



Las Vegas Wash Coordination Committee

E-mail update

June 2008

New Bat Survey Takes Flight

The Las Vegas Wash Coordination Committee has been conducting bat surveys along the Las Vegas Wash for several years using acoustic monitoring stations. The acoustic monitoring devices are able to record the high pitched ultrasonic sounds emitted by bats during echolocation. Since each species echolocates at a specific frequency and pattern, acoustic monitoring is a valuable and inexpensive technique for collecting baseline information on the diversity and activity of the bat community at the Las Vegas Wash. To date, 17 different species of bats have been identified through the study, eight of which are listed as Federal Species of Special Concern, four are State-listed Sensitive and four are State-listed Protected.

Although the acoustic monitoring study has provided important information regarding species diversity and abundance, there are limitations to this type of survey. To compensate, biologists have recently implemented an additional study using capture techniques, which will provide a more "hands on" approach. Using mist nets and harp traps to capture the bats, biologists will be able to evaluate the overall health, sex, reproductive status, size and age of each bat.

Upcoming Meetings

Las Vegas Valley
Watershed Advisory
Committee
June 10, 2008
3:00 p.m.
Location: Clark County
Regional Flood Control
District

Notice

The Las Vegas Wash
Wildlife Management Plan
and Land Cover Types of
the Las Vegas Wash
are now available at
www.lvwash.org.



Biologists handle a Pallid bat during a May survey.

The capture techniques may also identify bat species that may have previously gone undetected due to their quiet calls. Because the capture techniques are more mobile than the acoustic monitoring stations, biologists will be able to achieve greater sampling coverage. Sampling will take place one week of each month from June through November.

Upper Diversion Weir Construction Nears Completion

Construction crews continue to move forward toward completing the Upper Diversion Weir and Bypass Channel. Construction began last summer on the Bypass Channel, which is more than a half mile in length and required over 200,000 cubic yards of excavation. The parallel channel—capable of entirely conveying normal Las Vegas Wash flows—runs down the eastern side of the Las Vegas Wash and includes four additional drop structures, or small weirs. Even though both channels will carry a portion of the flows most of the time, once completed, the Upper Diversion Weir will have the ability to redirect flows from the main channel to the bypass channel. This operational flexibility will not only be a valuable asset during high storm flows, but will also assist in completing the Upper Diversion Weir and conducting future maintenance projects for the Monson and Visitor Center Weirs.



The eastern section of the bridge over the newly diverted bypass channel.

Construction in May reached two monumental achievements. First, was the installation of a foot bridge to connect the north and south sides of the Las Vegas Wash, similar to the bridge over the Powerline Crossing Weir. Supported by six piers, the bridge stretches an impressive 511 feet and serves as an important component in the Clark County Parks and Recreation Trails Master Plan. The second achievement in May took place when the contractor removed the earth berm, allowing the first flows to make their way down the completed Bypass Channel. Within a few hours, the Bypass Channel was receiving all of the Las Vegas Wash flows so that crews could prepare to complete the Upper Diversion Weir. Construction is expected to be completed in July.

Did You Know?

"Hoo" lives in that hole?

The burrowing owl is one of the more unique residents of the Wetlands Park. Burrowing owls can grow to about 10 inches tall and can be found in the upland portions of the Las Vegas Wash. Burrowing owls are easily identified by their large yellow eyes, characteristic of many owl species, but they also have very long, featherless legs. These unique legs are an adaptation to the burrowing owl's ground dwelling lifestyle as they use holes, crevices or burrows of other animals for nesting and shelter. The diet of burrowing owls typically consists of insects, small rodents and reptiles. Burrowing owls are protected by the Migratory Bird Treaty Act and are of local conservation concern since their habitats are increasingly at risk of loss.



A pair of burrowing owls peer out of a nest near the Sunrise Mountain Trailhead.