Yellow-billed Cuckoo Population Monitoring Lower Colorado River 2015

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Research for Conservation of Biological Diversity

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Lower Colorado River Multi-Species Conservation Program

Yellow-billed cuckoo (*Coccyzus americanus*, YBCU)

- Neotropical long-distance migrant
- Secretive canopy bird, short nesting season
- Require large habitat patches
- Diet mainly large insects
- Riparian forest breeding obligate in West
- Western Distinct Population Segment listed as Threatened November 2014

LCR MSCP

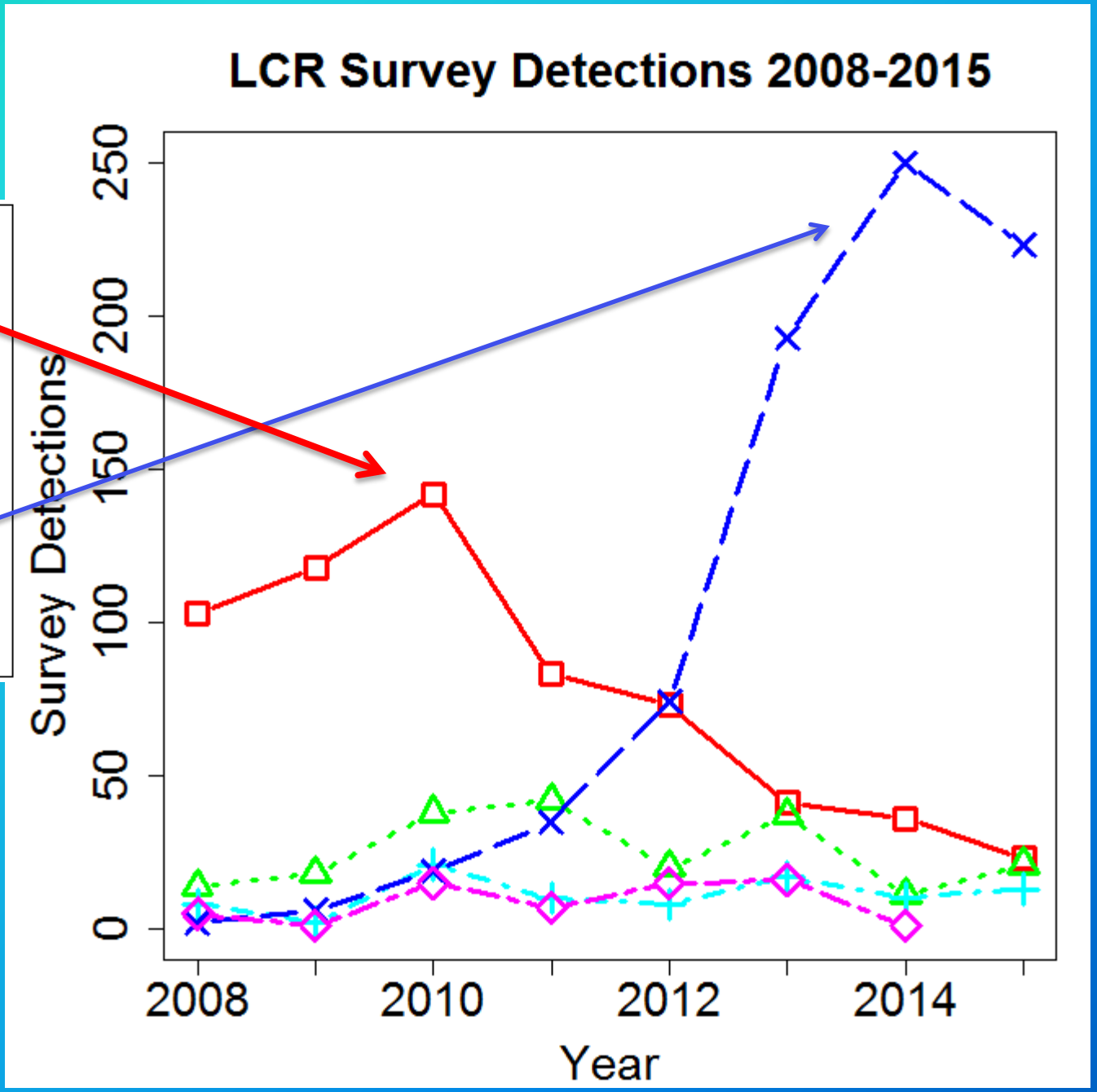
Re-create >3000 ha riparian vegetation, >1600 ha cottonwood-willow

