



2025 BIODIVERSITY INDEX MONITORING REPORT



Chaparral yucca
(Photo: Lily Carlson)

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This report was prepared by the LA Sanitation & Environment Biodiversity Team under the direction of Dr. Mas Dojiri, Assistant General Manager. The index was assessed and the report written and prepared by Lily Carlson, Environmental Specialist. Amanda Amaral, Environmental Affairs Officer, and Doug Walters, Sustainability Division Manager and Chief Sustainability Officer, were crucial for reviewing the report and assessments and supporting this effort.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgements.....	2
Executive Summary.....	6
Summary of Results	7
Important Definitions.....	8
Theme 1 (Native Species).....	10
Theme 2 (Social Equity Considerations).....	32
Theme 3 (Governance & Management).....	46
Conclusion.....	55
 <u>Appendix I:</u> Methodology (pdf)	
 <u>Appendix II:</u> Code (pdf)	



Bladderpod
(Photo: Lily Carlson)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The first LA Biodiversity Index Monitoring Report builds on the LA Biodiversity Index Baseline Report to measure change in the Biodiversity Index, a framework that comprehensively assesses biodiversity in the City of Los Angeles (2022, LASAN). This current report evaluates each of the 25 metrics of the Index using the most recent data, examining how native species, social equity, and governance and management have changed within the City.

While the baseline report assigned numerical scores for each metric, this monitoring report is an interim assessment before the next benchmark assessment in 2030. As such, the body of this report assigns ordinal scores instead of numerical scores, indicating if the metric has improved or declined. Metrics can have positive, negative, or mixed scores. For metrics that have current data, results are compared to a baseline measurement in order to determine how that metric has changed. For metrics that do not have current data, the most recent results are presented as the most accurate baseline data currently available, and no score is assigned to the metric. Additionally, key information, relevant plots and maps, and important trends are highlighted for each metric. Detailed methodology can be found in Appendix I and Appendix II.

Many metrics, particularly those belonging to Theme 1: Native Species Protection and Enhancement, are not assigned an ordinal score due to data limitations. As such, it is absolutely essential that recent data is regularly produced in order to be able to comprehensively assess these metrics in the future. Furthermore, while many metrics within Theme 2: Social Equity Considerations and Theme 3: Governance and Management are assigned positive scores, these improvements are typically very small, indicating the need to continue and intensify existing efforts to improve these aspects of biodiversity in the City.

Furthermore, we recognize the devastation of the wildfires that occurred in early 2025 and the significant impact that the fires will have on biodiversity within the City. Because the fires are very recent at the time of this report's publication, the impact of the fires is not captured within this assessment. As such, certain metrics, such as 1.3c: Wildfire Frequency, are likely to get substantially worse before the next benchmark assessment of the Biodiversity Index in 2030.

This Monitoring Report provides crucial information on which metrics have successfully improved and which metrics are getting worse. Additionally, the report highlights the trends that will drive scores for the next benchmark assessment. We hope that the report will inform actions that work towards a resilient, biophilic LA for all Angelenos, especially as the City begins to formulate its Local Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (LBSAP) to guide work to protect and enhance biodiversity.



2025 MONITORING REPORT RESULTS

CODE	METRIC	SCORE			
1.1a	% Natural Areas	*	2.1a	Access to Natural Areas	*
1.1b	Naturalness of Urban Landscapes & Open Space	*	2.1b	Neighborhood Landscape / Tree Canopy Footprint	*
1.1c	Habitat Quality of Streams	*	2.2a	School (K-12) Biodiversity Topics	↑
1.1d	Connectivity of Natural Areas	*	2.2b	Off-Campus Biodiversity Educational Visits	↑
1.1e	Connectivity of Urban Landscapes & Open Space	*	2.2c	Campus Nature Education Gardens	*
1.1f	Connectivity of Streams and Riparian Areas	*	2.3a	Community Scientist Activities and App Utilization	↑
1.2a	Presence of Charismatic Umbrella Species in Natural Areas	—	2.3b	# Certified Biodiversity-Friendly Areas	↑ ↓
1.2b	Native Species Presence in Urban Areas	↑	3.1a	Biodiversity Vision / Action Plan	↑
1.2c	Species of Conservation Concern Gained or Lost	*	3.1b	% Departments with Biodiversity Actions & Goals	↑
1.3a	Urban Edge Effects on Natural Areas	↓	3.2a	% Protected Natural Areas	*
1.3b	Presence & Spread of Invasive Plants	*	3.2b	Protected Natural Areas Management and Monitoring	*
1.3c	Wildfire Frequency	↑ ↓	3.2c	Management of Invasive Species & Pests	↑
			3.2d	Management of Species of Conservation Concern	↑

LEGEND				
↑	↓	↑ ↓	—	*
Positive	Negative	Mixed	No Change Detected	No Data Available

IMPORTANT DEFINITIONS

The 2025 LA Biodiversity Index Monitoring Report utilizes key terminology, which are defined here.

Biodiversity: For the City of Los Angeles, biodiversity is the native flora, fauna, and ecosystems that enrich and sustain natural and urban areas.

Native Species: A species that has evolved within Los Angeles and was present prior to human settlement.

Invasive Species: A species that is not native to Los Angeles but was introduced to the area (often through human activity) and is harmful to local ecosystems and native species.

Threatened, Endangered, and/or Species of Conservation Concern: A native species whose population is decreasing or is at risk of extinction, or has the potential to decrease due to various environmental threats (e.g., habitat loss, pollution).

Charismatic Umbrella Species: Species that are easily recognizable, popular with residents, and are good indicators of a healthy ecosystem.

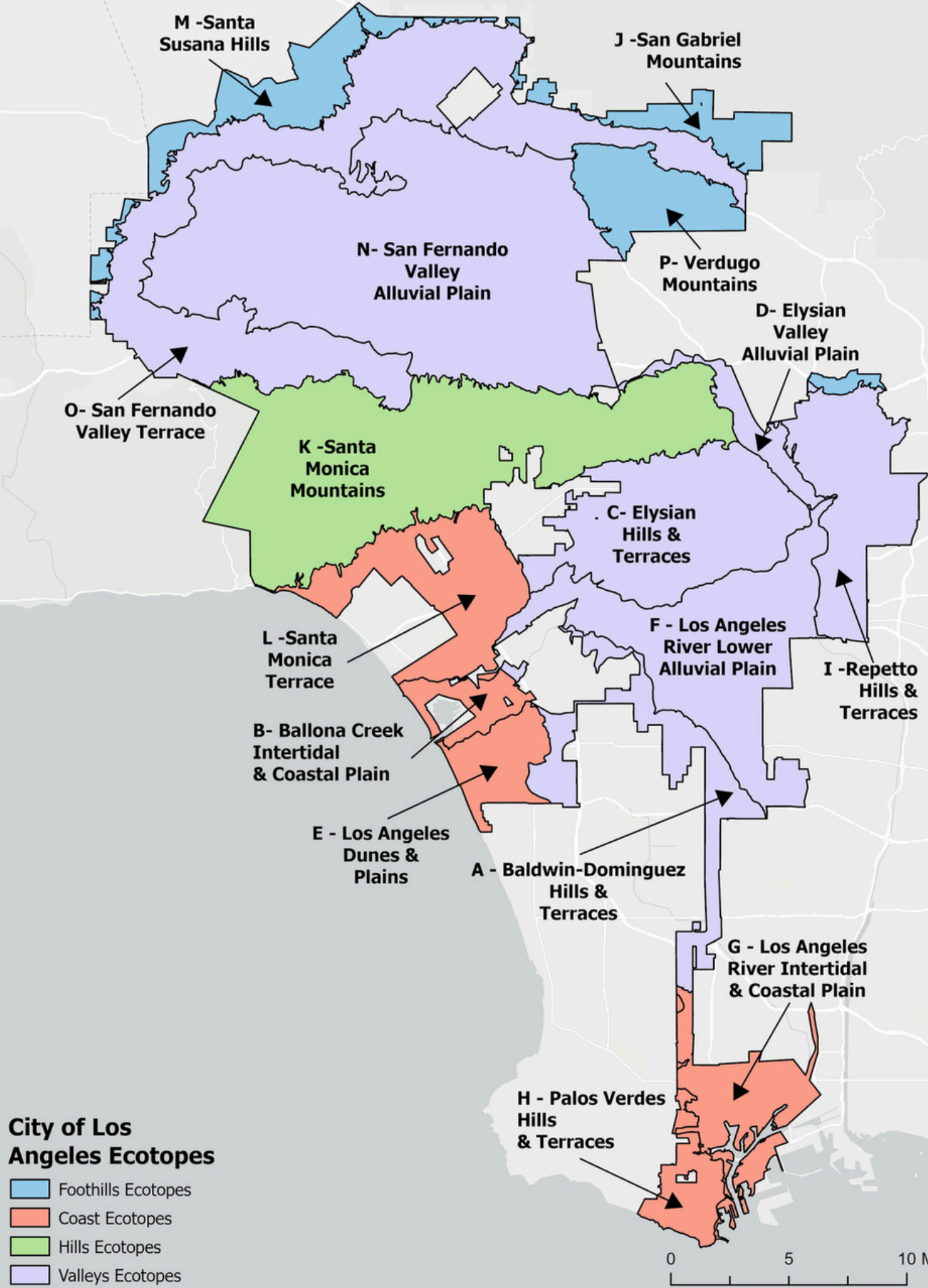
Habitat: The natural home or environment of an animal, plant, or other organism, which can range from a protected natural area to the trees and plants that line City streets.

Natural Areas: Areas that are vegetated by naturally occurring or restored native habitat. These areas have the greatest habitat quality and support local biodiversity the best. Degraded natural areas are areas that have previously been healthy but have since been damaged, such as through the spread of invasive species.

