

## FIELD SUMMARY REPORT

### I. Introduction

On June 23, 1987 a field reconnaissance trip was conducted to study the wetland areas bounded by the 7.5 minute quads listed below. The work area trends from NW to SE along the San Joaquin River floodplain. A portion of the Charleston School quad, and most of the Laguna Seca Ranch quad cover a part of the foothills of the Diablo Range.

The largest town in the area is Los Banos, with a population of approximately 10,300.

The valley has been intensively developed for agriculture and most, if not all, of the water flow is controlled via dams, dikes, canals, and ditches.

The major wetland complexes are on public lands controlled by the State of California, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Bureau of Reclamation, or on private duck club properties. All of these are managed for waterfowl as this area has historically been of major importance to duck and geese migrations within the Pacific flyway.

#### A. Map Names

<u>San Jose SE</u>	<u>Monterey NE</u>
Gustine	Charleston School
Stevinson	Dos Palos
Arena	Oxalis
Ingomar	Poso Farm
San Luis Ranch	Firebaugh
Turner Ranch	Mendota Dam
Sandy Mush	Tranquility
Volta	Laguna Seca Ranch
Los Banos	Hammonds Ranch
Delta Ranch	Broadview Farms
Santa Rita Ridge	Chaney Ranch
	Coit Ranch
	Monocline Ridge
	Levis
	Cantua Creek

B. Quads with Checksites:

Gustine  
Ingomar  
Stevinson  
San Luis Ranch  
Los Banos  
Turner Ranch

C. Personnel:

Les Vilchek, USFWS  
Dennis Peters, USFWS  
Joel Miller, San Luis NWR USFWS

D. Date of Field Trip:

6/23/87

E. Available Photography:

No photography was available for the field trip. Notes were made on the topos to compare with photo signatures when the frames became available.

F. Collateral Data:

- USGS Topographic Maps
- USDA SCS Wetland Vegetation Survey Grasslands
- Previously delineated 1:120,000 CIR photography for original NWI mapping effort
- CIR 1:24,000 scale March 1983 photography of small part of northern study area

II. Overview

According to Robert G. Bailey, the study area falls almost totally within the California Grassland Province (2610) of the Mediterranean Division (2600). The small foothills portion mentioned above is included in the California Chaparral Province.

Elevations range from 50 ft. to 1600 ft. (foothills) with a very mild slope from the SE down to the NW along the San Joaquin River. Summers are very hot and dry with temperatures reaching 110°F between mid-June and September. Winters are mild and moist with temperatures occasionally hitting 25°F at night. Most of the 7" average yearly precipitation falls between November and March.

Soils are mostly Entisols in the valley proper, with Alfisols at slightly higher elevations away from the valley floor.

### III. Biological Characteristics of Wetland Habitats

Marine System: none

Estuarine System: none

Lacustrine System: Any areas exhibiting open water or aquatic bed signatures greater than 20 acres in size will fall into this system. This includes Little Panoche Reservoir, the Buttonwood Lakes, and possibly some areas of Fresno Slough if it is found to be affected by Mendota Dam.

Riverine System: Only lower perennial and intermittent systems were found in the field. The San Joaquin River and many of its associated sloughs (e.g. Salt, Mud, Fresno) will be classified as permanent. The major water delivery canals (e.g. Mendota, Arroyo, Main) will also be permanent. Drainage canals which carry off excess irrigation water will be intermittent. The USGS quadrangle data will serve as indicators for other systems not encountered in the field.

Palustrine System: Due to the artificially controlled nature of most of the water in the study area, the majority of wetlands are not naturally flooded. Even emersion along stream banks is highly affected by the amount of diversion taking place at points upstream.

Most of the Palustrine wetlands found were made up of emergent vegetation flooded on a seasonal basis. Some vegetated semipermanently flooded areas were also seen. The major species noted in the field were: cattails (*Typha* spp.), tules (*Scirpus acutus*), <sup>Hardstem</sup> saltgrass (*Distichlis spicata*), swamp timothy (*Heleocholea schoenoides*), rush (*Juncus* spp.), dock (*Rumex crispus*), spike rush (*Eleocharis* spp.), iodine bush (*Allenrolfia occidentalis*), smartweed (*Polygonum* spp.), sedges, and various annuals. <sup>Bullrush</sup> Vernal pools were common and found to vary from unvegetated to completely vegetated. These are also flooded seasonally. Irrigated pastureland was found to be non-wetland with the exception of areas with frequent ponding and resultant concentrated hydrophytic plant growth (usually *Juncus* spp.). Emergent vegetation along ditches was also commonly seen.

Wetland vegetation along streams was mainly limited to shrubby vegetation consisting of willows (*Salix* spp.) and some cottonwood (*Populus fremontii*).

The remaining Palustrine wetlands encountered were less than 20 acre unconsolidated bottoms or unconsolidated shores.

IV. Imagery, Preliminary Delineations, Field Checking

Due to unforeseen circumstances, the photography for this study was not yet available at the time of the scheduled field trip. Notes were made at appropriate sites on the USGS topographic maps and will be compared to photo signatures when the interpretation begins. If major problems are found, another field trip will be conducted.