

Robert A. Hamilton

President, Hamilton Biological, Inc.

Expertise

Endangered Species Surveys
General Biological Surveys
CEQA Analysis
Population Monitoring
Bird Banding
Vegetation Mapping
Noise Monitoring
Open Space Planning
Natural Lands Management

Education

1988. Bachelor of Science degree
in Biological Sciences,
University of California,
Irvine

Professional Experience

1994 to Present. Independent
Biological Consultant,
Hamilton Biological, Inc.
1988 to 1994. Biologist, LSA
Associates, Inc.

Permits

Federal Permit No. TE-799557 to
survey for the Coastal
California Gnatcatcher and
Southwestern Willow
Flycatcher (expires 3/5/12)
Federal Bird Banding Subpermit
No. 20431 (expires 1/31/11)
MOUs with the California Dept.
of Fish and Game to survey
for the San Diego Cactus
Wren (expires 12/31/11), and
the Coastal California
Gnatcatcher and SW Willow
Flycatcher (expires 5/31/12)
California Scientific Collecting
Permit No. SC-001107 (expires
11/5/11)

Robert A. Hamilton has been providing biological consulting services in southern California since 1988. He spent the formative years of his career at the firm of LSA Associates in Irvine, where he was a staff biologist and project manager. He has worked as a full-time independent consultant since 1994, incorporating the enterprise as Hamilton Biological, Inc., in 2009. His consultancy specializes in the practical application of environmental policies and regulations to land management and land use decisions in southern California.

A recognized authority on the status, distribution, and identification of birds in California, Mr. Hamilton is the lead author of two standard references describing aspects of the state's avifauna: *The Birds of Orange County: Status & Distribution* and *Rare Birds of California*. Mr. Hamilton has also conducted extensive studies in Baja California, and for seven years edited the Baja California Peninsula regional reports for the journal *North American Birds*. He served ten years on the editorial board of *Western Birds* and regularly publishes in peer-reviewed journals. He is a founding member of the Coastal Cactus Wren Working Group and is presently updating the Cactus Wren species account for *The Birds of North America Online*. Mr. Hamilton's expertise includes floral identification and vegetation mapping. He served for a decade as Conservation Chair for the Orange County chapter of the California Native Plant Society and has a working knowledge of native plant restoration.

Mr. Hamilton conducts general and focused biological surveys of small and large properties as necessary to obtain various local, state, and federal permits, agreements, and clearances. He also conducts landscape-level surveys needed by land managers to monitor songbird populations. Mr. Hamilton holds the federal and state permits and MOUs listed to the left, and he is recognized by federal and state resource agencies as being highly qualified to survey for the Least Bell's Vireo. He also provides nest-monitoring services in compliance with the federal Migratory Bird Treaty Act and California Fish & Game Code Sections 3503, 3503.5 and 3513. Mr. Hamilton has the capability of monitoring noise as it relates to nesting or roosting birds using an advanced Quest SoundPro unit that can provide second-by-

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Board Memberships, Advisory Positions, Etc.

- Coastal Cactus Wren Working Group (2008–present)
- American Birding Association:
Baja Calif. Peninsula Regional Editor, *North American Birds* (2000–2006)
- Western Field Ornithologists:
Associate Editor of *Western Birds* (1999–2008)
- California Bird Records Committee (1998–2001)
- Nature Reserve of Orange County: Technical Advisory Committee (1996–2001)
- California Native Plant Society, Orange County Chapter: Conservation Chair (1992–2003)

Professional Affiliations

- American Ornithologists' Union
- Cooper Ornithological Society
- Institute for Bird Populations
- California Native Plant Society
- Southern California Academy of Sciences
- Western Foundation of Vertebrate Zoology

Insurance

- \$2,000,000 general liability and professional liability policies (The Hartford)
- \$1,000,000 auto liability policy (State Farm)

second logging of noise levels at the nest; this allows documentation of the varying sound pressure levels that nesting birds are exposed to during construction and evaluation of any effects associated with different levels. He is also an expert photographer, and typically provides photo-documentation and/or video documentation as part of his services.

Drawing upon a robust, multidisciplinary understanding of the natural history and ecology of his home region, Mr. Hamilton works with private and public land owners, as well as governmental agencies and interested third parties, to apply the local, state, and federal land use policies and regulations applicable to each particular situation. Mr. Hamilton has amassed extensive experience in the preparation and critical review of CEQA documents, from relatively simple Negative Declarations to complex supplemental and recirculated Environmental Impact Reports. In addition to his knowledge of CEQA and its Guidelines, Mr. Hamilton understands how each Lead Agency brings its own interpretive variations to the CEQA review process.