Ecotopes: Regions across the City that are classified based on similar ecological conditions. There are 16 ecotopes within the City, mapped out from A - P, and they are utilized as land management units throughout this report to highlight local trends in biodiversity.



California scrub jay
(Photo: Nurit Katz)



THEME 1:

NATIVE SPECIES PROTECTION & ENHANCEMENT



1.1a

% NATURAL AREAS

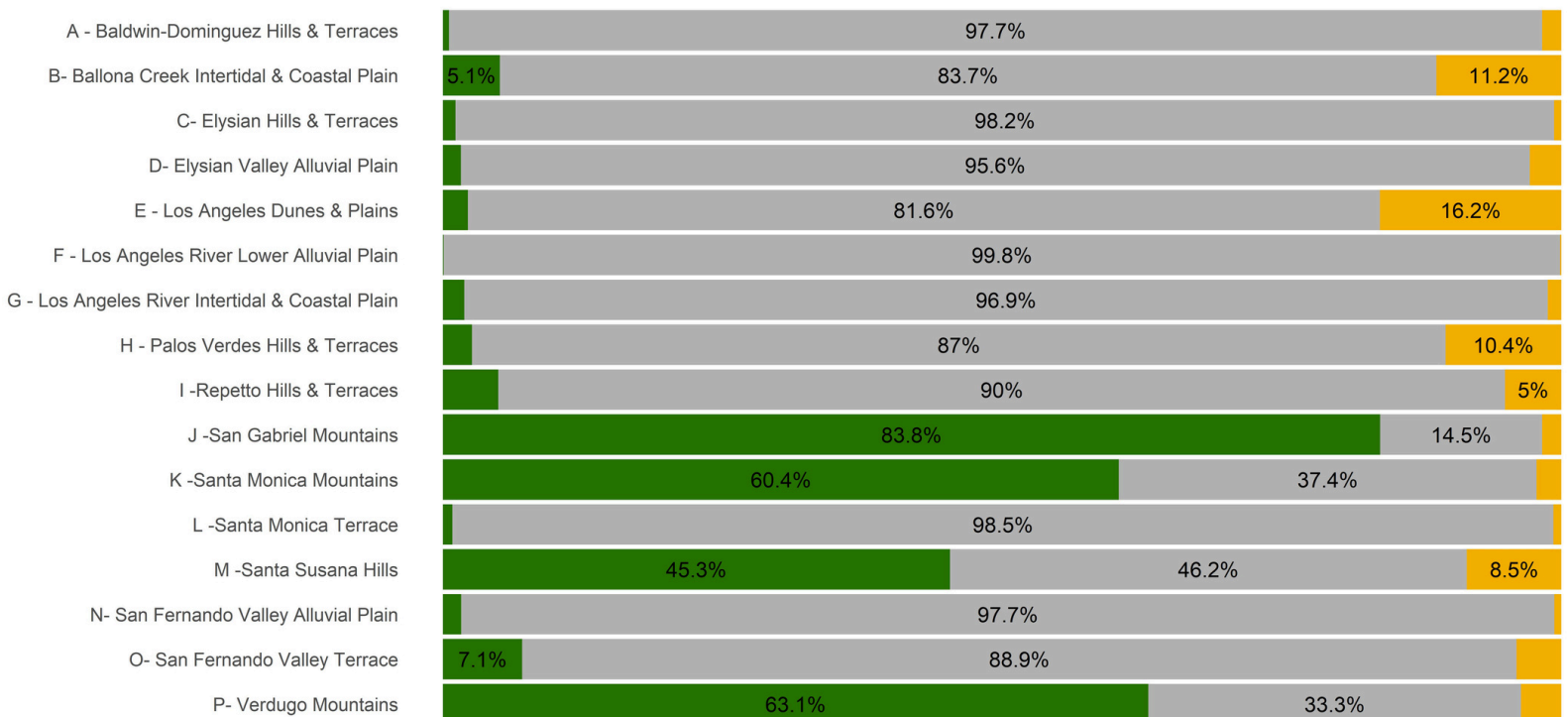
SCORE:

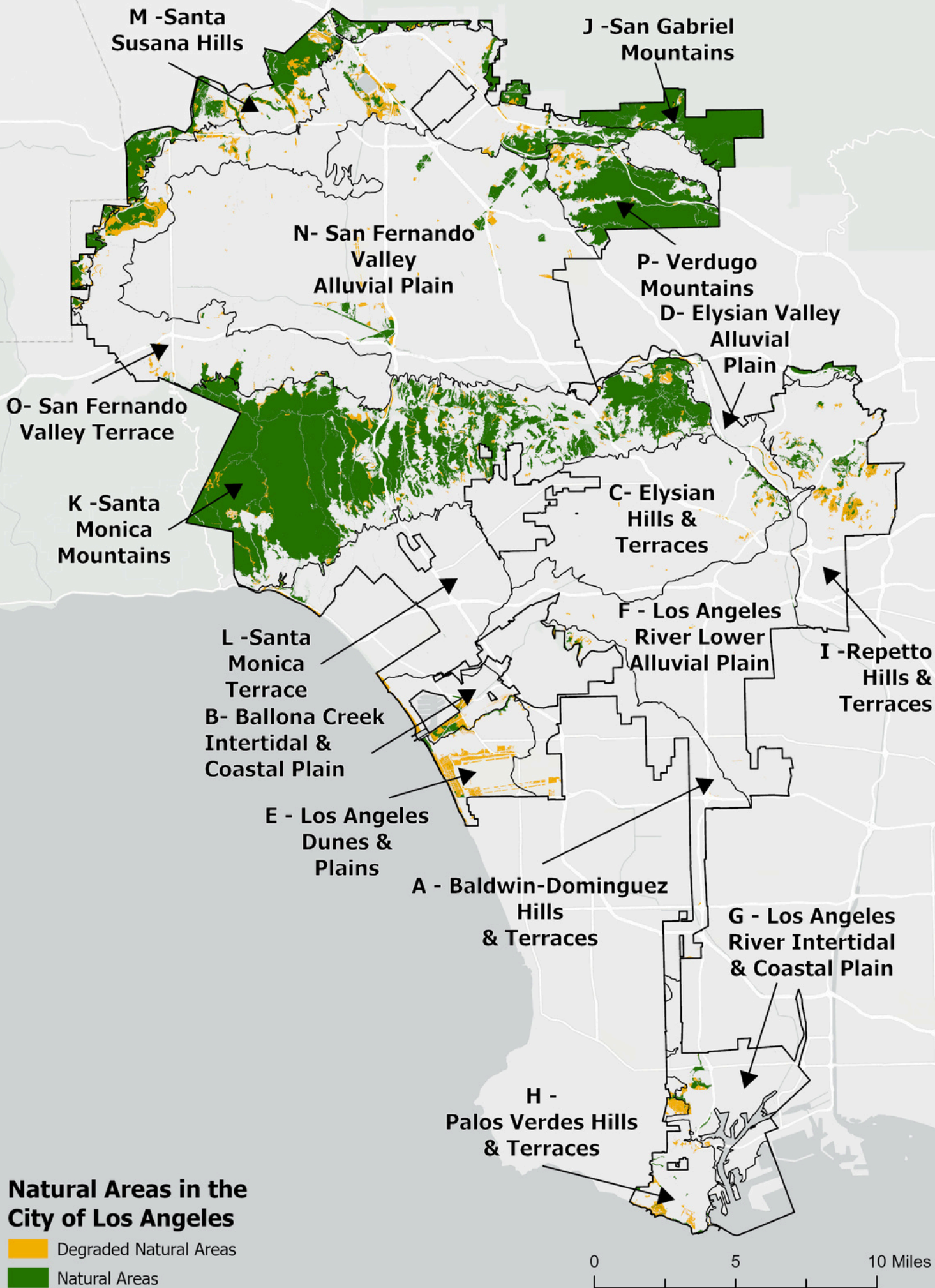
*

The baseline measurement for Metric 1.1a uses vegetation data from 2002, which was refined with land cover data from 2017 and iNaturalist native plant observations. In the baseline, 16.68% of the City is covered by natural areas, and 2.55% of the City is covered by degraded natural areas. The majority of ecotopes have a very small % of natural areas, and the overall City-wide percentage is inflated by a few ecotopes with high coverage, emphasizing the inequitable distribution of natural areas. To begin comparing the baseline to more recent conditions, changes in natural areas from the baseline to 2020 were manually determined with aerial imagery at 200 randomly sampled sites across the City, and there was not a statistically significant change in the percentage of natural areas ($p = 0.885$). This result suggests that the % of natural areas City-wide in 2020 is unlikely to have changed significantly from the baseline; however, updated spatial data is still very necessary in order to determine local trends and the exact coverage of natural areas currently in the City. Since the baseline, a variety of factors, such as increased development and construction; degradation of natural areas through the effects of the spread of invasive species, wildfire, pollution, and more; and poor stewardship can result in losses of natural areas. Similarly, gains in natural areas, such as through restoration activities, are also not measured since the baseline. Some natural areas are also certainly present within degraded natural and developed areas and are not captured by the baseline. As such, it is absolutely essential that updated vegetation alliance spatial data are produced in order to be able to accurately assess natural areas for present conditions. Because of this, no score is assigned to this metric.

Natural Area Coverage by Ecotope

■ Natural ■ Developed ■ Degraded Natural





1.1b

NATURALNESS OF URBAN LANDSCAPES & OPEN SPACE

SCORE:

*

Metric 1.1b was not quantitatively assessed due to data limitations. The natural area and landscape coverage datasets are outdated, containing data collected from as early as 2002, and as such cannot measure the current status of the naturalness of urban landscapes. While there are initiatives to restore natural areas and expand landscape coverage in the City, further degradation of existing natural areas through factors like the spread of invasive species, wildfire, and pollution; loss of landscape coverage through a lack of stewardship, drought, and other causes; and fragmentation of existing patches of vegetation through development all can result in decreases in naturalness across the City. In order to be able to comprehensively assess the status of naturalness across the City and detect potential changes in this metric, updated vegetation mapping and landscape coverage data are absolutely necessary. As such, no score is assigned for this metric.