YBCU Project Objectives:

- Assist Reclamation to document and standardize data – mobile field forms
- Document presence/absence of YBCUs along the LCR – call-playback surveys
- Monitor population parameters to assess habitat quality – nest success, productivity, survival

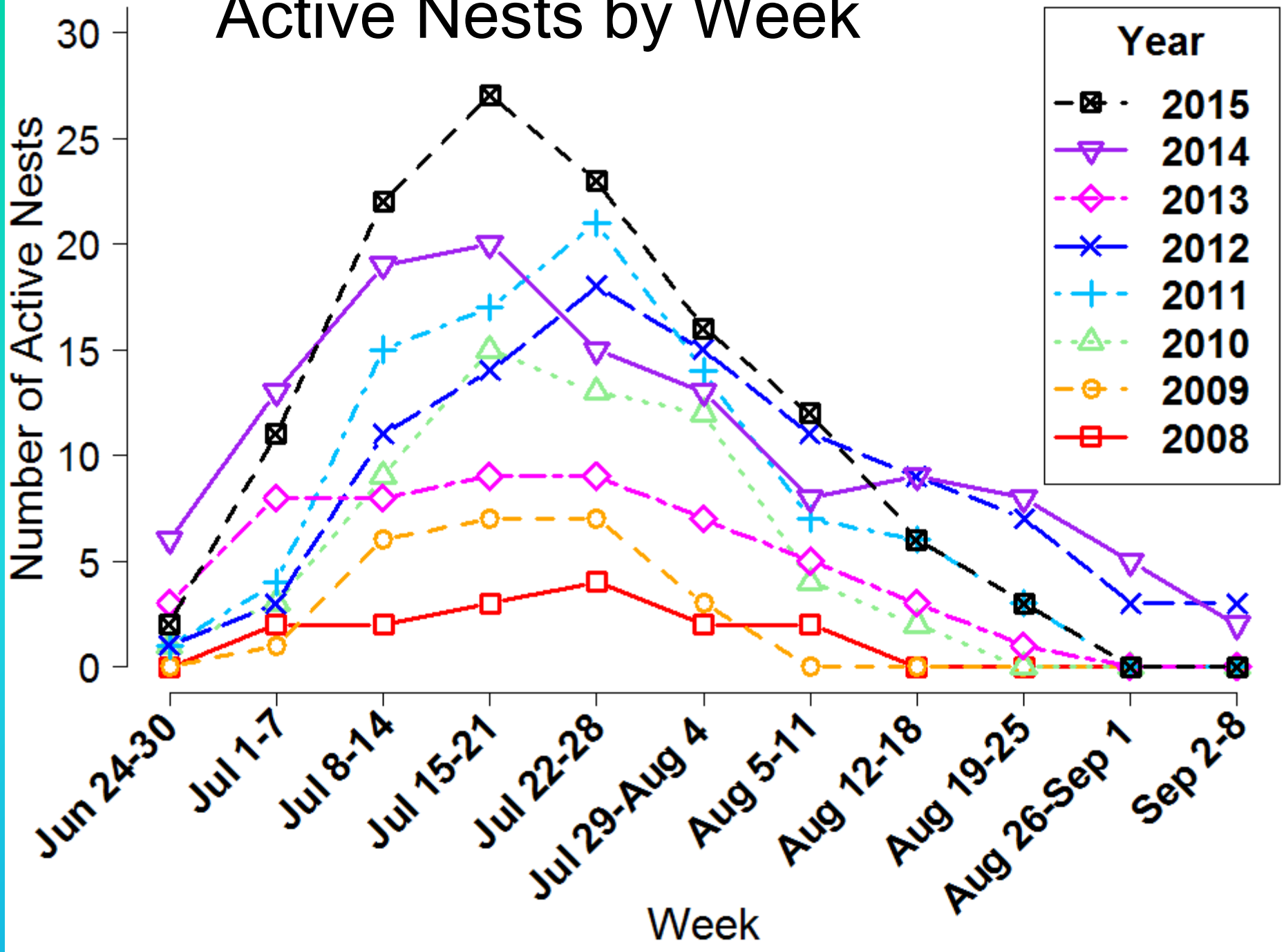
Palo Verde Ecological Reserve. Photo: LCR MSCP

