

COASTAL GREENBELT AUTHORITY

13042 Old Myford Road
Irvine, CA 92602

DRAFT

May 14, 2026

Regarding: Future Rules Governing the Use of the Irvine Bowl

Laguna Beach Mayor Orgill, Councilmembers, Laguna Beach Community Development Staff, and the Irvine Bowl Policy Committee,

The Coastal Greenbelt Authority (CGA) is the cooperative management authority for Laguna Coast Wilderness Park and Aliso and Wood Canyons Wilderness Park. The CGA members represent the park's landowners – County of Orange, Cities of Laguna Beach, and Laguna Woods, as well as local environmental organizations, and Laguna Canyon Homeowners (CANDO) who were part of the negotiations for the purchase of the Laguna Laurel Development land for parkland. The guiding documents for the CGA oversight are the General Development (GDP) and Resource Management (RMP) Plans for Laguna Coast Wilderness Park and the Resource Management Plan for Aliso and Wood Canyons Wilderness Park.

CGA has received very little information over the years about the Irvine Bowl issue. Recently CGA received information of the 2025 and 2026 Irvine Bowl Committee meetings which advocated raising the sound level to 75 decibels and development of additional dates for concerts during the week and weekend outside the Festival of Arts time period.

On May 6, 2026 the Laguna Beach Administrative Community Director Meeting included an agenda item with the Recommendation: Adopt the Community Director Determination 26-0831 approving Coastal Development Permit 26-0831 for a change of the intensity of use of land as it relates to an update to the Irvine Bowl Sound Policy to allow for an increase in the sound limit at the Neighborhood Sound Boundary at and around the Irvine Bowl located at 650 Laguna Canyon Road, and finding said action exempt from CEQA under Sections 15304 and 15323.

CGA did not directly receive an announcement of this meeting. The item was continued with no Public Participation. CGA had sent a letter of concern in March 2025, but the letter was not included in any of the past meeting packets, but was included in the May 6, 2026 agenda packet.

CGA concerns about this Recommended Action involving a Coastal Development Permit and exemption from CEQA include:

- Laguna Coast Wilderness Park and the City of Laguna Beach Open are adjacent to the Irvine Bowl. These coastal sage areas are environmentally sensitive habitats and scenic resources and are mapped and identified as such.
- These coastal sage areas provide habitat for the Coastal California Gnatcatcher, listed as Federally Threatened and designated as a Bird Species of Special Concern by the State of California. The area adjacent to the Irvine Bowl is a known nesting site. The area is also part of the Natural Communities Conservation Plan/Habitat Conservation Plan (NCCP/HCP) program coordinated by the nonprofit, Natural Communities Coalition.

- The Staff Report for the May 6, 2026 meeting incorrectly stated in Findings for the Coastal Development Permit that the proposed changes would not adversely affect environmentally sensitive areas; and the Rincon report states that there would not be any significant impacts to biological or natural resources with the proposed changes.
- CGA finds these assumptions not based on a scientific/biological study. Concert-related cumulative noise and activity from the Bowl within a narrow canyon may result in adverse impacts to sensitive coastal birds (California Gnatcatchers) and small mammals with the proposed increased sound decibels and cumulative number of concerts.
- A biologist familiar with these environmentally sensitive lands should be included in the review of any proposed changes.
- Notifications of any further meetings about the proposed changes of off-season concerts and increased sound levels need to include the California Department of Fish & Wildlife, US Fish and Wildlife, Natural Communities Coalition, OC Parks and the Coastal Greenbelt Authority.

In order to address CGA concerns it is imperative that all adjacent landowners are included in the decision process. Before any decisions can be made regarding the Sound Policy and additional concerts the landowners and managers of the open space land adjacent to the Irvine Bowl must have an opportunity to present their concerns and request further studies.

CGA also requests that any future meetings regarding the Irvine Bowl use include notifications to those responsible for the open space land.

CGA Members approved this letter at their May 13, 2026 meeting.

Thank you for considering our concerns.

