIMING & NUMBER OF VISITS

- **3RD SURVEY PERIOD: JUNE 25 TO JULY 17**
 - Southwestern Willow Flycatchers should have arrived by this time.
 - Surveyors should determine if flycatchers detected during surveys 1 and/or 2 are still present and watch closely for nesting activity.
- Minimum one survey – BUT for project related surveys – A minimum of 2 surveys at least 5 days apart.

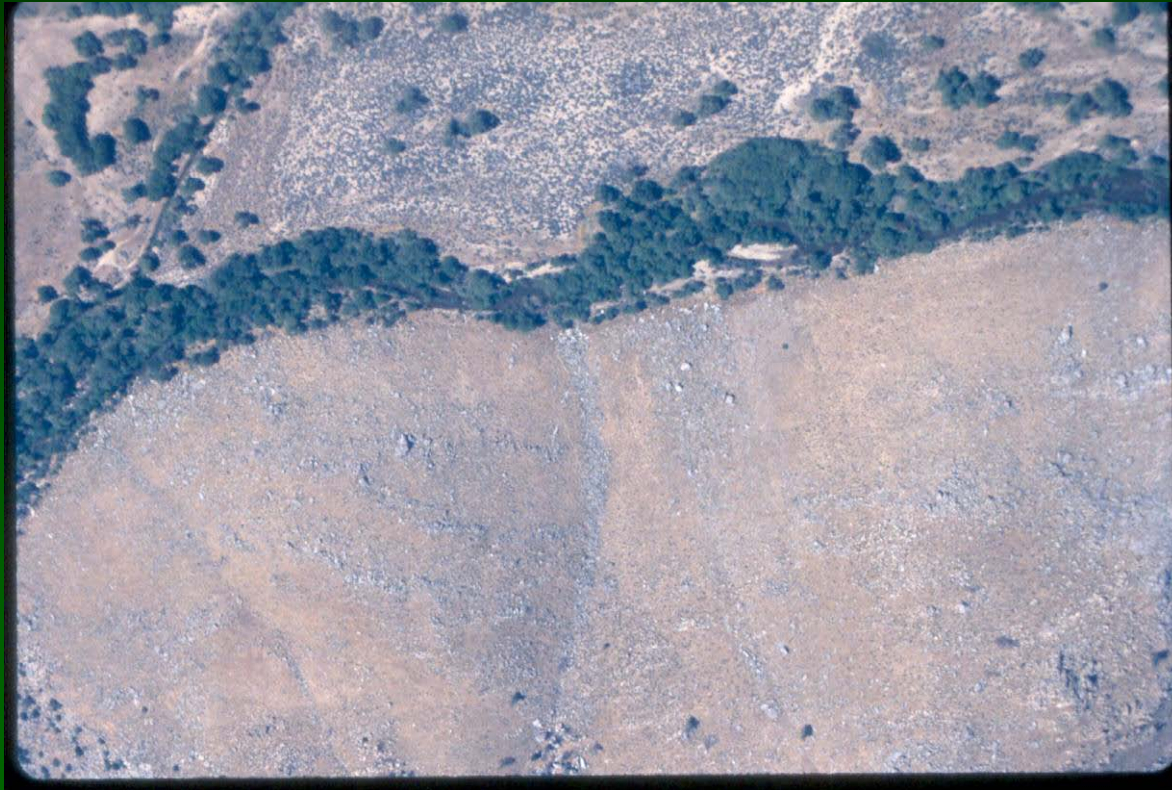
SURVEY REQUIREMENTS

- “FITZ-BEW” to positively identify.
- Surveys must be at least 5 days apart
- Minimum of 5 surveys to determine that Willow Flycatchers are not breeding at that site that particular year.