Survey Results



Nests

- N = 39 nests found
- Apparent nest success = 56%
- Mayfield nest success = 43%
- Average productivity = 1.08 young fledged per nest


Active Nests by Week
Number of Active Nests
30
25
20
15
10
5
0
Year
2015
2014
2013
2012
2011
2010
2009
2008
Jun 24-30
Jul 1-7
Jul 8-14
Jul 15-21
Jul 22-28
Jul 29-Aug 4
Aug 5-11
Aug 12-18
Aug 19-25
Aug 26-Sep 1
Sep 2-8
Week

Nest Highlight – Cibola NWR (Crane Roost)

Cottonwood-willow wind break <12 m wide!

Nest Highlight – PVER

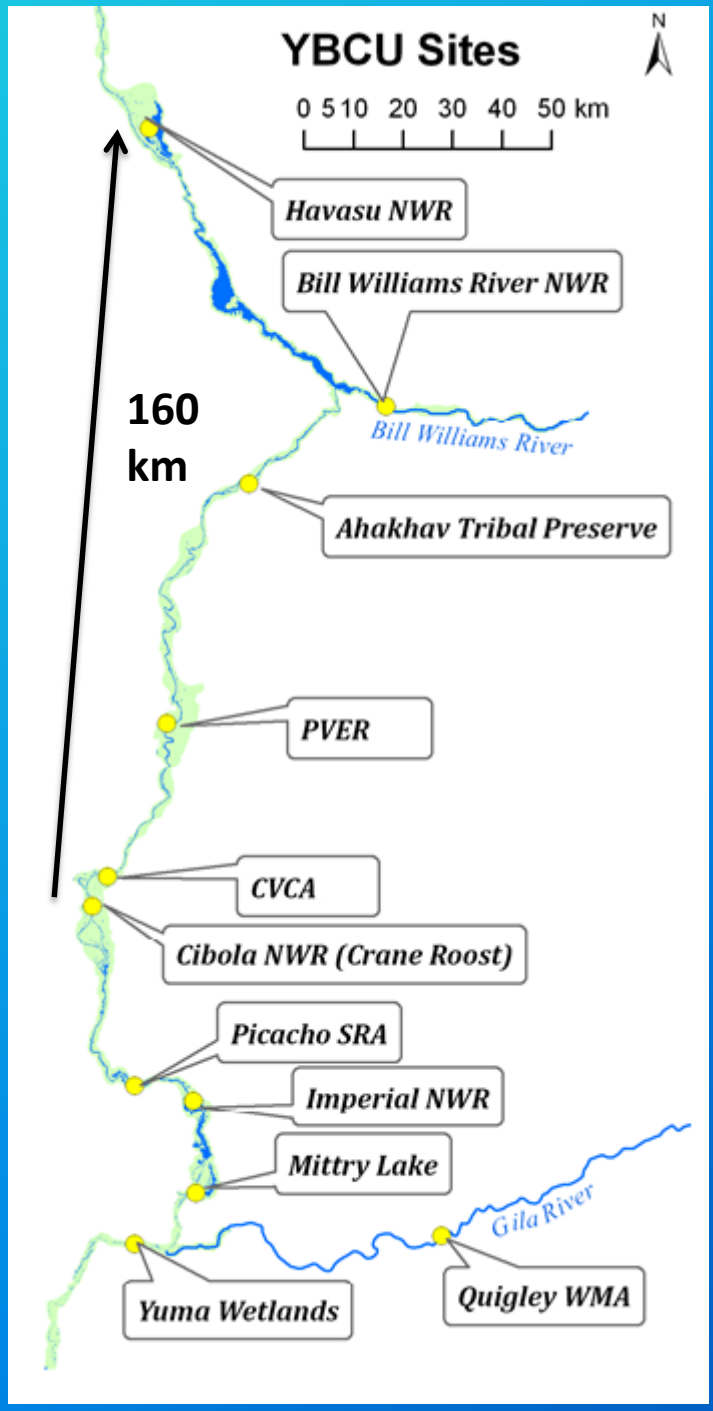
First nest in mesquite: Phase 6

Adult Captures

- 45 adults captured: 32 new, 13 recaptures
- = 29% recapture rate (!)