Mary Fegraus

Mary Fegraus, Chair Coastal Greenbelt Authority

cc: Coastal Greenbelt Authority Members

OC Parks Director Pam Passow

County of Orange Fifth District Supervisor Foley

For the City Council Members: Ann Marie McKay, City Clerk, City of Laguna Beach,
amckay@lagunabeachcity.net

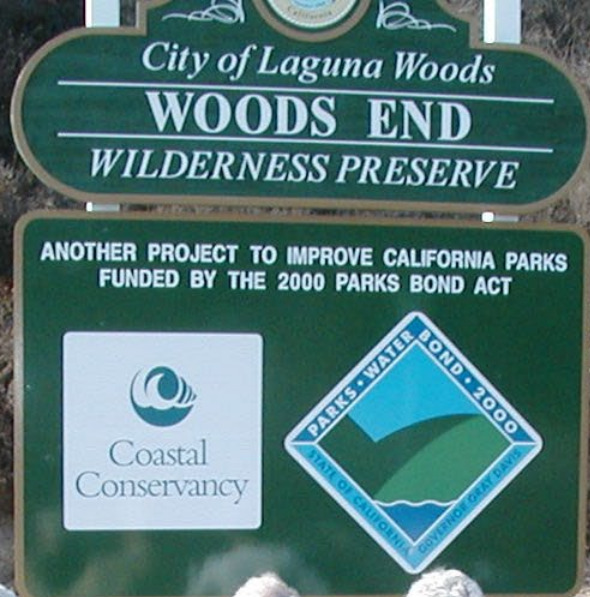
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Matt Schneider, LB Community Development Director mkschneider@lagunabeachcity.net