SURVEY METHODS

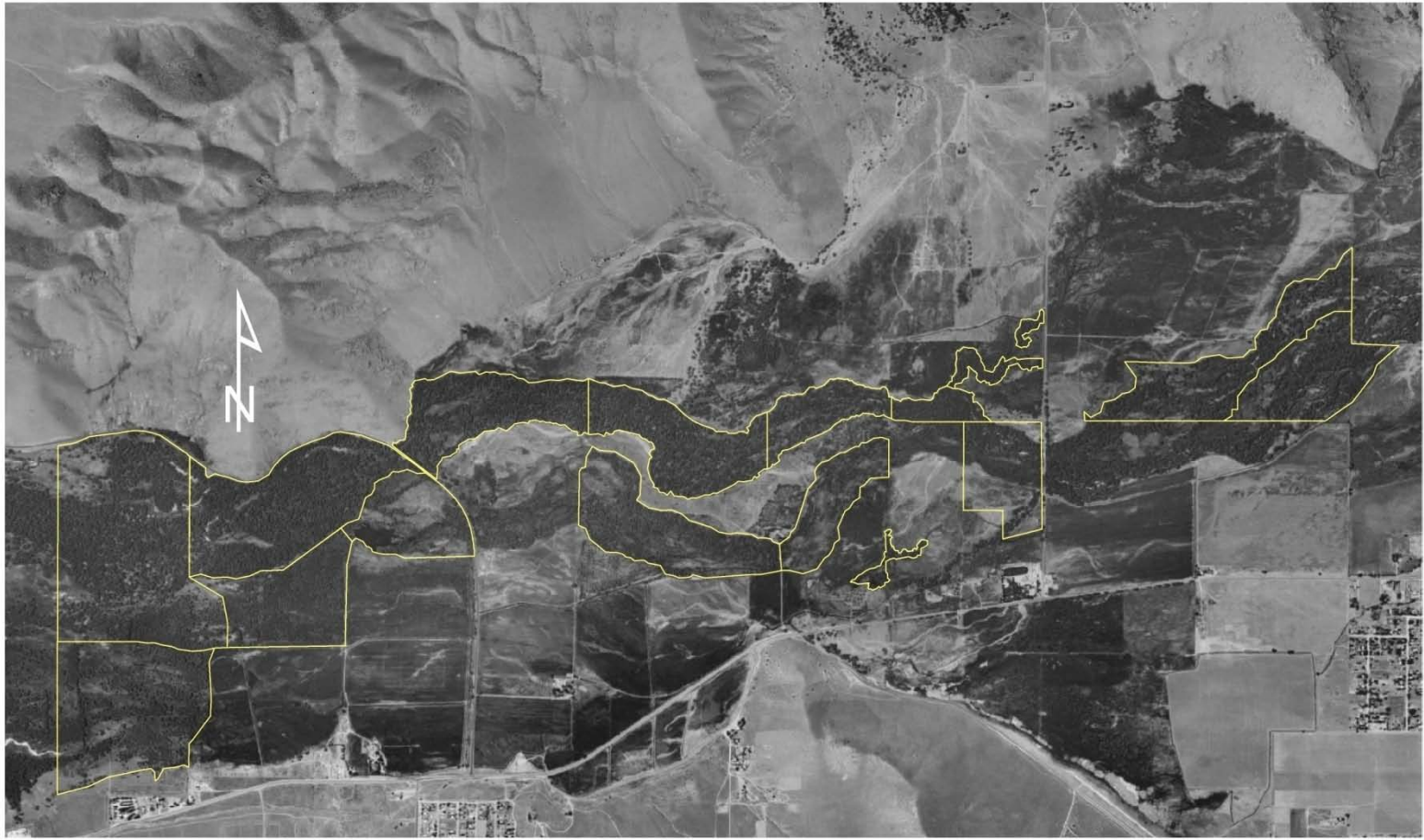
- Begin surveys as soon as there is enough light to safely walk.
- Conduct surveys from within the site if possible
- Survey all suitable habitat within the patch.