Dispersal highlights

- 1. Male captured CVCA 2012 = >4Y
- 2. Female captured Cibola NWR 2014 = >SY
- Both resighted at Beal Lake Conservation Area 2015



Dispersal highlight

- Female captured PVER July 14 2015 (>HY)
- Found dead Chino Valley (200 km NE) August 4 2015 ☹

New YBCU Age Record

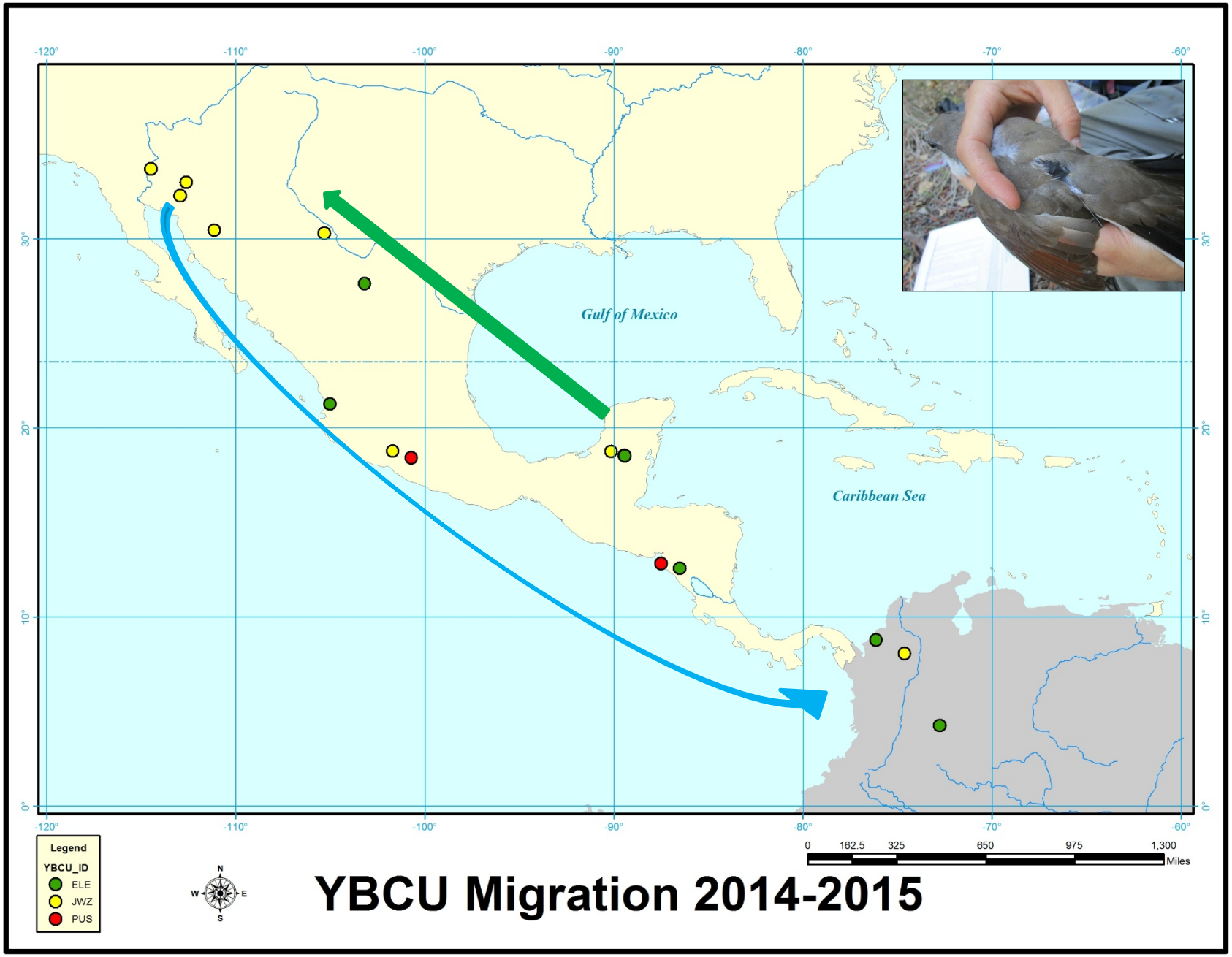
Previous record:
>6th Year (2014)