Sepulveda Basin
(Photo: Nurit Katz)

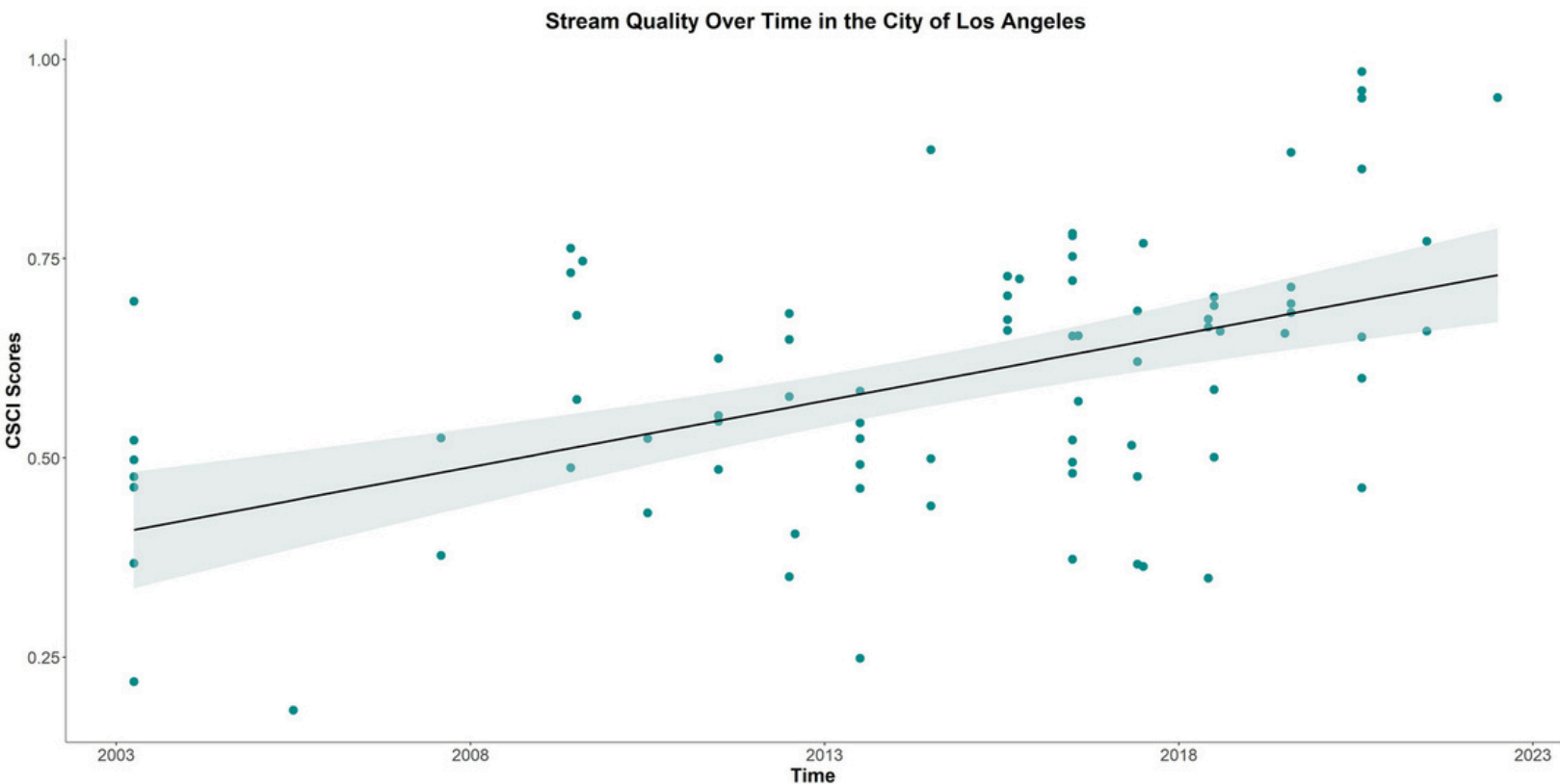
1.1c

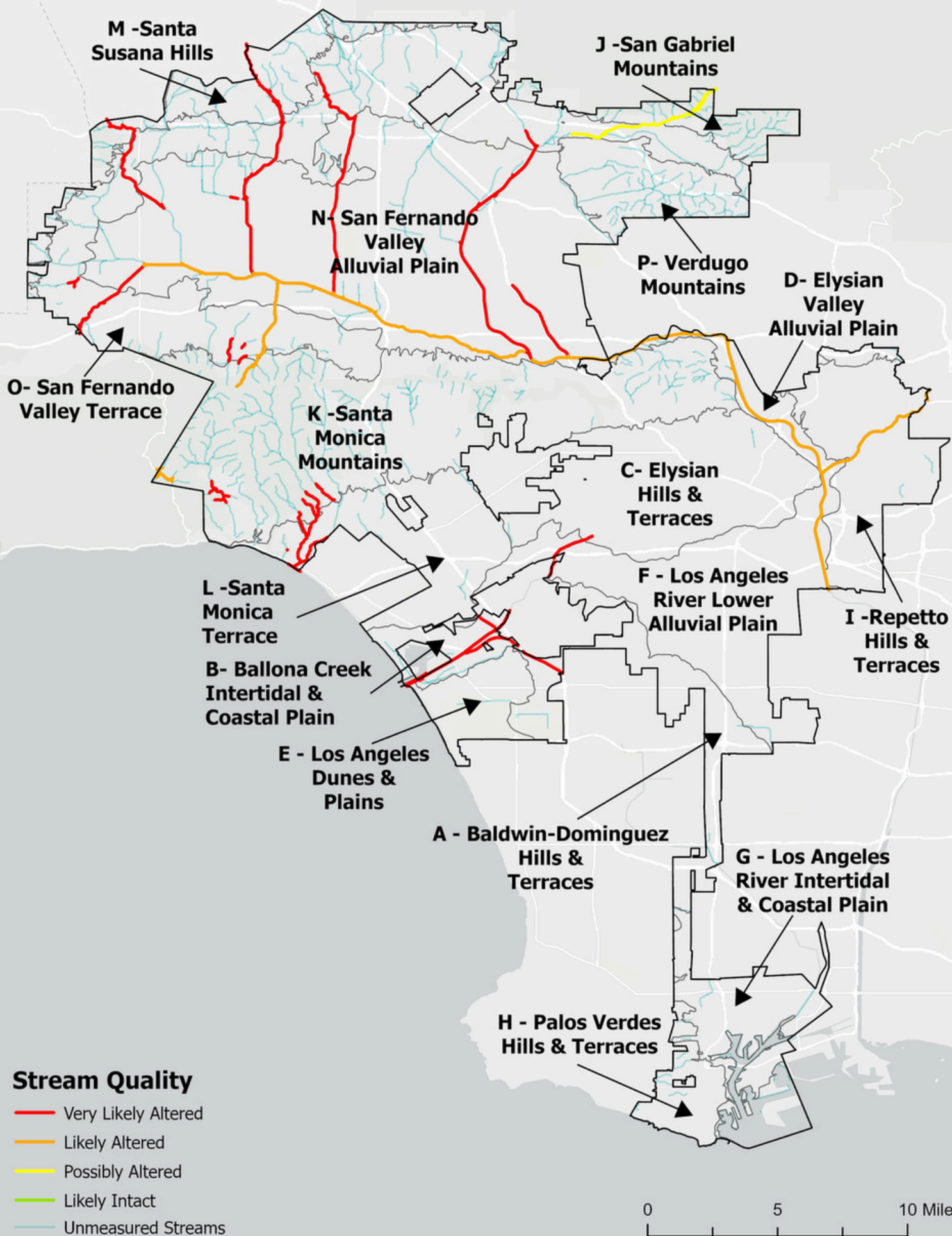
HABITAT QUALITY OF STREAMS

SCORE:

*

Metric 1.1c was assessed by using a model of California Stream Condition Index (CSCI) scores from 2003 - 2022 in order to determine how stream quality has changed in the past. When controlling for the location the data is collected from as a confounding variable, there is a statistically significant improvement in stream quality over time ($p = 5.31e-5$). However, data only extends until 2022, and the model relies heavily on CSCI data well before present conditions. Despite there being a measured improvement in stream quality over time in the past, it is uncertain if this trend will continue into the present. In order to comprehensively assess the status of stream habitat quality, CSCI or other similar stream quality metrics must be collected at regular intervals at the same locations. While substantial efforts are being advanced, other factors like the spread of invasive species, runoff and pollution, and hydrological variability from drought and flooding threaten the quality of streams in the City. Until regularized stream quality data are collected, it will not be possible to fully assess the current status of stream quality in the City. As such, no score is assigned for this metric.