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Irvine Bowl Committee

Jim Sulentich, Natural Communities Coalition jsulentich@occonservation.org







LAGUNA COAST

WILDERNESS PARK at WOODS END
CITY OF LAGUNA WOODS

OC Parks





BIG BEND WILDLIFE CAMERAS

Baseline/Pre Construction Report



Big Bend Wildlife Monitoring

Local Wildlife Corridors

GPS accuracy 38.4 ft · 30 ft required

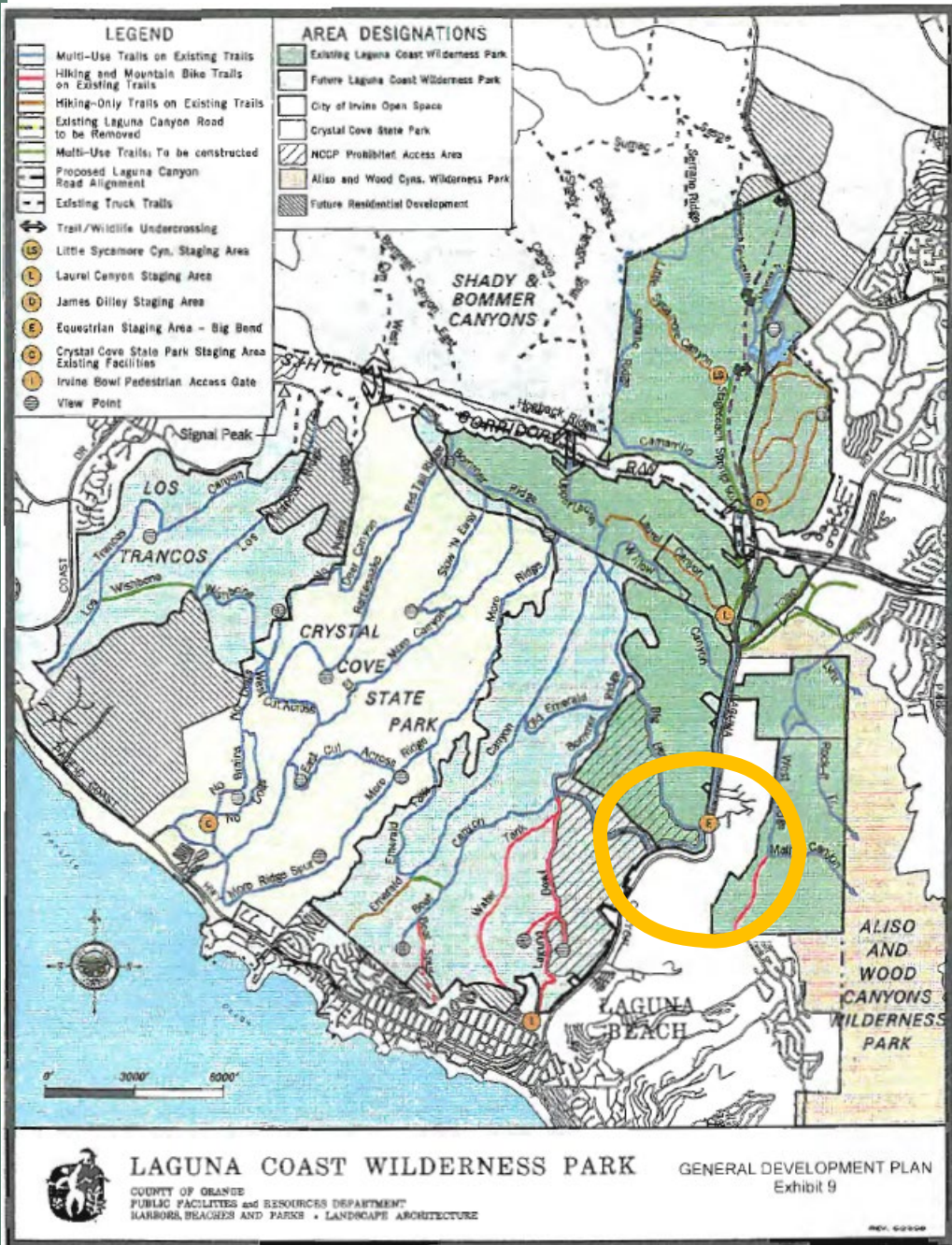


Wildlife Movement Studies

- SR 133 Undercrossings
 - 16 cameras at 4 undercrossings
 - Partnership w/ Laguna Greenbelt, Inc – Rock Designs
 - Project Start: June 2026 (est.)
- Big Bend Wildlife Corridor
 - 4 Camera “Traps” installed within City of Laguna Beach Open Space
 - Active Project (in yr 2 of 3 yr study)

Laguna Coast Wilderness Park General Development Plan

- Big Bend Wildlife Corridor
 - Corridor within City of Laguna Beach Open Space & Laguna Coast & Aliso & Wood Cyns Wilderness Park
 - LACO portion is within NCCP/HCP Southern Reserve Prohibited Access Area



Big Bend Wildlife Monitoring Background

- Purpose & Scope of Work
 - Monitor wildlife activity within Big Bend Wildlife Corridor
 - Four Camera “Traps” installed within City of Laguna Beach Open Space
 - Obtain wildlife occupancy and travel information - Collect, Qualify and Aggregate Data
- Study Phases:
 - Pre-construction of LCAD N Campus (06-21-2024 to 01-31-2026)
 - During Construction (2-01-2026 – TBD)
 - Post-Construction/ LCAD N Campus Occupancy (TBD)
- Study Duration: 3 years (6-21-2024 to 6-21-2027) with current funding

