



SDG&E SQ-PX Bat Survey Results

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Rahn Conservation Consulting, LLC (RCC) is providing the following information from the bat habitat surveys conducted on February 10, 2017 along the SDG&E SQ-PX project, with an emphasis on those areas identified as the highest potential for bat use and habitat based on preliminary field assessment and GIS analysis. Bat habitat assessments and potential occupancy was focused along the areas of the project alignment where habitat features (vegetation, foraging areas, and potential roosting areas) occur. Biologists Matt Rahn and Kelcey Stricker conducted a field assessment of the proposed alignment, under the following assumptions:

- Evidence of bats for most species is detectible through habitat assessments, potential habitat and roost searches, thermal imaging, and echolocation monitoring using the AnaBat system
- RCC will be able to reasonably access areas with suitable habitat and vegetation communities surrounding and adjacent to the project area
- RCC can analyze all relevant data and, to the maximum extent practicable, determine species presence during the assessment period
- If appropriate (based on the data collected) RCC can identify the species present at each site, the relative frequency of occurrence of each species, and an analysis of current seasonal occupancy

RESULTS

RCC performed a comprehensive assessment of the entire proposed project alignment, with an emphasis on the potential suitable habitat as identified by Chambers Group, Inc. While the assessment focused on these areas, a comprehensive assessment of the alignment was completed. Assessments completed by RCC confirmed that the potential suitable habitat areas for bats are those identified by Chambers, and subsequently the focus of this assessment. Results from the initial habitat assessments resulted in no bats being identified across the survey area, both along the proposed project alignment, and within the potential bat habitat described by Chambers (Figures 1-2).

The proposed alignment follows (substantially) an urban route, with little availability of bat roosting habitat, vegetation, or areas for foraging. As a result, no bats were detected during the surveys. This is likely due (in part) to the lack of habitat within the survey area, and the timing of the surveys; while bats may occur within the region at this time of year, the prevailing temperatures and weather conditions have significantly limited bat habitat use and distribution within western San Diego County (at this time).

Figure 1. SQ-PX Project Focus Area for bat habitat assessments.

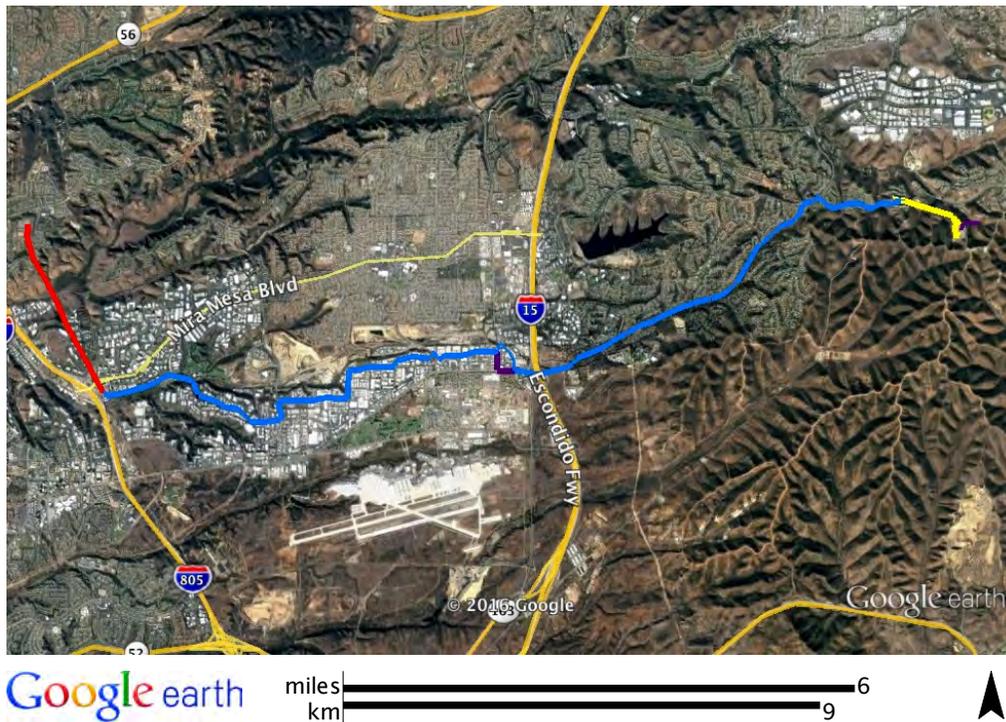


Figure 2. Project focus area with potential bat habitat at Carroll Canyon Road (in orange).



Three areas along Carroll Canyon Road were identified by Chambers as potential bat habitat, and were part of the focused bat surveys. While the areas may have features and vegetation that could *potentially* support bats, the location and quality of that habitat is marginal for bat occupancy and use. In particular, the proximity of the trees to the roadway, and lack of suitable roosting habitat within those trees limits potential bat use. In general, trees should have open crevices and structure suitable for bats to roost in; the sycamore and eucalyptus trees in particular lack those features. Again, no bats were observed in the focused surveys, nor were habitat features or roosts identified.

Given our assessment of the project area, we have concluded that impacts to bats are not a significant issue at this time. However, due to the time of year of this survey, additional pre-construction bat clearance surveys should be conducted during the maternity roosting season (April/May through August), and should be limited to those suitable habitat areas identified in Figure 2. If there are any questions or comments, please feel free to contact RCC directly by phone or email.


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