1.1d

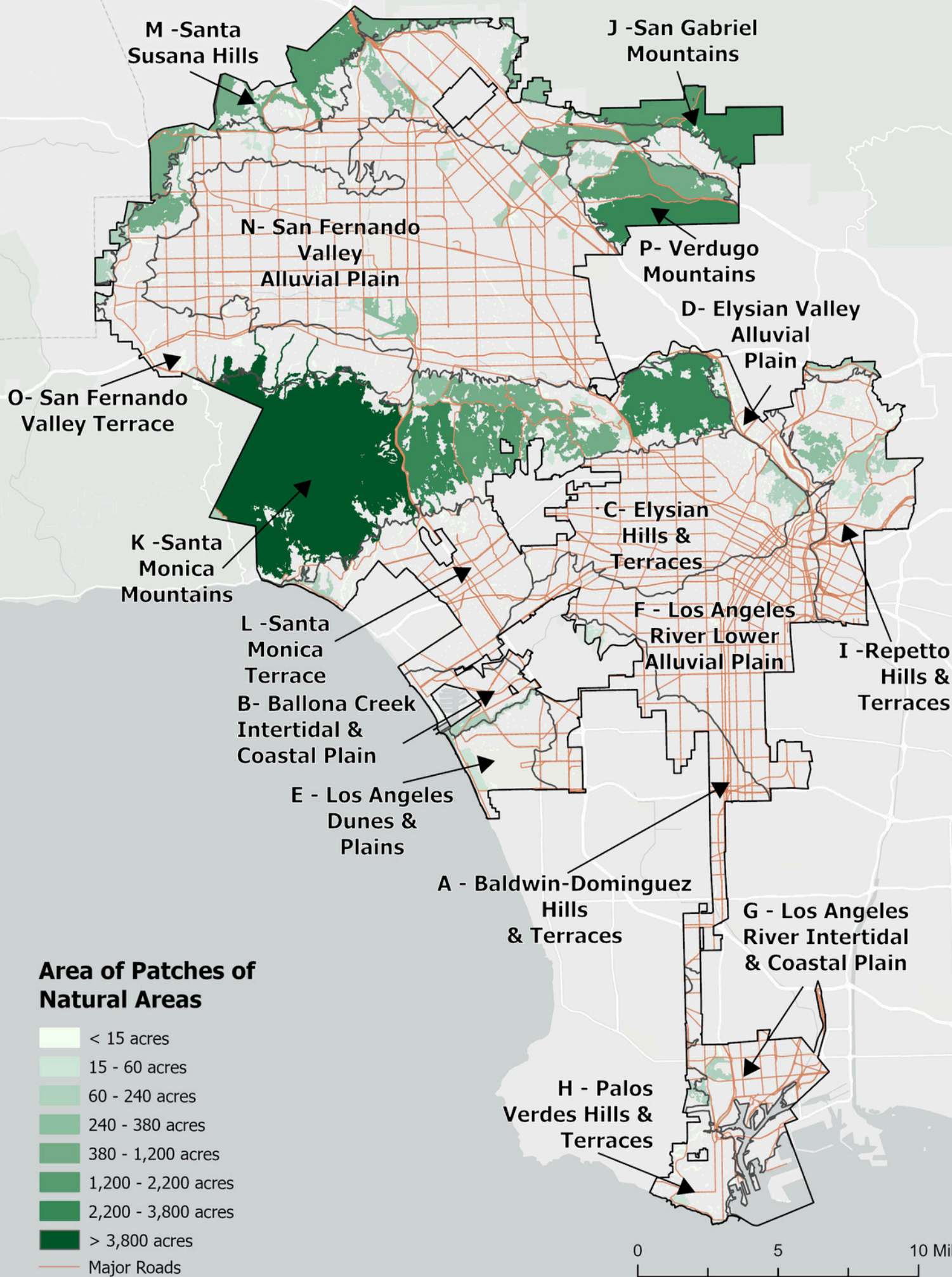
CONNECTIVITY OF NATURAL AREAS

SCORE: *

Metric 1.1d was assessed by calculating the effective mesh size, a way to measure how well connected patches of natural areas are, using the baseline natural areas measurement created for Metric 1.1a. Using this baseline, the effective mesh size was 1,317.20 acres. Additionally, there was not a statistically significant difference in the percentage of natural areas between the baseline and 2020, suggesting that these results are accurate through 2020 unless substantial fragmentation has occurred. However, because there is not an updated measurement of natural area coverage across the City, this metric cannot be accurately assessed for current conditions. While restoration and connectivity efforts are in place, the risk of development that further fragments and shrinks the areas of patches, as well as the degradation of natural areas from factors like the spread of invasive species and wildfire, threatens the City's essential network of natural areas. As such, no score is assigned for this metric.



405 freeway in the Santa Monica Mountains
(Photo: Kat Superfisky)



1.1e

CONNECTIVITY OF URBAN LANDSCAPES AND OPEN SPACE

SCORE:

*

Metric 1.1e was not assessed because the input data, the results of Metric 1.1b, could not be updated due to data limitations. Furthermore, terrestrial connectivity across the City will be comprehensively measured with refined methodology as part of the South LA County Habitat Connectivity Masterplan, which is funded through the State of California Wildlife Conservation Board and the Wildlife Conservation Network and led by the Resource Conservation District of the Santa Monica Mountains. As discussed with Metric 1.1b, ongoing efforts to enhance the naturalness of the City are ongoing, but numerous factors simultaneously threaten connectivity. In order to properly assess the status of connectivity in the City, it is essential to support the South LA County Habitat Connectivity Masterplan and regularize the production of vegetation and landscape coverage data. As such, no score is assigned for this metric.



Los Angeles' landscape
(Photo: Kat Superfisky)

1.1f

CONNECTIVITY OF STREAMS AND RIPARIAN AREAS

SCORE: *

Metric 1.1f was not assessed because stream and riparian connectivity across the City will be comprehensively measured with refined methodology as part of the South LA County Habitat Connectivity Masterplan, which is funded through the State of California Wildlife Conservation Board and the Wildlife Conservation Network and led by the Resource Conservation District of the Santa Monica Mountains. There are currently substantial efforts directed towards improving streams and rivers within the City, particularly for highly channelized features like the LA River, although these initiatives have largely not been fully implemented yet. There are currently dozens of active projects on the LA River, such as improvements to the LA River within Sepulveda Basin and wetland construction at the Bowtie Parcel. However, other potential factors, such as degradation of stream naturalness threatens to decrease connectivity. The results of the Connectivity Masterplan should be looked to in order to inform actions to enhance stream and riparian connectivity. As such, this metric is assigned no score.



Los Angeles River
(Photo: Brooke Borders)

1.2a

PRESENCE OF CHARISMATIC UMBRELLA SPECIES IN NATURAL AREAS

SCORE: —

Metric 1.2a was assessed through calculating the average number of charismatic umbrella species present within patches of natural area between 2018-2020 and 2021-2023. After normalizing data, the average number of charismatic umbrella species within natural areas decreased from 5.87 species to 5.78 species, although this result is not statistically significant ($p = 0.72$). This result suggests that there has not been a significant change in this metric since the baseline. As such, this metric is assigned a score of no change detected.



Great horned owls
(Photo: Nurit Katz)

1.2b

NATIVE SPECIES PRESENCE IN URBAN AREAS

SCORE:

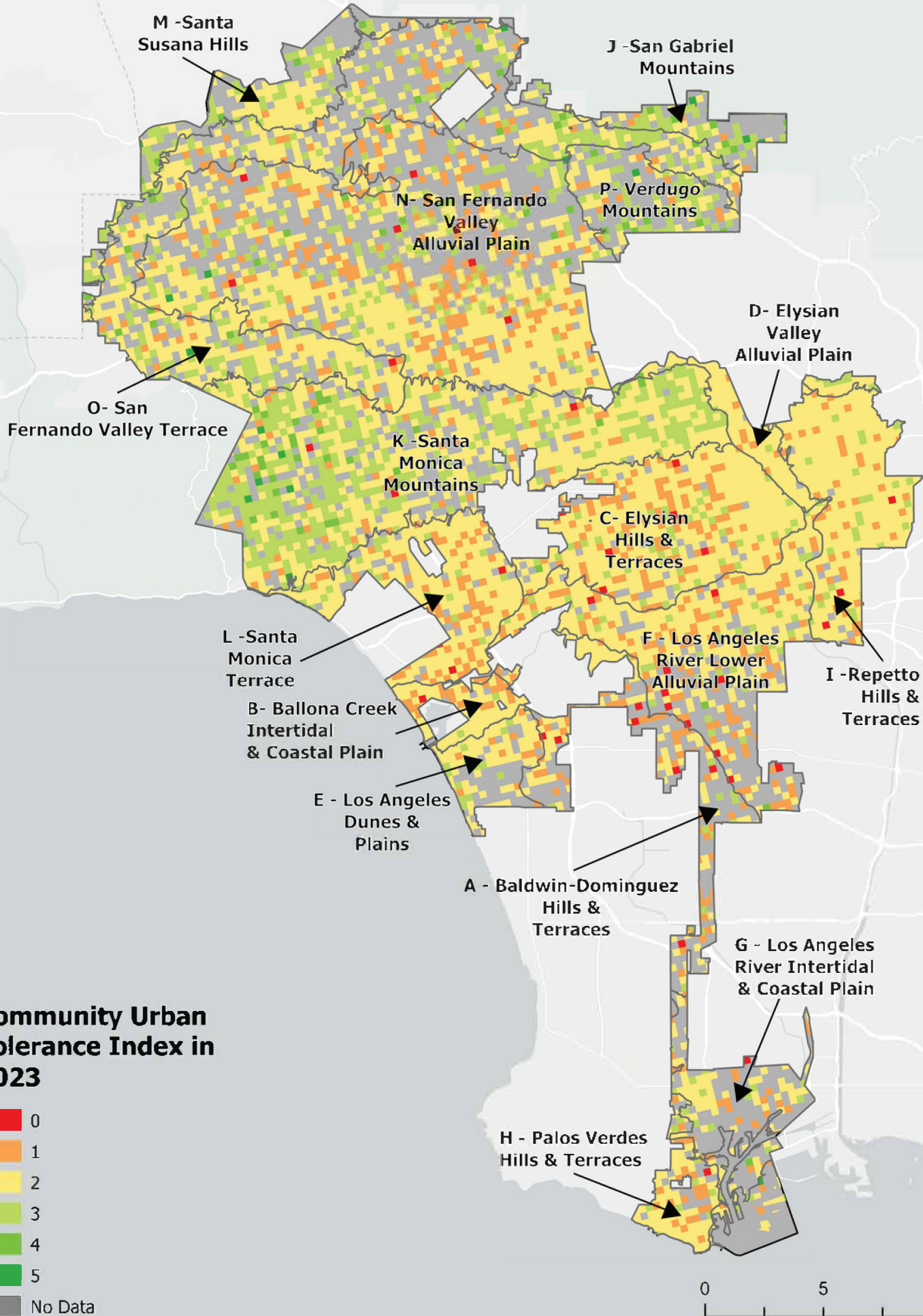
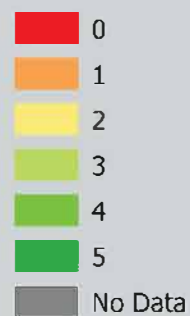


Metric 1.2b was assessed by calculating the average Community Urban Tolerance Index (CUTI) for the City, a metric that represents the urban tolerance of native species. The CUTI was evaluated on a scale of 0 - 5, and a higher average CUTI would demonstrate an improvement in the ability of the City to support native species. From 2020 to 2023, the average score across the City increased from 2.01 to 2.06, indicating a very small improvement in this metric. Pooling scores by ecotopes showed slight changes in the average CUTI overall, with the largest positive change seen in the Elysian Hills & Terraces. As such, this metric receives a positive score, although the improvement is marginal and needs future measurements to establish a trend.