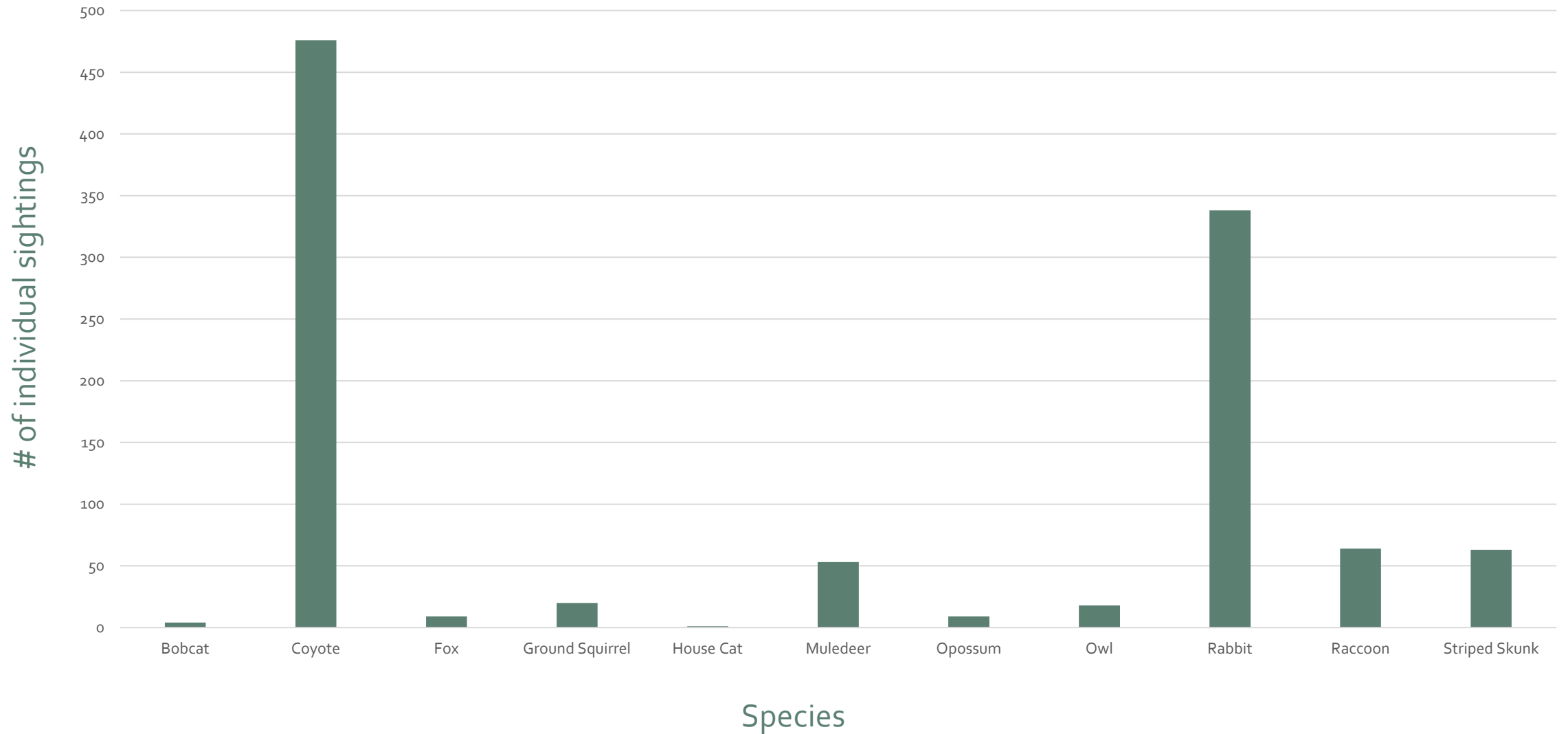




Camera Locations

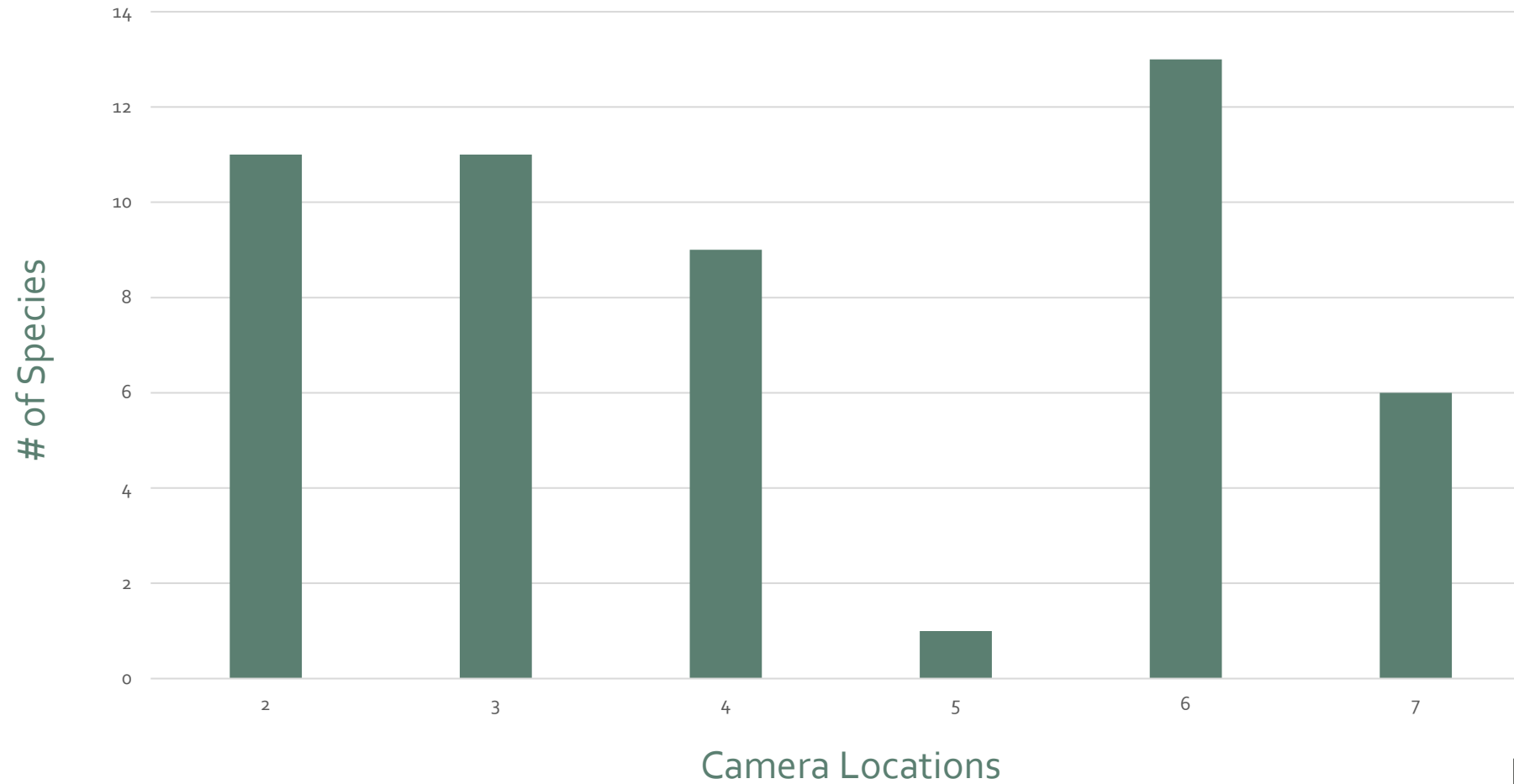
Sightings Per Species

Pre-Construction



Species Per Camera Location

Pre-Construction



Pre-Construction Camera Data



Coyote

35°F 03/20/2025 04:28AM BIG BEND 5



Bobcat

57°F 06/26/2024 04:19AM BIG BEND 3



Raccoon

53°F 11/28/2024 04:18AM BIG BEND 2



Opossum

50°F 12/31/2024 09:22PM BIG BEND 2

Pre-Construction Camera Data



Gray Fox

STEALTH CAM 03:33 10/23/25 52F WIRELESS 1