Representative Project Experience

From 2007 to present, have reviewed biological resources sections of CEQA documents submitted to the County of Los Angeles Department of Regional Planning. Work includes evaluating the accuracy and adequacy of consultants' biological reports, developing impact analyses and mitigation measures, and recommending findings of significance. Under the same contract, prepared a list of drought-tolerant native plants, hyperlinked to web-based information, for use in landscaping in Los Angeles County. The County later revised the list, with some loss of information, but the original list and accompanying map of seven planting zones in the county are available [here](#) and [here](#).

In 2009, under contract to the Palos Verdes Peninsula Land Conservancy, surveyed for the California Gnatcatcher and Cactus Wren across nine habitat reserves that constitute nearly all of the Portuguese Bend Natural Preserve in coastal Los Angeles County. The services provided included mapping and classifying all cactus scrub resources in the areas surveyed.

Under contract to the Conservation Biology Institute in San Diego County, conducted 2008 reconnaissance of those portions of the San Dieguito River Valley that were unburned or only partially

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Other Relevant Experience

Field Ornithologist, San Diego Natural History Museum Scientific Collecting Expedition to Central and Southern Baja California, October/November 1997 and November 2003.

Field Ornithologist, Island Conservation and Ecology Group Expedition to the Tres Marias Islands, Nayarit, Mexico, 23 January to 8 February 2002.

Field Ornithologist, Algalita Marine Research Foundation neustonic plastic research voyages in the Pacific Ocean, 15 August to 4 September 1999 and 14 to 28 July 2000.

Field Assistant, Bird Banding Study, Río Nambí Reserve, Colombia, January to March 1997.

References

Provided upon request.

burned during the massive Witch Fire, which consumed nearly 200,000 acres in October 2007. Three-pass surveys conducted at 14 sites between Lake Hodges and the San Pasqual Valley determined the presence or absence of Cactus Wrens and California Gnatcatchers. Work products included maps of all unburned and partially burned scrub communities, maps of weed infestations, and complete lists documenting the numbers of each vertebrate wildlife species detected during the surveys.

Under contract to the City of Orange, prepared the Biological Resources section of a hybrid Supplemental EIR/Draft EIR for the 6,900-acre Santiago Hills II/East Orange Planned Community project in central Orange County. This complicated document covered one proposed development area that already had CEQA clearance, but that required updating for alterations to the previously approved plan, and a much larger area that was covered under an existing Natural Communities Conservation Plan (NCCP). The SEIR/EIR was certified in November 2005.

During the 1990s and 2000s, worked with study-design specialists and resource agency representatives to develop the long-term passerine bird monitoring program for the 37,000-acre Nature Reserve of Orange County, and directed its implementation from 1996 to 2001 with additional contract work since then. Tasks have included 1) annual monitoring of 40 California Gnatcatcher and Cactus Wren study sites, 2) oversight of up to 10 constant-effort bird banding stations from 1998 to 2003 under the Monitoring Avian Productivity and Survivorship (MAPS) program, and 3) focused surveys for the Cactus Wren, and detailed mapping of cactus scrub habitat, across the NROC's coastal reserve in 2006 and 2007.

Third-Party CEQA Review

Under contract to cities, conservation groups, homeowners' associations, and other interested parties, have reviewed EIRs and other project documentation for the following projects:

- ▶ The Ranch Plan (residential/commercial, County of Orange)
- ▶ Southern Orange County Transportation Infrastructure Improvement Project (Foothill South Toll Road, County of Orange)

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- ▶ Sunset Ridge Park (proposed city park, City of Newport Beach)
- ▶ Gregory Canyon Landfill Restoration Plan (proposed mitigation, County of San Diego)
- ▶ Montebello Hills Specific Plan EIR (residential, City of Montebello)
- ▶ Cabrillo Mobile Home Park Violations (illegal wetland filling, City of Huntington Beach)
- ▶ Newport Hyatt Regency (timeshare conversion project, City of Newport Beach)
- ▶ Lower San Diego Creek "Emergency Repair Project" (flood control, County of Orange)
- ▶ Tonner Hills (residential, City of Brea)
- ▶ The Bridges at Santa Fe Units 6 and 7 (residential, County of San Diego)
- ▶ Villages of La Costa Master Plan (residential/commercial, City of Carlsbad)
- ▶ Whispering Hills (residential, City of San Juan Capistrano)
- ▶ Santiago Hills II (residential/commercial, City of Orange)
- ▶ Rancho Potrero Leadership Academy (youth detention facility/road, County of Orange)
- ▶ Saddle Creek/Saddle Crest (residential, County of Orange)
- ▶ Frank G. Bonelli Regional County Park Master Plan (County of Los Angeles)

