

Field Activity Advisory

Mendota Pool Giant Garter Snake Surveys

April 6, 2015

The San Joaquin River Restoration Program (SJRRP) plans to conduct Giant Garter Snake (GGS) trapping in Mendota Pool, Fresno Slough, and other adjacent/nearby canals and ditches beginning late spring and continuing through summer. The surveys serve to evaluate whether this area is home to GGS, a species listed as threatened under the Federal Endangered Species Act in 1993. The snake was last observed in the Mendota Pool and Fresno Slough in 2007. Completion of the survey helps determine the level of mitigation the SJRRP will be required to implement for construction facilities of the Mendota Pool Bypass and Reach 2B Project. Construction activities are scheduled to begin in 2017.

Who: U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, AECOM, and independent consultant Eric Hansen

What: Reclamation's consultants plan to survey for GGS in Mendota Pool, Fresno Slough, other canals and ditches, and within a 200-foot upland buffer of aquatic habitats. The surveys will include an initial GGS habitat assessment to determine locations for placement of traps.



Figure 1: GGS Trapping Example

Following this assessment, staff will place up to 300 floating traps (see Figure 1) along the edges of suitable aquatic habitat. Once trapping begins, staff will conduct regular site visits to check traps, collect water samples, and conduct visual surveys with dogs specially trained to track GGS. A laboratory analysis of collected water samples will be performed to determine if GGS DNA is present.

When: Habitat assessment will occur April 25 and 26. Trapping will occur from early May through the end of September. All activities will be performed during daylight hours. The precise timing of the surveys will be determined by weather and seasonal conditions and will be chosen to maximize the probability of capture.

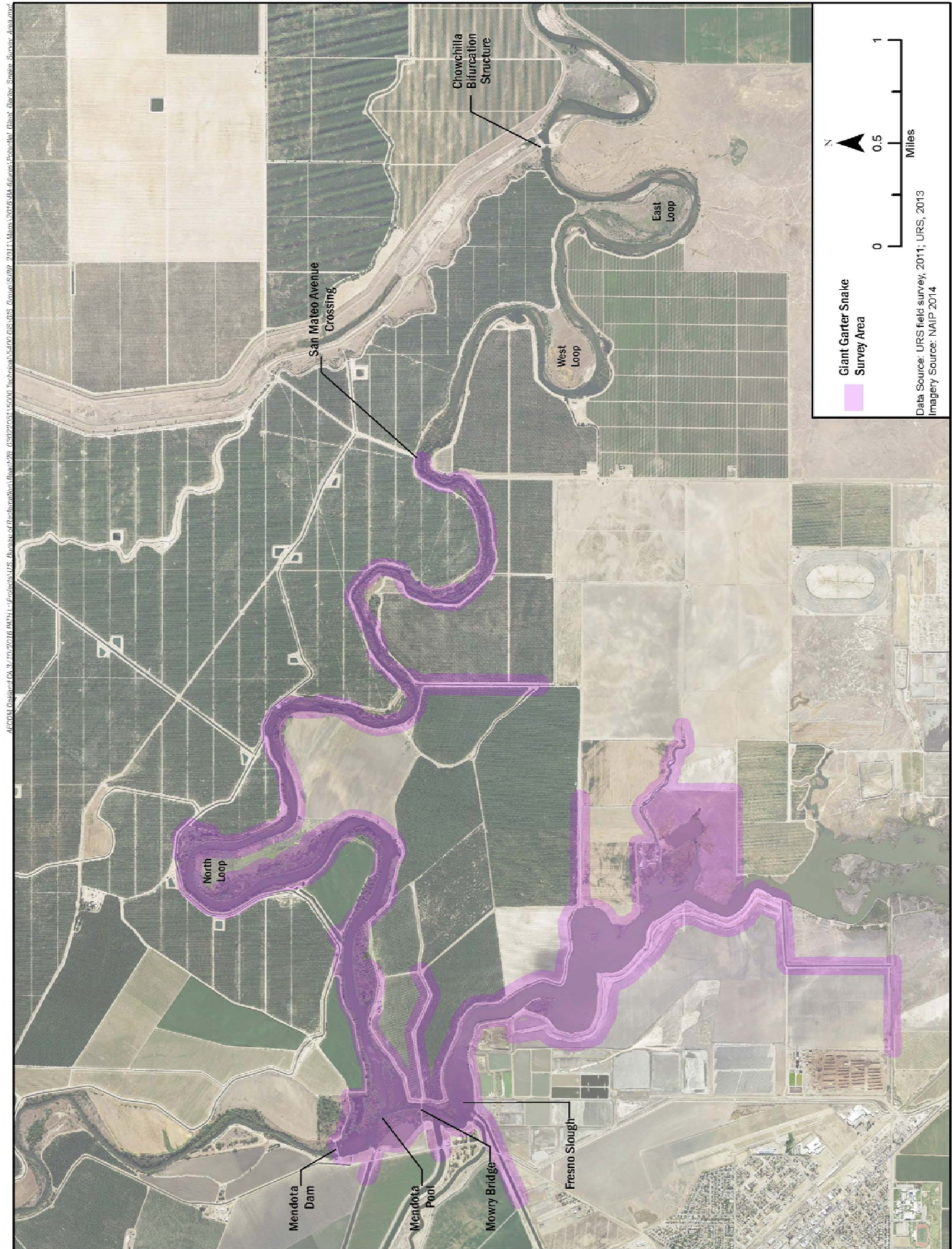
Where: Surveys will occur on private property with landowner permission and all State and Federal property. The survey area includes Mendota Pool between Mendota Pool Dam and the San Mateo Crossing and the Fresno Slough up to a point approximately 2.5 miles southeast of Mendota Dam (see Figure 2).

Questions about this activity should be directed to Katrina Harrison. Questions about activities on private land should be directed to the SJRRP Landowner Coordinator, Craig Moyle.

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Figure 2 – GGS Study Area Map



For more information, please visit the SJRRP Web site at www.restoresjr.net.