



Blunt Nose Leopard Lizard Habitat Preservation for Low Water Crossing Replacement Project in Cuyama, CA

BRENNAN NERHUS

Project Manager/Senior Biologist

This past summer, Endemic Environmental Services began working on projects in the Central Valley region of California. The focus of the projects we worked on were the state and federally endangered Blunt Nosed Leopard Lizard (BNLL).

Blunt Nosed Leopard Lizards have historically inhabited much of this region including arid and semiarid plains growth, like bunchgrass, alkali bush, sagebrush, creosote bush, along with other scattered low plants. The ground scape they prefer can be hardpan, sand, or even gravel with rocks that are often used for basking. These types of habitats have been lost

and fragmented by development over the years causing their populations to decline.

A special survey protocol was directed by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) to help better identify the locations wherein BNLL still occur. The survey protocol lays out specific time and conditions for which these surveys should take place. The survey timeframe takes place during their optimal season from April 15th to July 15th, for adults, and August 15th to September 30th, for juveniles. These surveys also needed to happen during specific weather parameters including temperature, cloud cover, and wind in order to be able to observe them during their active times. Along with

these special parameters, the number of surveys needed is dependent on what is taking place within the project specifications.

Endemic worked on projects where BNLL were of concern with the County of Santa Barbara Public Works and Rincon Consultants. Endemic worked on a *Low Water Crossing Replacement* project in Cuyama, CA where BNLLs were historically present. Exclusion fencing was installed to keep wildlife outside of the project impact area. We provided biological monitoring as well as completed the CDFW protocol surveys to keep our client in compliance with the Federal and California Endangered Species Acts.

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Endemic biologists did observe five BNLLs within this project's vicinity during the course of their optimal season. It was exciting to observe that the protection measures work, as well as to see the species up close in some circumstances.

On another project for SoCal Gas, Endemic also supported Rincon Consultants with their seasonal BNLL survey program. This consisted of sending our biologists out to 18 different sites throughout Kern County where SoCalGas has current or proposed projects. We also surveyed

for San Joaquin Antelope Squirrels while on these sites who are listed as a threatened species in California. Endemic hopes to continue to service this area of California and provide protection measures for these special "endemic" species. ●



Staff Developments: Certificates and Training

JESSE ALLEN is a Water Resource Manager and recently earned his certificate as a QSD/P, as well as being a CPESC. He is based in our



Northern CA region focused in the Sacramento Valley region.

Jesse's experience as a manager/inspector includes assisting with development of Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plans (SWPPP) Best Management Practices (BMPs) for erosion and sediment control for highway and bridge construction projects. He has supported public and private clients with obtaining Water Quality permits by conducting water quality inspections and reviews. He holds a WPCM certificate after training with Caltrans requirements.

Jesse has experience with assisting clients to comply with the new

Construction General Permit and NPDES permit requirements. He is proficient in writing and submitting SWPPP inspection reports and water quality reports, including discharge, Type 8, and Type 6 reports.

Other Endemic staff who completed their WPCM training, required by Caltrans, include:

- Brennan Nerhus
- Chris Fabela
- Bailey Sweaney
- Vanessa Lozano

In addition, Vanessa Lozano also earned certifications to handle the kit fox and desert tortoise species. ●

Staff Developments: Introducing Thea Wang, Rare Species Program Director

BARRY NERHUS

President/Principal Ecologist

Endemic now has its very own Rare Species Program Director! We are very excited to have Thea Wang, PhD, take on this unique role. She will work with Endemic staff to develop funding grants, acquire permits, and manage upcoming research efforts. One study Endemic is currently taking part in is the California Gnatcatcher Population study, which is a long-term project that will take place

within the San Joaquin Marsh area in Orange County. She has already used her academic red pen to revise a soon to be published pond turtle manuscript.

This position will help guide a portion of our work towards conservation, science, and education. Dr. Wang will also be a liaison between Endemic and our non-profit organization, ICRE, whose aim is to support opportunities for research projects through grants that will be available for other non-profit organizations. ●



President's Corner

BARRY NERHUS

President/Principal Ecologist

The most recent UN Climate Change Conference (COP27) took place this November, with member nations coming together to take action towards achieving the world's collective climate goals. One agenda item discussed was the reality that climate change has severely affected many communities living in less wealthy countries, and whether or not to compensate them for the inevitable devastation resulting from climate change and sea level rise. On November 20th, the climate summit finally reached an agreement to aid the most vulnerable

countries when they do face these damages. This heavy focus on the "loss and damages" principle ultimately guided the way to one of COP27's biggest accomplishments. Unfortunately, the summit failed to support and fund concrete actions towards emissions reduction, mitigation and adaptation efforts for renewable energy sources.

Lastly, I would like to announce that both Endemic and myself have donated money to the International Rhino Foundation (IRF)'s [Sumatran Rhino Project](#). There are only about 80 of these animals remaining. I send money every month to feed "[Ratu](#)", a female breeding

Sumatran Rhino. Ratu gives the species hope as she continues to give birth to the next generation. We donated enough money to restore two acres of habitat in the Way Kambas National Park. Putting money towards the habitat will benefit the entire ecosystem, using the Sumatran Rhino as an umbrella species. Habitat loss is the main factor accelerating the extinction of endangered species. Habitat restoration is a great way to conserve a target species, and it ultimately benefits other species that may also be in decline. The Endemic staff is proud that our great work and contribution has allowed for the preservation of a few acres of Sumatran Forest. ●

WISHING YOU A

Happy Holiday Season

AND JOYFUL NEW YEAR

FROM YOUR FRIENDS AT



Endemic
Environmental Services