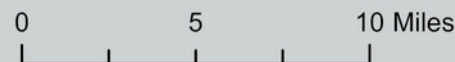
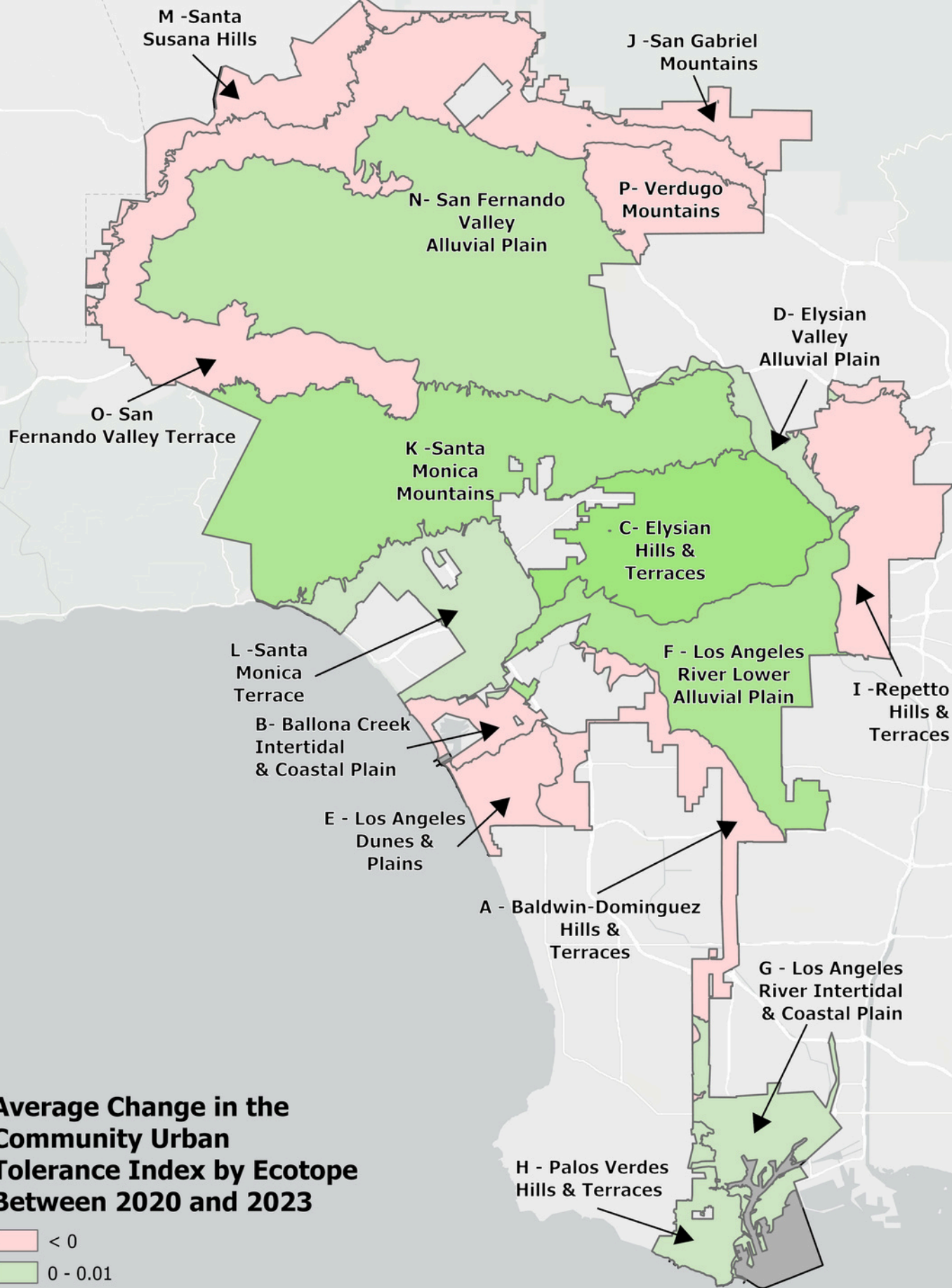
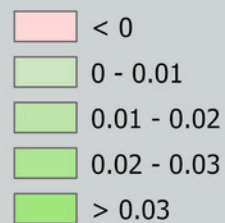


Desert cottontail
(Photo: Rosalind Helfand)

Community Urban Tolerance Index in 2023



Average Change in the Community Urban Tolerance Index by Ecotope Between 2020 and 2023



1.2c

SPECIES OF CONSERVATION CONCERN GAINED OR LOST

SCORE:

*

Metric 1.2c was not fully assessed due to the lack of a formal monitoring plan capable of detecting the presence of most species of conservation concern within the City. Based on records submitted to iNaturalist and the California Natural Diversity Database (CNDDDB), 62 species were detected within the City of LA from 2021-2023. However, the status for the other species of conservation is unknown; because these species are difficult to detect, a lack of observations does not necessarily indicate an absence of the species within the City. Additionally, the locations of most species of conservation concern are automatically obscured within the iNaturalist database, contributing towards species of conservation concern being particularly difficult to detect through community science activities. Factors such as increased development, degradation of natural areas through wildfire and the spread of invasive species, pollution, and climate change threaten sensitive species, although it is not possible with current data to detect if any of these factors have resulted in species being lost within the City. The inability to properly assess the status of these species highlights how essential a formal monitoring plan is in order to be able to best conserve these species within the City. As such, no score is assigned for this metric.



Cooper's hawk
(Photo: Rosalind Helfand)

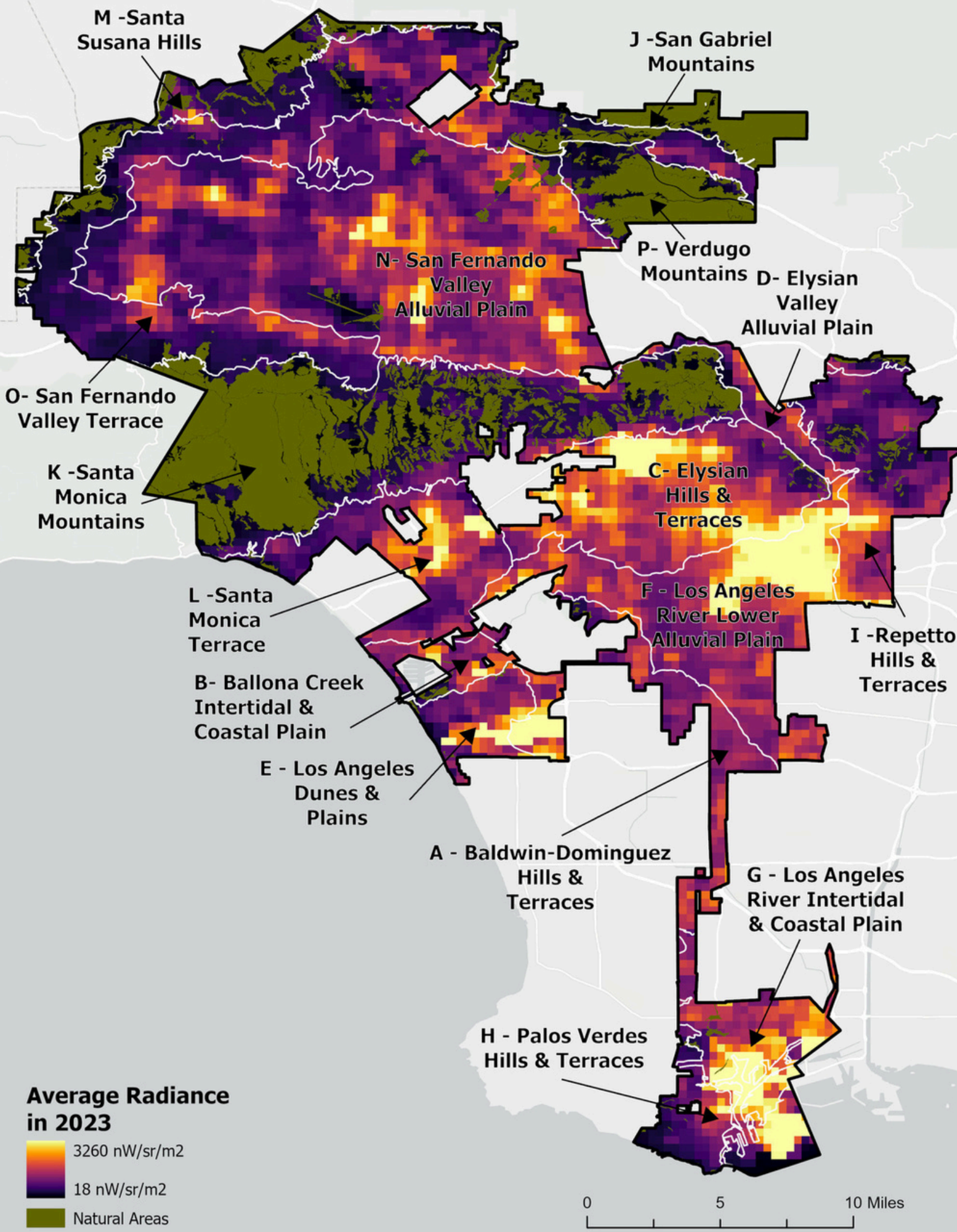
1.3a URBAN EDGE EFFECTS ON NATURAL AREAS

SCORE: 

Metric 1.3a was assessed by comparing radiance, a way to quantify light pollution levels, between 2020 and 2023 within ½ mile of natural area patches of at least 3 acres. The average radiance around these patches of natural areas increased from 282.59 nanoWatt/steradian/square meter (nW/sr/m2) in 2020 to 288.11 nW/sr/m2 in 2023. While small, this increase indicates that light pollution near the edges of natural areas has worsened. As such, a negative score is assigned to this metric.