Contact Information

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Selected Presentations

Hamilton, R. A., and Cooper, D. S. 2009-2010. Conservation & Management Plan for Marina del Rey. Twenty-minute Powerpoint presentation given to different governmental agencies and interest groups.

Hamilton, R. A. 2008. Cactus Wren Conservation Issues, Nature Reserve of Orange County. One-hour Powerpoint presentation for Sea & Sage Audubon Society, Irvine, California, 25 November 2008.

Hamilton, R. A., Miller, W. B., Mitrovich, M. J. 2008. Cactus Wren Study, Nature Reserve of Orange County. Twenty-minute Powerpoint presentation given at the Nature Reserve of Orange County's Cactus Wren Symposium, Irvine, California, 30 April 2008.

Hamilton, R. A. and K. Messer. 1999-2004 Results of Annual California Gnatcatcher and Cactus Wren Monitoring in the Nature Reserve of Orange County. Twenty-minute Powerpoint presentation given at the Partners In Flight meeting: Conservation and Management of Coastal Scrub and Chaparral Birds and Habitats, Starr Ranch Audubon Sanctuary, 21 August 2004; and at the Nature Reserve of Orange County 10th Anniversary Symposium, Irvine, California, 21 November 2006.

Hamilton, R.A. Preliminary results of reserve-wide monitoring of California Gnatcatchers in the Nature Reserve of Orange County. Twenty-minute Powerpoint presentation given at the Southern California Academy of Sciences annual meeting at California State University, Los Angeles, 5 May 2001.

Publications

[Hamilton, R. A. 2008. Cactus Wrens in central & coastal Orange County: How will a worst-case scenario play out under the NCCP? *Western Tanager* 75:2-7.](#)

[Erickson, R. A., R. A. Hamilton, R. Carmona, G. Ruiz-Campos, and Z. A. Henderson. 2008. Value of perennial archiving of data received through the North American Birds regional reporting system: Examples from the Baja California Peninsula. *North American Birds* 62:2-9.](#)

[Erickson, R. A., R. A. Hamilton, and S. G. Mlodinow. 2008. Status review of Belding's Yellowthroat *Geothlypis beldingi*, and implications for its conservation. *Bird Conservation International* 18:219-228.](#)

[Hamilton, R. A. 2008. Fulvous Whistling-Duck \(*Dendrocygna bicolor*\). Pp. 68-73 in Shuford, W. D. and T. Gardali, eds. 2008. *California Bird Species of Special Concern: A ranked assessment of species, subspecies, and distinct populations of birds of immediate*](#)