Ground Squirrel

60F 03/10/2025 06:12PM BIG BEND 1



Muledeer

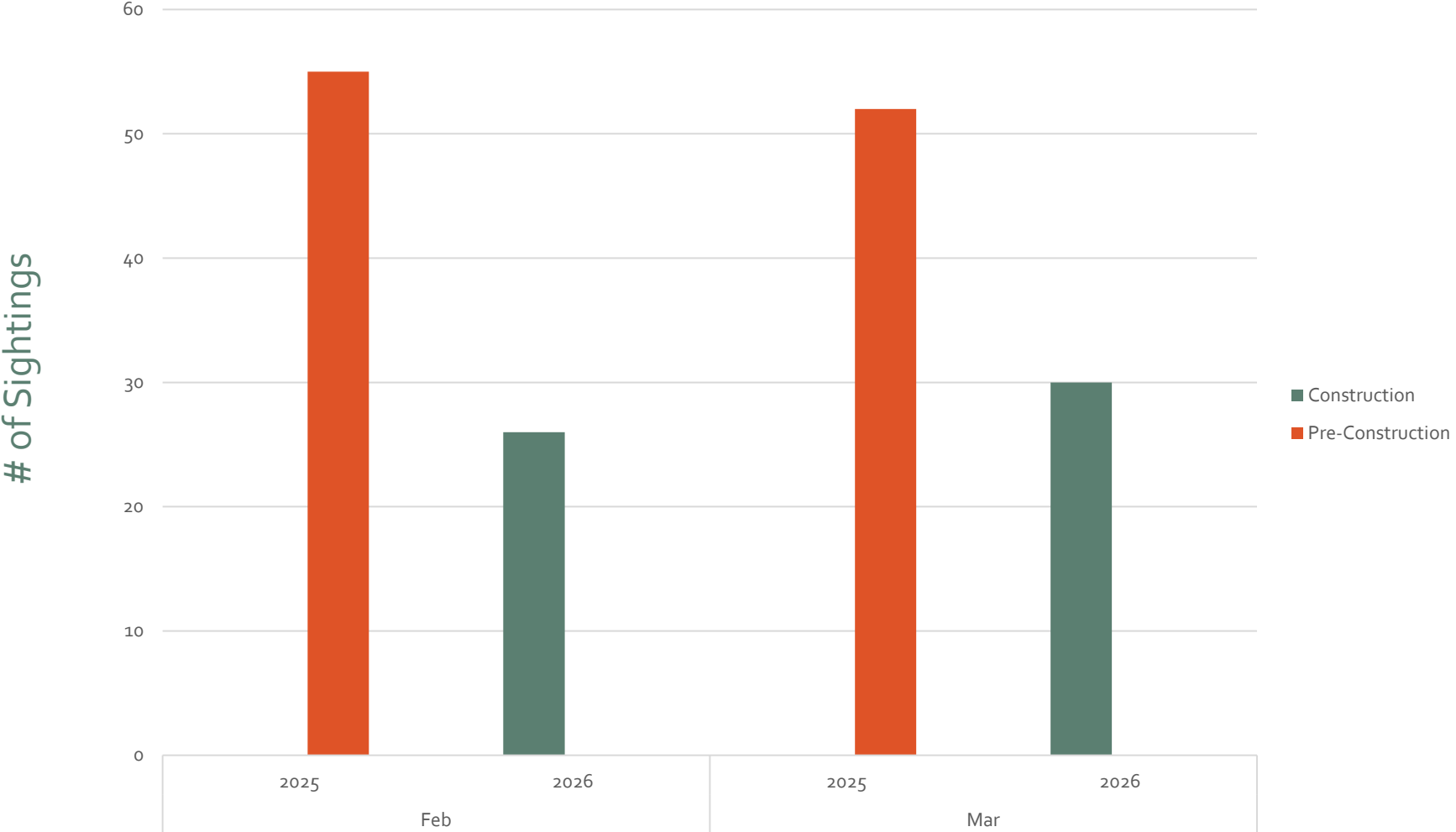
62F 08/06/2024 01:43AM BIG BEND 4



Owl

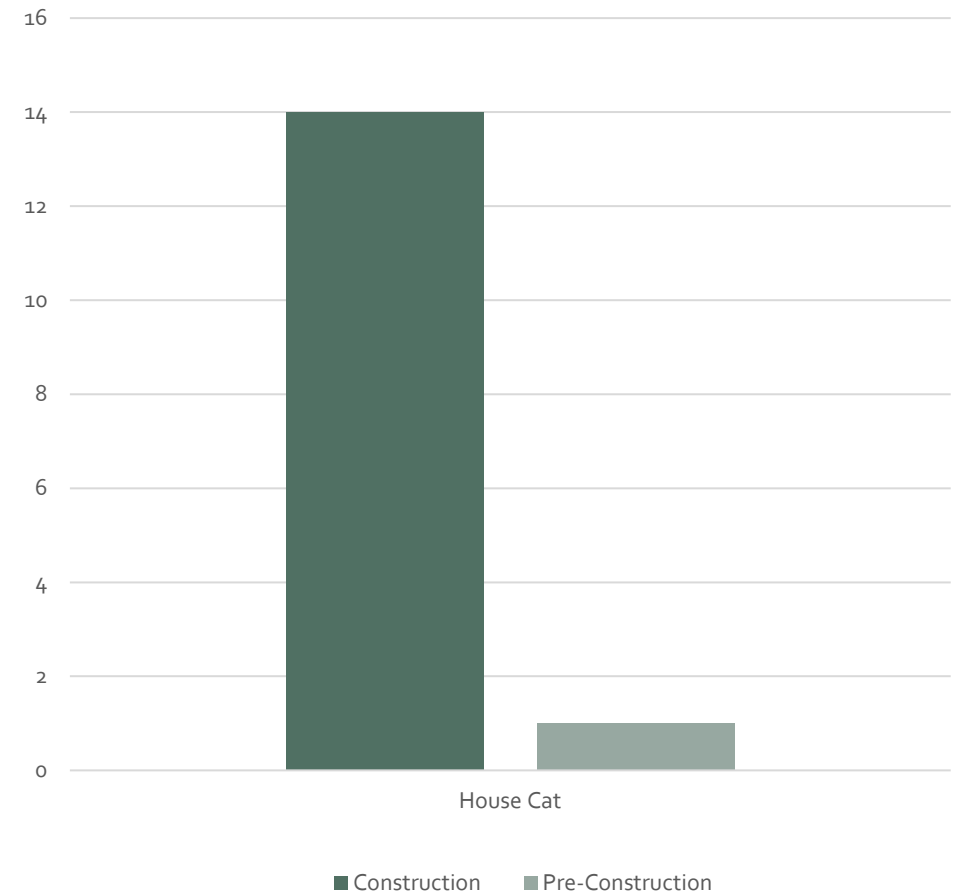
STEALTH CAM 01:43 12/31/25 67F WIRELESS 1

Sightings 2025 vs 2026



Significant increase in domestic house cat sightings at start of construction period. This could be due to:

- Lower wildlife sightings
- Cat has been displaced



Challenges

- Camera position and location
 - Location 1 never captured wildlife.
 - Location 5 had limited observations.
- Camera vandalization
 - Location 7 was vandalized various times by the public.
 - Location 6 was removed by construction crew in mid Feb 2026.
 - Location 4 was stolen between Oct 5-Nov 12 2024.
- Photo storage
 - Camera 7's memory was quickly filled by people.
 - Increased subscription and changed capture time from 7pm-8am.
- Delay in construction period

Big Bend Wildlife Monitoring Results

- Pre-Construction Phase
 - Wildlife Corridor is functioning for small mammals (coyote, bobcat, racoon, skunk, muledeer, grey fox)
 - 1055 total sightings. No sightings for Camera 1
 - Trail/station tracking data is recommended for supplemental data, especially along existing trails/tracks
- Construction Phase
 - Domestic Cat (possibly feral) sightings have increased 1,400 % (14 sightings)
- Post-Construction Phase:
 - Additional funding needed to continue study
 - Existing Project Duration expires after 3 years. Construction was delayed.

Big Bend Wildlife Monitoring-- Questions?