Sepulveda Basin Wildlife Reserve at sunset
(Photo: Nurit Katz)



1.3b

PRESENCE AND SPREAD OF INVASIVE PLANTS

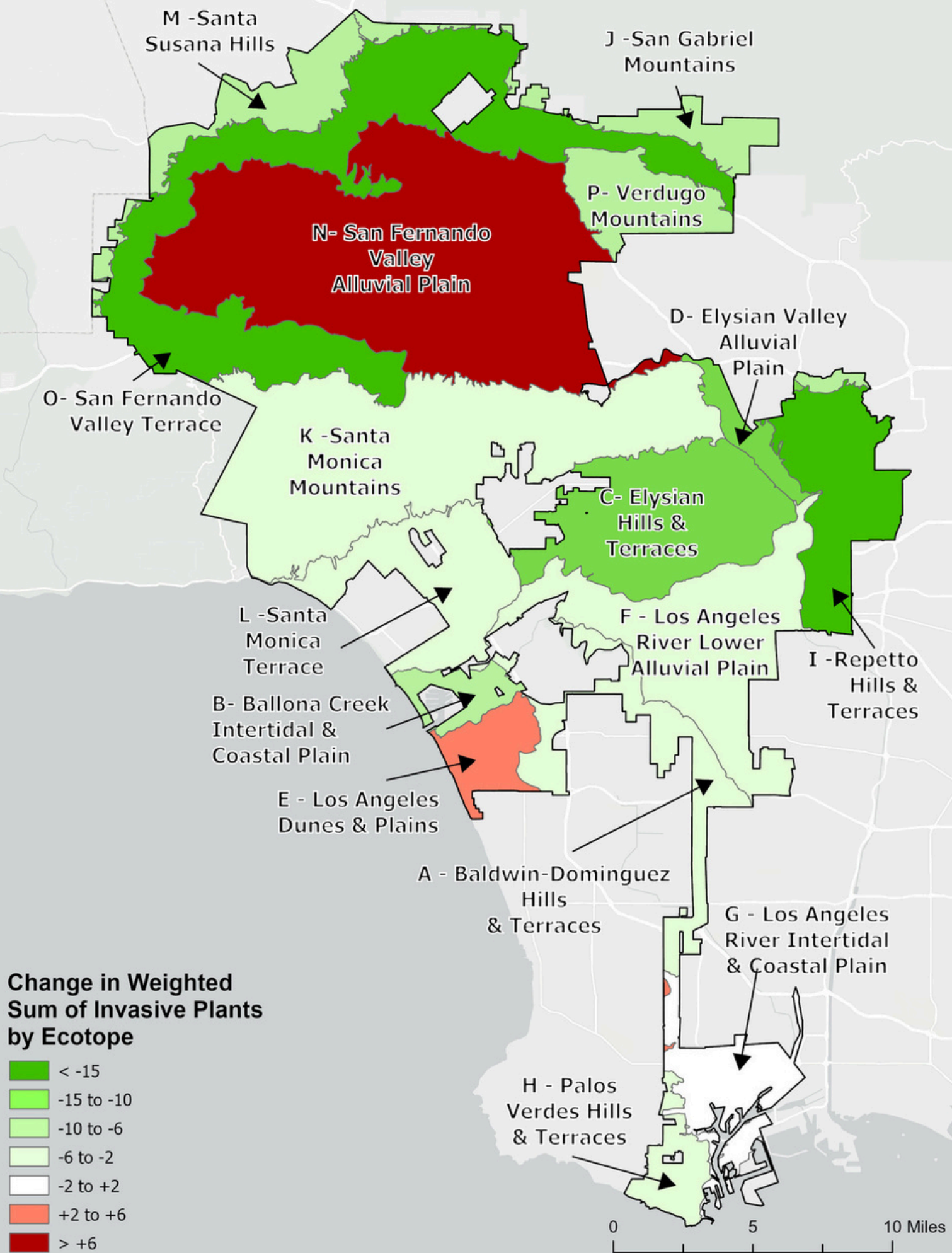
SCORE:

*

Metric 1.3b was assessed partially by evaluating species richness of invasive plants through CalFlora observations across the City for 2021-2023 compared to 2018-2020. Each invasive plant was assigned a value using CAL-IPC rankings, with higher values corresponding to more harmful species. An overall score indicating the change in the richness of invasive species was calculated for each ecotope and weighted based on the harmfulness of species observed. 14 out of 16 ecotopes had a reduction in the weighted species richness of invasive plants, with the San Fernando Valley Alluvial Plain and the Los Angeles Dunes & Plains being the only ecotopes with an increase in invasive species richness. However, observation data through CalFlora relies heavily on community science activities and is thus limited and unable to be used to detect the spread and intensity of invasive plants in the City, giving only an indication of the diversity of species within a given area. Key factors that affect the spread of invasive plants, such as changing fire regimes and limited invasive species management, influence the spread of invasive species. However, this is not captured by assessing species richness. In order to be able to assess the spread of invasive plants, a formal monitoring plan is needed in order to comprehensively assess the extent of invasive plants. Because spread is unable to be evaluated without formal monitoring, no score is assigned to this metric.



California poppy among invasive grasses
(Photo: Rosalind Helfand)



