



U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
Sacramento Fish & Wildlife Office
Species Account
BUENA VISTA LAKE SHREW
Sorex ornatus relictus



CLASSIFICATION: Endangered
Federal Register 67:10101; March 6, 2002
http://ecos.fws.gov/docs/federal_register/fr3844.pdf

CRITICAL HABITAT:
Designated Federal Register 78:39835; July 02, 2014
<http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2013-07-02/pdf/2013-15586.pdf>

RECOVERY PLAN: Final
Recovery plan for the upland species of the San Joaquin Valley, California, September 30, 1998
http://ecos.fws.gov/docs/recovery_plan/980930a.pdf

DESCRIPTION

The Buena Vista Lake shrew is one of nine subspecies of ornate shrew (*Sorex ornatus*), seven of which occur in California. Ornate shrews are primarily insectivorous (insect-eating) mammals that are the approximate size of a mouse. Shrews make up the family Soricidae.

Shrews have a long snout, tiny bead-like eyes, ears that are concealed, or nearly concealed, by soft fur, and five toes on each foot. They are active day or night. When they are not sleeping, they are searching for food, namely insects and other small invertebrates. Shrews eat more than their own weight each day to avoid starvation and maintain their body weight at high rates of metabolism. The specific feeding and foraging habits of the Buena Vista Lake shrew are unknown.

The Buena Vista Lake shrew's back is predominantly black with a buffy-brown speckling pattern, its sides are more buffy-brown than the upper surface, and its underside is smoke-gray. The tail is faintly bicolor and blackens toward the end both above and below. The Buena Vista Lake shrew grows to around 4 inches in total length, including a tail of about 1.5 inch. Adults weigh 0.14-0.27 ounce.

Little is known about the reproduction or demography of this subspecies. It lives in dense vegetation around the perimeter of marshes, lakes or sloughs. The breeding season may begin in autumn and end in May or June. Up to two litters of four to six young are produced per year.

DISTRIBUTION

The Buena Vista Lake shrew historically occupied the marshlands of the Tulare Basin in the southern San Joaquin Valley. Its range has become fragmented and restricted due to the loss of lakes and marshlands in the area. It is currently known from eight locations in Kings, Tulare, and Kern Counties, from Lemoore in the north, to south of Bakersfield.

THREATS

Loss and fragmentation of habitat appear to be the main historical causes of decline for the Buena Vista Lake shrew. Conversion of historical range to agricultural land has sharply reduced the available habitat.

The few remaining populations of Buena Vista Lake shrew are cut off from each other, and thus more vulnerable to environmental perturbations such as fire, drought, and disease. Habitat alterations such as removal of dense vegetation or drying of marshy areas could also threaten the subspecies.

REFERENCES FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Brown, N.L. C. D. Johnson, and D.F. Williams. Endangered Species Recovery Program [Species Account](#).

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. 1998. Recovery plan for the upland species of the San Joaquin Valley, California, September 30, 1998. Region 1, Portland, OR.

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. 2011. Buena Vista Lake Ornate Shrew (*Sorex ornatus relictus*) 5-Year Review: Summary and Evaluation. Sacramento Fish and Wildlife Office, September 2011.

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