

# T&E River Avifauna



**National Park Service**  
**U.S. Department of the Interior**  
**Grand Canyon National Park**



# CO River LTEMP - ROD



U.S. Department of Interior (DOI). 2016. Long term and experimental management plan for the Glen Canyon Dam, environmental impact statement and decision notice. United States Department of the Interior, Bureau of Reclamation, Washington, D. C.

Committed to the following T&E avifauna surveys which are funded jointly by the NPS and the BOR.

- Every Other Year: Southwestern Willow Flycatchers
- Every 3 years\*: Ridgeway's Rail



# Southwestern Willow Flycatcher (*Empidonax traillii extimus*)



Endangered  
“SWFL”





# SWFL in GRCA



- Listed as an endangered species in 1995
- Last nest found in GRCA in 2007
- Intermittent detections of SWFLs between 2011-2023
  - Survey gap between 2012 and 2019.
  - Most detections in May = likely migratory birds
- Detections of SWFL in June only below RM260, so 2023 & 2025 surveys focused there.
- Things that may affect use of GRCA:
  - Brown-headed cowbird parasitism
  - Changes in hydrology (e.g. standing water for willows)
  - Changes in habitat – used live tamarisk which has declined since beetle and not been replaced with dense native habitat



Photos: Cardenas Creek (RM 71.6L) habitat before tamarisk beetle in 2010 (upper) and after in 2017 (lower).

# USFWS protocol SWFL surveys

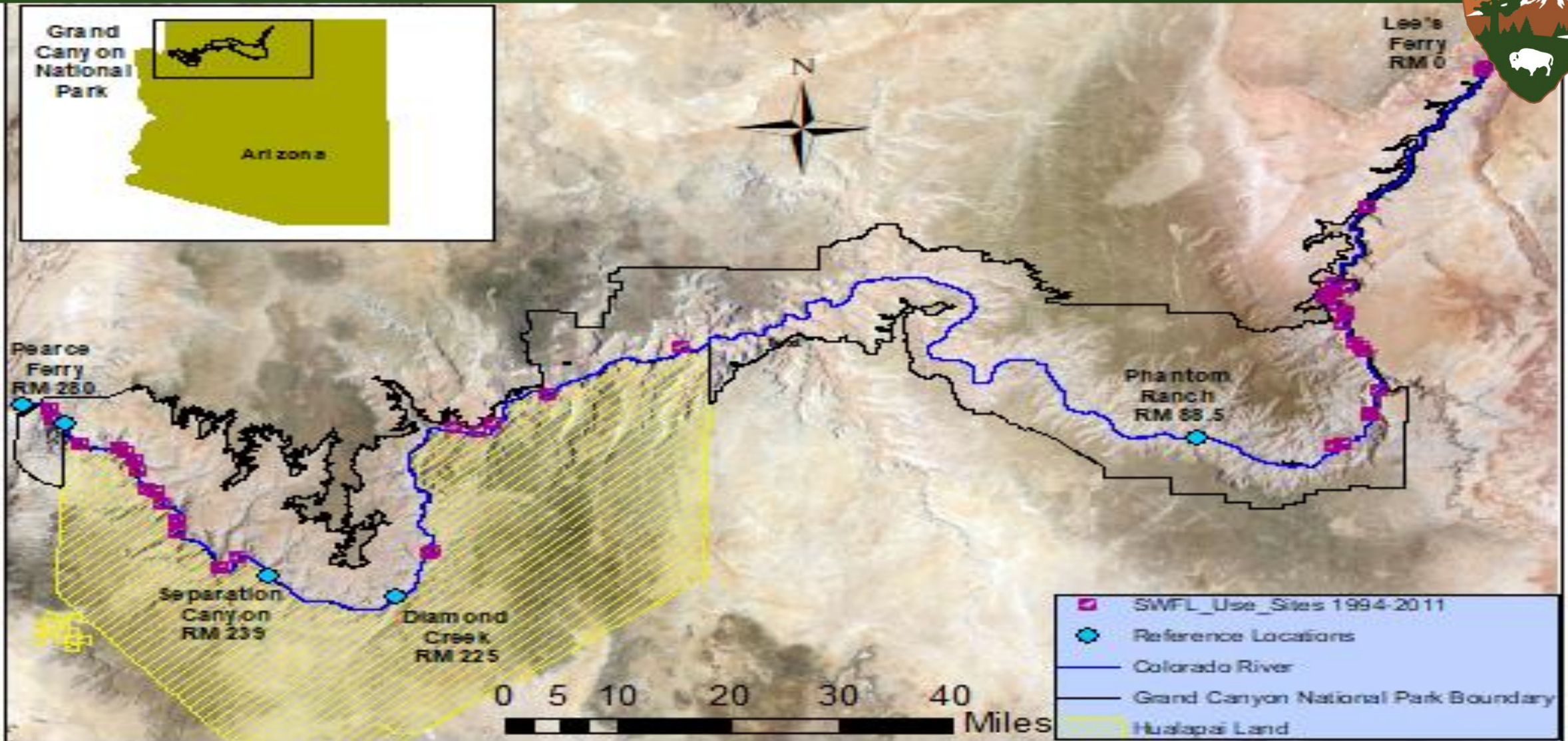


Years	Surveyors	River Miles covered (GCMRC river miles)
1981-2004	GCMRC	0 (Lee's Ferry) - 88.5 (Phantom Ranch)
2005-2009	GRCA	0 (Lee's Ferry) - 88.5 (Phantom Ranch)
2003-2010	SWCA/Hualapai	239.5 (Separation Canyon) - 274.5 (Columbine Falls)
2016	GRCA	71.1L (Cardenas Marsh)
2019	GRCA	0 (Lee's Ferry) – 280 (Pearce Ferry)
2021	GRCA	0 (Lee's Ferry) – 280 (Pearce Ferry)
2023	GRCA	260R (Burnt Springs Canyon) – 275R Marsh
2025	GRCA	260R (Burnt Springs Canyon) – 275R Marsh

Currently survey every other year as part of Long-term ecological plan (LTEMP) for the Glenn Canyon Dam with financial assistance from the Bureau of Reclamation.



# Documented SWFL Use Areas



# Yuma Ridgway's Rail (*Rallus obsoletus yumanensis*)



- Listed as Endangered in 1967
- Very few detected in park, with 3 spotted in Burnt Spring Canyon (RM 260R) in 2001
- Do occur below Pearce Ferry (RM 280)
- Most likely habitat in the canyon to be 275 River Marsh (RM 275R) and Burnt Springs (RM 260R).
- Have not been detected in GRCA during recent surveys (since 2020)
- Prefers Marsh habitat (cattails)





# Yellow-billed Cuckoo (*Coccyzus americanus*)



- Listed as Threatened in 2014
- 6 records since 1950 (Gatlin 2011):
  - 1965 at RM -14.2
  - 1971 at RM 87 (Steven W. Carothers)
  - 1990 in the Little Colorado River Gorge (Patrick F. Ryan),
  - 1995 at Lees Ferry (John D. Grahame)
  - 2001 at Burnt Springs Canyon (wildlife staff)
  - 2021 calls at Burnt Springs Canyon (Greg Holm)
- Most likely habitat in the canyon to be Burnt Springs (RM 260R) and 275 River Marsh (RM 275R).
- Likes dense riparian habitat with a cottonwood canopy