1.3c

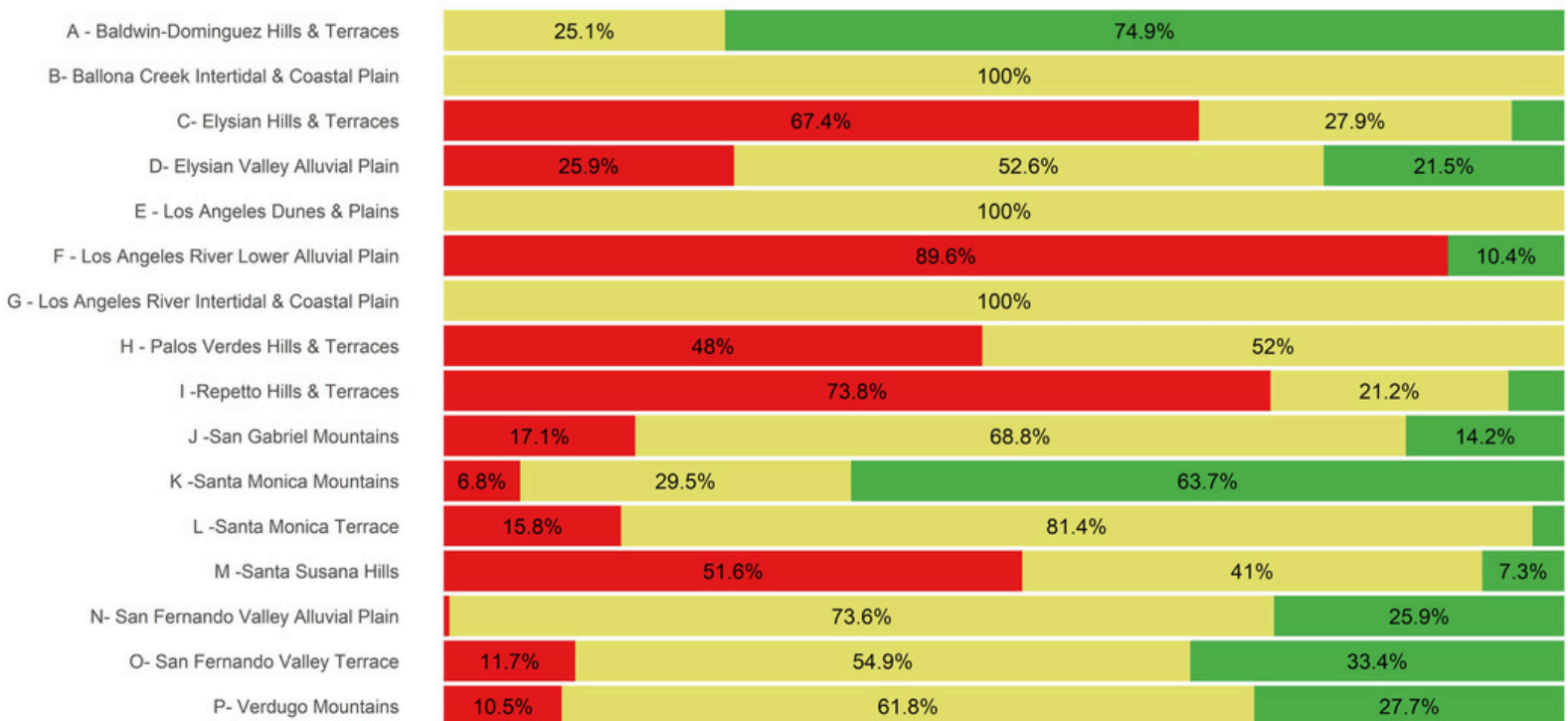
WILDFIRE FREQUENCY

SCORE: ↑ ↓

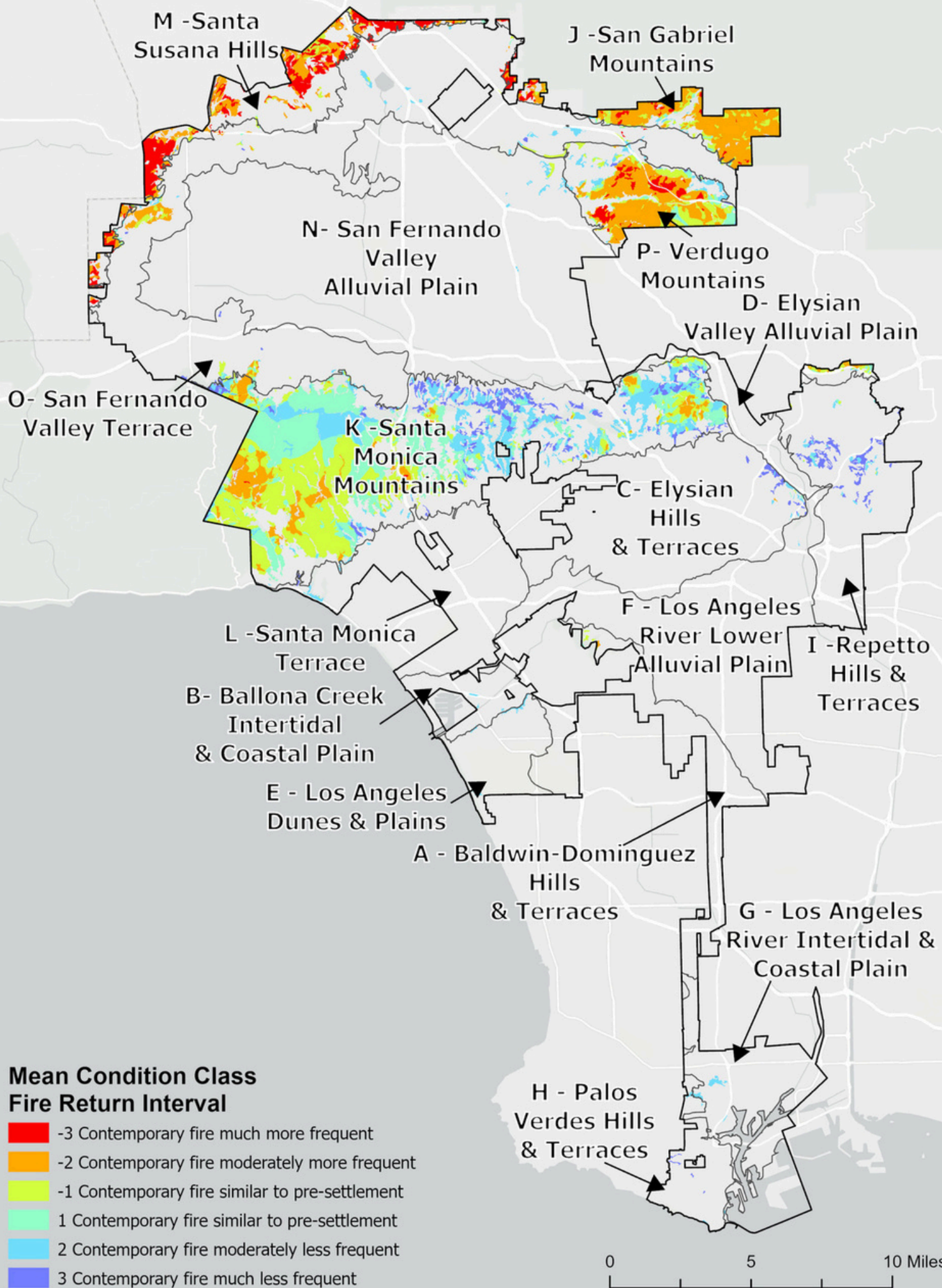
Metric 1.3c was assessed by comparing U.S. Forest Service Fire Return Interval Departure (FRID) data collected in 2022 to data collected in 2019. The dataset classifies each vegetation type susceptible to wildfire as severely departing from (red), moderately departing from (yellow), or being similar to wildfire conditions before LA was urbanized (green). Compared to 2019, there are 3.05% fewer areas with severe departure. At the same time, there are 7.75% more areas with moderate departure, which is accompanied by 4.71% fewer areas with conditions similar to historical wildfire frequencies. As such, there are fewer areas with severe departure, but there is also a loss in areas of similar conditions, resulting in a mixed score. The San Gabriel and Verdugo Mountains, as well as the Santa Susana Hills, have gotten closer to historical fire conditions whereas the other ecotopes have departed further from historical conditions, especially the Los Angeles Dunes & Plains and the Los Angeles River Intertidal & Coastal Plain.

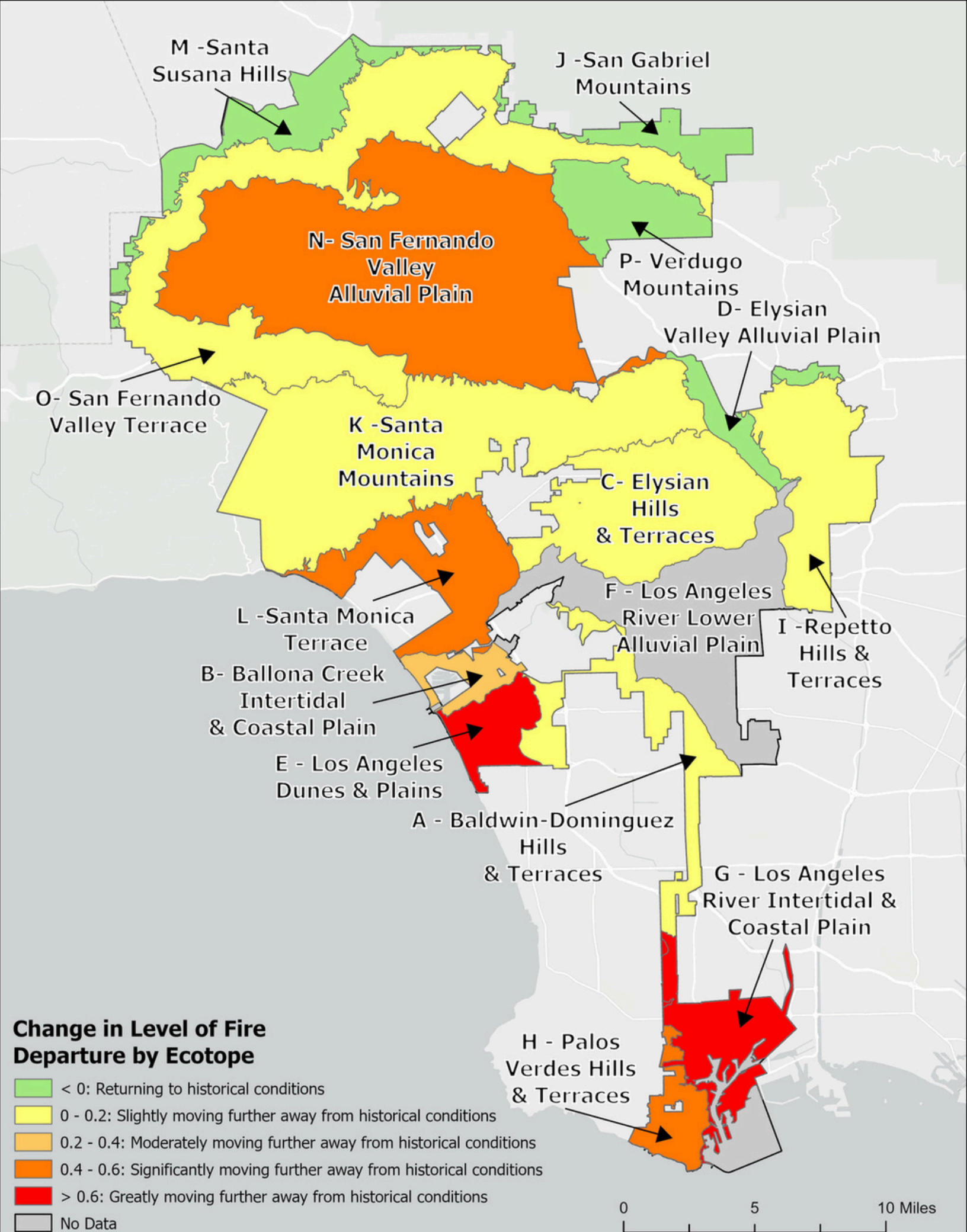
Mean Condition Class Fire Return Interval by Ecotope

■ -3 and 3 ■ -2 and 2 ■ -1 and 1



Tujunga Wash with orange sky from wildfire
(Photo: Rosalind Helfand)





THEME 2:

SOCIAL EQUITY CONSIDERATIONS



View of Downtown LA from Griffith Park; invasive mustard in foreground
(Photo: Lily Carlson)