CVCA1 ‘08 First MSCP nest

Cibola NWR ‘15
8 Years

GPS Data Logger Deployment 2014: n = 7

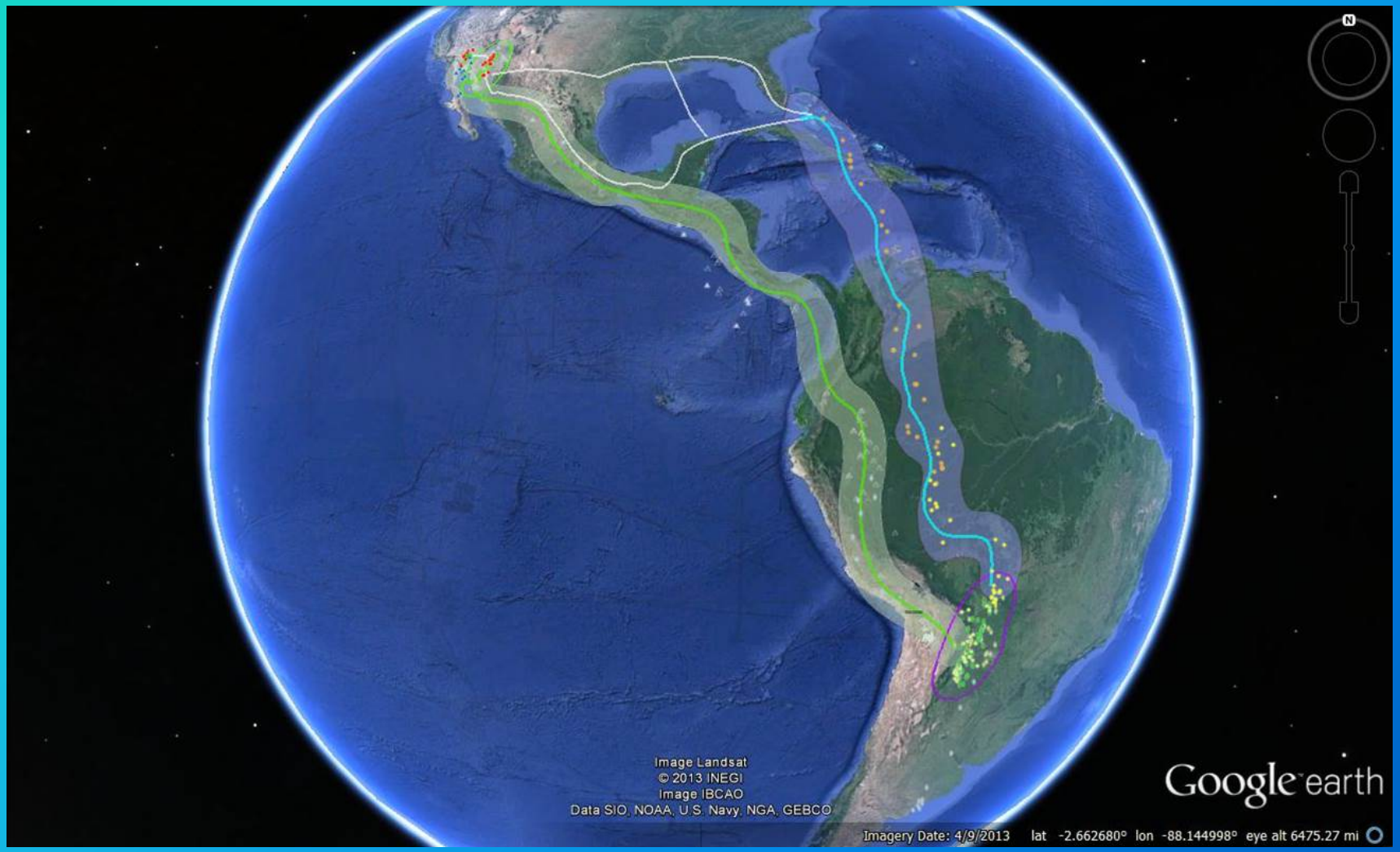
GPS Recaptures 2015: n = 3
43% recapture rate (!)



YBCU Migration 2014-2015

Loop Migration by a Western Yellow-billed Cuckoo Wintering in the Gran Chaco.

Western Birds 46(3) 2015, pp 244-255



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