SURVEY METHODS

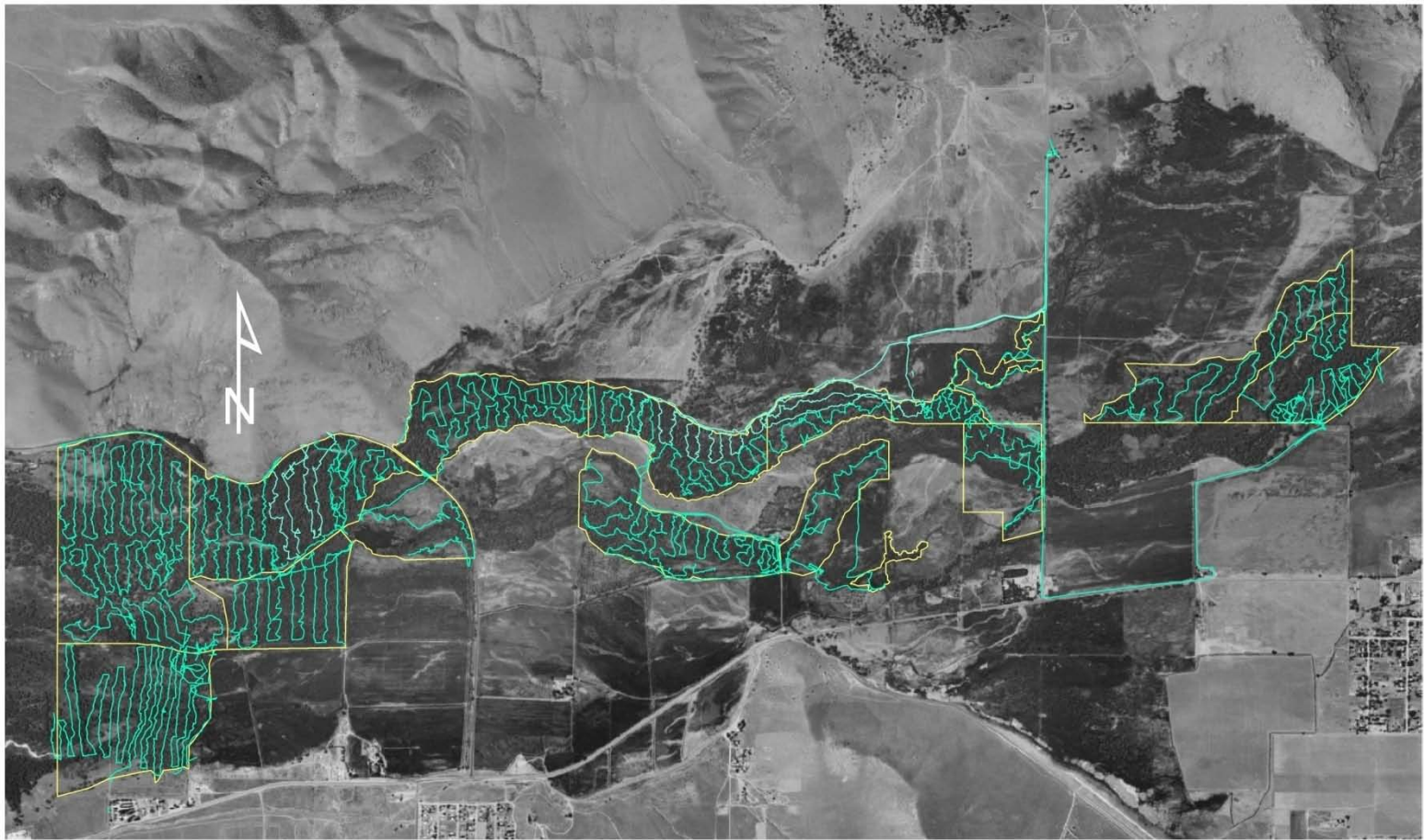


SURVEY METHODS





0 310 620 1,240 1,860 2,480 Meters



0 287.5 575 1,150 1,725 2,300 Meters

SURVEY METHODS

- Initially approach each site and stand quietly for 1 to 2 minutes.
 - If you don't hear singing flycatchers:
 - Play WIFL vocalizations for 15-30 seconds
 - Listen 1-2 minutes for a response
 - If you don't detect a WIFL – Repeat every 25-35m.

SURVEY METHODS

- If you detect a flycatcher:
 - Move *at least* 40 m from the site and repeat the procedure.
 - Try to avoid double counting flycatchers that have already responded.
 - Some WIFLs may follow a taped call for 50m or more.

RESPONSES TO BROADCAST CALLS

- Move to the observer and sing.
- “Whitt” or interaction calls from within the nearby vegetation, particularly once nesting have begun.
 - Should remain in area and quietly listen for “fitz-bews” several minutes.

RESPONSES TO BROADCAST CALLS

- Silently approach observer
 - If you have played the vocalizations several times and a bird has approached, but has not “fitz-bewed”, do not continue the playback.
 - Should remain in area and quietly listen for fitz-bews several minutes.

DETERMINING RESIDENCY

- Present during the “non-migrant” period: 20 June – 20 July.
 - However, at many known breeding sites – some males maintain territories well into July, yet never succeed in attracting a mate.

SIGNS OF BREEDING

- Signs of possible nest
 - Aggression toward other bird species
 - Defense of specific area, whitt alarm calls
- Signs of nest
 - Carrying nesting material, food or fecal sac
- Signs of successful nest
 - Feeding fledglings

THIS PROTOCOL IS NOT DESIGNED TO:

- Determine absolute numbers of willow flycatchers within a site
- Determine breeding status of flycatchers
- Be used as a guide to nest monitoring flycatchers or conducting other research activities

