



## **Nest Buffer Reduction Request 2018 #1**

**To: Billie Blanchard, California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC)**

**Cc: Jeff Thomas (Panorama), Sheila Hoyer (Panorama)**

**Subject: Mitigation Measure (MM) Biology-7 Nest Buffer Reduction Request**

**From: Amy Trexler, Qualified Biologist**

**Date: 02/07/2018**

In accordance with MM Biology-7 of the Sycamore-Peñasquitos 230 kV Transmission Line Project (Project) San Diego Gas & Electric (SDG&E) is requesting a nesting bird buffer reduction to accommodate scheduled potholing, saw cutting, and trenching activities associated with construction of the underground alignment of the Project. If granted, the duration of this buffer reduction would be effective until ground disturbing activities are complete within the reduced buffer or the nest becomes inactive, whichever occurs sooner.

A total of 1 new common bird species nest has been identified between STA 416 + 00 and STA 438 + 00 as identified in the Nest Survey Report dated February 07, 2018. The attached table contains the following information for the recorded nest SDG&E is requesting a buffer reduction for:

- Species
- Location
- Pre-existing conditions present on site
- Description of the work to be conducted within the reduced buffer
- Size and expected duration of proposed buffer reduction
- Reason for the buffer reduction

Also, please find attached a map showing the location of the documented nest, the standard nest buffer limits identified in MM Biology-7, and the reduced buffer limits being recommended by the Qualified Biologist.

If SDG&E does not receive a response to the request for a buffer reduction within 1 business day, SDG&E will proceed with the buffer reduction recommended by the Qualified Biologist until the CPUC's independent biologist can review and approve or deny the buffer reduction request. If SDG&E proceeds with a reduced buffer, the nest will be monitored on a daily basis during construction activities. If the buffer request is denied, or the Qualified Biologist determines that the nesting birds(s) are not tolerant of project activity, the specified buffer(s) listed in MM Biology-7 will be implemented.

If you have any questions regarding the details of this request, please contact the Qualified Biologist making the buffer reduction request at the contact information below:

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Sycamore to Peñasquitos 230 kV Transmission Line Project Nesting Bird Buffer Reduction Request

Date: 02/07/2018

Nest Information									Buffer Reduction Request						
Nest ID <sup>1</sup>	Species <sup>2</sup>	Listing Status <sup>3</sup>	Nest Stage <sup>4</sup>	Observation Notes <sup>5</sup>	Latitude (decimal degrees)	Longitude (decimal degrees)	Estimated Fledge Date	Nesting Bird Behavior	Standard Buffer	Reduced Buffer Necessary for Construction	Pre-Existing Conditions Onsite	Reason for Buffer Reduction/Biologist Recommendation	Duration of Buffer Reduction	Work Activity Description	Monitoring Approach
02072018_ACT_01	Anna's hummingbird (ANHU)	Common	Building	Observed female gathering spider webs and bringing them back to the nest for building material.	32.89530	-117.10770	05/15/2018  Standard incubation is 16 days; standard nestling period is 20 days	Building nest. Appears tolerant of human activity.	250 feet	30 feet	Nest is located south of Pomerado Road. Nest is near busy, active roadway.	Nest is located near busy, active roadway. Birds have been exposed to high levels of noise and human activity. Recommendation is to approve buffer with daily monitoring for duration of construction.	For entire duration of proposed work (02/07/17 - 04/30/18), or until nest is no longer active	Construction activities include saw cutting, pot-holing, and excavation and trenching for installation of new underground 230kV line and vaults. Work within the direct vicinity of the nest is scheduled to occur during daytime hours.  Buffer reduction is being requested to allow construction to remain on schedule for completion date per CPUC permit.	Nests will be monitored during daytime construction when work activity and noise levels are high in order to best determine the birds' noise tolerance. Monitoring will occur from a distance using binoculars or a spotting scope whenever possible to minimize nest disturbance. If nest cannot be adequately monitored from a distance, the CPUC qualified biologists (qualified biologist) will approach the nest to gather nest data. When approaching a nest, the qualified biologist will first determine whether there are any potential nest predators nearby, such as raptors, corvids, jays, and brown-headed cowbirds. If no predators are observed, the qualified biologist will approach the nest and collect nest data. The qualified biologist will observe the nest for a sufficient amount of time based on their professional judgment (usually between 30-60 minutes if an adult is not immediately observed on the nest) to determine nest status and will record the nest status (e.g., nest building, incubating, nestlings, etc.), and observe avian behavior (carrying food, agitation or distress, etc.). If the qualified biologist is unable to make a determination on nest status and has not detected the nest pair in the vicinity of the nest, the qualified biologist will continue to monitor the nest daily for a period of 5 days. If the qualified biologist is not able to determine nest status after 5 days due to lack of activity at the nest (including the observation of fledgling groups in the vicinity of the nest), the biologist will determine the nest is no longer active. The qualified biologist will gather appropriate nest data to allow proper documentation of nest stage and recommended buffer effectiveness. The qualified biologist will make assessments based on their experience, professional judgment and the following considerations: incubation period and nestling period (i.e., fledge date) of species, geographic location, existing ambient conditions (human activity such as traffic, jet noise, rail noise, etc.), type and extent of construction within nest buffer, visibility of construction to nest, and other environmental factors such as the species' site-specific level of habituation to disturbance. The nest buffers will be increased or reinstated if there are signs of significant disturbance and risk of project-induced nest abandonment consistent with MM Biology-7.



**Legend**

**Bird Nests**

**Tracking**

Active

**Reduced Bird Nest Buffers**

Proposed Reduced Buffer

**Bird Nest Buffers**

250 ft

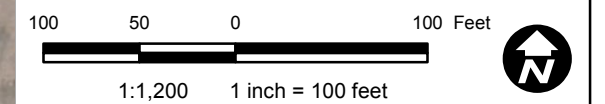
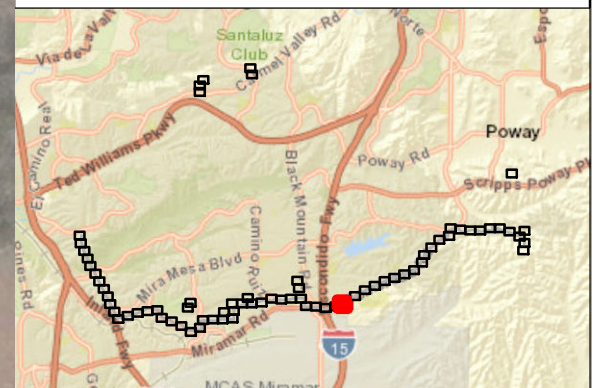
Temporary Work Space

Underground Vault

**Segment B**

Segment 3, Section 2

Segment 3, Section 3



**Sycamore to Peñasquitos  
230kV Transmission Line Project  
Nesting Bird Survey  
Buffer Reduction Request**