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- [conservation concern in California. Studies of Western Birds 1. Western Field Ornithologists, Camarillo, CA, and California Department of Fish and Game, Sacramento, CA.](#)
- [California Bird Records Committee \(R. A. Hamilton, M. A. Patten, and R. A. Erickson, editors.\). 2007. Rare Birds of California. Western Field Ornithologists, Camarillo, CA.](#)
- Hamilton, R. A., R. A. Erickson, E. Palacios, and R. Carmona. 2001–2007. *North American Birds* quarterly reports for the Baja California Peninsula Region, Fall 2000 through Winter 2006/2007.
- [Hamilton, R. A. and P. A. Gaede. 2005. Pink-sided × Gray-headed Juncos. *Western Birds* 36:150–152.](#)
- [Mlodinow, S. G. and R. A. Hamilton. 2005. Vagrancy of Painted Bunting \(*Passerina ciris*\) in the United States, Canada, and Bermuda. *North American Birds* 59:172–183.](#)
- Erickson, R. A., R. A. Hamilton, S. González-Guzmán, G. Ruiz-Campos. 2002. Primeros registros de anidación del Pato Friso (*Anas strepera*) en México. *Anales del Instituto de Biología, Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, Serie Zoología* 73(1): 67–71.
- [Hamilton, R. A. and J. L. Dunn. 2002. Red-naped and Red-breasted sapsuckers. *Western Birds* 33:128–130.](#)
- [Hamilton, R. A. and S. N. G. Howell. 2002. Gnatcatcher sympatry near San Felipe, Baja California, with notes on other species. *Western Birds* 33:123–124.](#)
- [Hamilton, R. A. 2001. Book review: *The Sibley Guide to Birds*. *Western Birds* 32:95–96.](#)
- Hamilton, R. A. and R. A. Erickson. 2001. Noteworthy breeding bird records from the Vizcaíno Desert, Baja California Peninsula. Pp. 102–105 in *Monographs in Field Ornithology* No. 3. American Birding Association, Colorado Springs, CO.
- Hamilton, R. A. 2001. Log of bird record documentation from the Baja California Peninsula archived at the San Diego Natural History Museum. Pp. 242–253 in *Monographs in Field Ornithology* No. 3. American Birding Association, Colorado Springs, CO.
- Hamilton, R. A. 2001. Records of caged birds in Baja California. Pp. 254–257 in *Monographs in Field Ornithology* No. 3. American Birding Association, Colorado Springs, CO.
- Erickson, R. A., R. A. Hamilton, and S. N. G. Howell. 2001. New information on migrant birds in northern and central portions of the Baja California Peninsula, including species new to Mexico. Pp. 112–170 in *Monographs in Field Ornithology* No. 3. American Birding Association, Colorado Springs, CO.
- Howell, S. N. G., R. A. Erickson, R. A. Hamilton, and M. A. Patten. 2001. An annotated checklist of the birds of Baja California and Baja California Sur. Pp. 171–203 in *Monographs in Field Ornithology* No. 3. American Birding Association, Colorado Springs, CO.
- Ruiz-Campos, G., González-Guzmán, S., Erickson, R. A., and Hamilton, R. A. 2001. Notable bird specimen records from the Baja California Peninsula. Pp. 238–241 in *Monographs in Field Ornithology* No. 3. American Birding Association, Colorado Springs, CO.

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Wurster, T. E., R. A. Erickson, R. A. Hamilton, and S. N. G. Howell. 2001. Database of selected observations: an augment to new information on migrant birds in northern and central portions of the Baja California Peninsula. Pp. 204–237 in *Monographs in Field Ornithology* No. 3. American Birding Association, Colorado Springs, CO.

[Erickson, R. A. and R. A. Hamilton, 2001. Report of the California Bird Records Committee: 1998 records. *Western Birds* 32:13–49.](#)

[Hamilton, R. A., J. E. Pike, T. E. Wurster, and K. Radamaker. 2000. First record of an Olive-backed Pipit in Mexico. *Western Birds* 31:117–119.](#)

[Hamilton, R. A. and N. J. Schmitt. 2000. Identification of Taiga and Black Merlins. *Western Birds* 31:65–67.](#)

[Hamilton, R. A. 1998. Book review: Atlas of Breeding Birds, Orange County, California. *Western Birds* 29:129–130.](#)

[Hamilton, R. A. and D. R. Willick. 1996. The Birds of Orange County, California: Status and Distribution. Sea & Sage Press, Sea & Sage Audubon Society, Irvine.](#)

Hamilton, R. A. 1996–98. Photo Quizzes. *Birding* 27(4):298-301, 28(1):46-50, 28(4):309-313, 29(1):59-64, 30(1):55–59.

Erickson, R. A., and Hamilton, R. A. 1995. Geographic distribution: *Lampropeltis getula californiae* (California Kingsnake) in Baja California Sur. *Herpetological Review* 26(4):210.

[Bontrager, D. R., R. A. Erickson, and R. A. Hamilton. 1995. Impacts of the October 1993 Laguna fire on California Gnatcatchers and Cactus Wrens. in J. E. Keeley and T. A. Scott \(editors\). *Wildfires in California Brushlands: Ecology and Resource Management*. International Association of Wildland Fire, Fairfield, Washington.](#)

[Erickson, R. A., R. A. Hamilton, S. N. G. Howell, M. A. Patten, and P. Pyle. 1995. First record of Marbled Murrelet and third record of Ancient Murrelet for Mexico. *Western Birds* 26: 39–45.](#)

Erickson, R. A., and R. A. Hamilton. 1993. Additional summer bird records for southern Mexico. *Euphonia* 2(4): 81–91.

Erickson, R. A., A. D. Barron, and R. A. Hamilton. 1992. A recent Black Rail record for Baja California. *Euphonia* 1(1): 19–21.