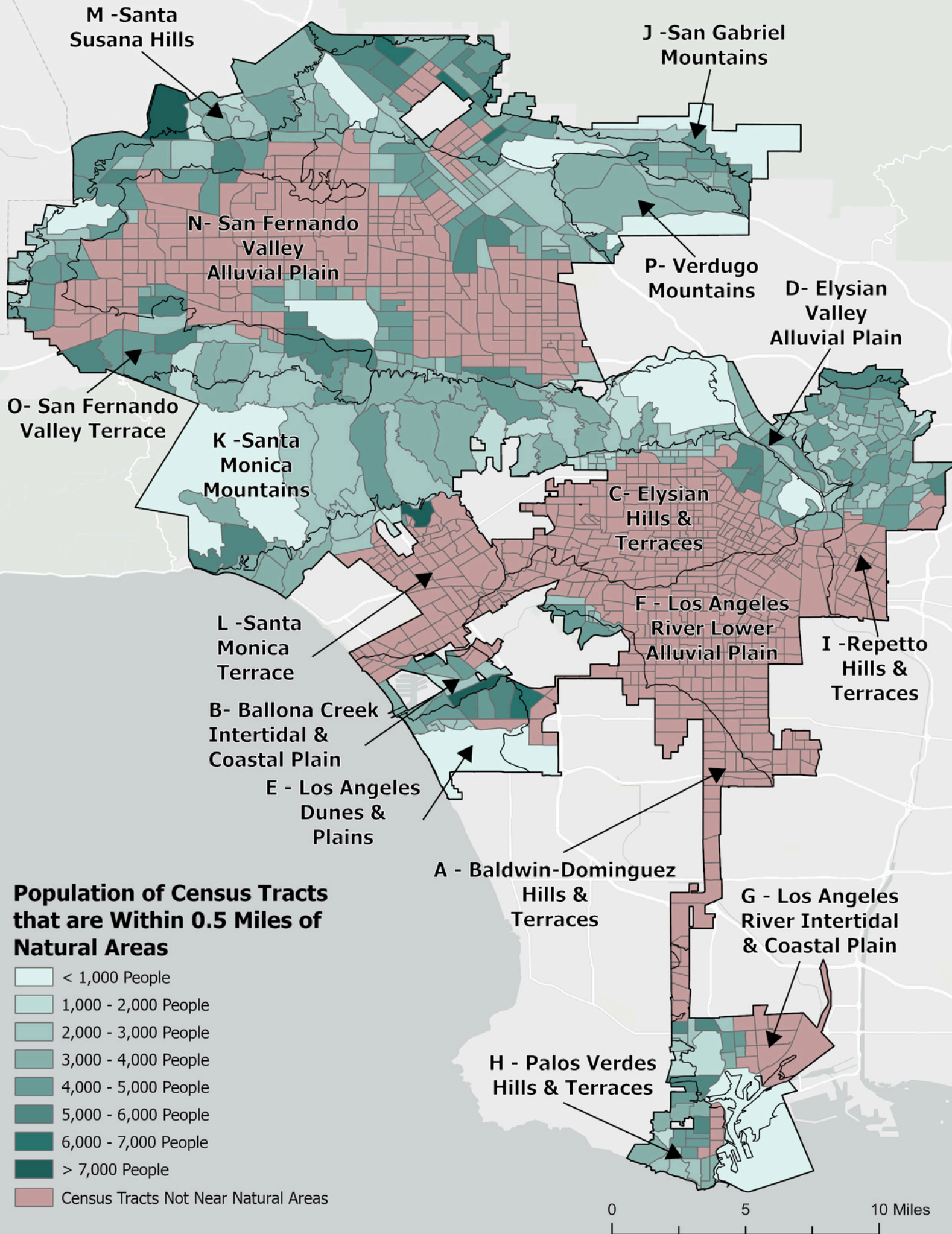
2.1a

ACCESS TO NATURAL AREAS SCORE: *

Metric 2.1a was assessed by evaluating the census tracts that fall within the City that are within ½ mile of a patch of natural area of at least 3 acres, and the percentage of the population of census tracts within the City that have access to natural areas was calculated. The baseline measurement from Metric 1.1a was utilized to determine the coverage of natural areas in the City. Using this baseline, 32.05% of the City’s population is estimated to have access to a natural area. However, the baseline measurement of natural areas is very outdated, as indicated in Metric 1.1a. In order for access to natural areas to be comprehensively assessed for current conditions, updated spatial data that maps vegetation alliances must be produced to accurately detect where natural areas are located. Additionally, access to natural areas has other key factors beyond direct proximity—such as the effectiveness and availability of transportation to natural areas, whether the natural areas are accessible to the public, and population density—which are not measured here. As such, this metric is not assigned a score.



Serrania Park
(Photo: Lily Carlson)



2.1b

NEIGHBORHOOD LANDSCAPE / TREE CANOPY FOOTPRINT

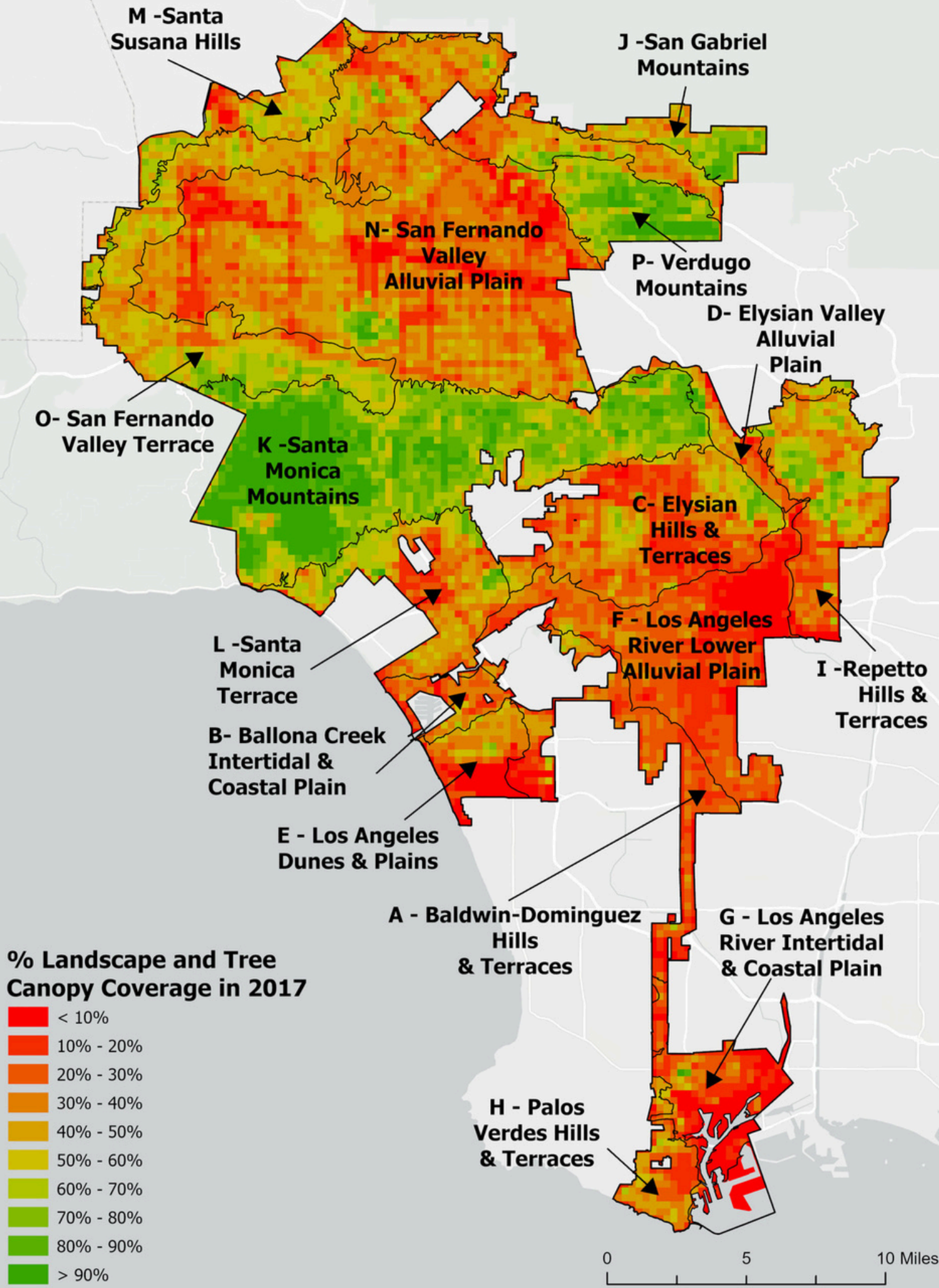
SCORE:

*

Metric 2.1b was assessed by calculating the total coverage of tree canopy, grasses and shrubs, and tall shrubs across the City for 2017. 2017 was the year with the most recent data available, and the percentage of the City covered by these landscape types overall was 40.71%. Additionally, multiple groups are working within the City to increase tree canopy coverage. LA Sanitation and Environment's Street Tree Planting Program planted 7,009 trees, StreetsLA planted 5,761 trees, and Recreation and Parks planted 1,368 in parks between 2020 and 2023. However, losses in tree canopy and landscape coverage due to construction, drought, and other factors significantly threaten both newly planted trees and existing trees. Because the most recent data available is from 2017, it is not possible to ascertain the current status of landscape coverage across the City. As such, no score is assigned to this metric.



Los Angeles Skyline
(Photo: Kat Superfisky)



2.2a

SCHOOL (K-12) BIODIVERSITY TOPICS

SCORE: ↑

Metric 2.2a was assessed by evaluating California Next Generation Science Standards (CA NGSS) and their compliance within Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) schools, the implementation of CA NGSS into school curricula, and the status of additional biodiversity initiatives that go beyond what is required by the CA NGSS. The CA NGSS have not been substantially changed since their adoption in 2013, and LAUSD affirms that all schools have remained compliant with the standards. While the CA NGSS haven't changed, certain evidence suggests an improvement in implementing the standards and additional biodiversity initiatives. WestEd, with partners UCLA and LASAN, was awarded a National Science Foundation grant to include biodiversity topics in curricula, expand biodiversity education, and enhance implementation of the CA NGSS in intermediate schools (6th-8th grades). Additionally, LAUSD provides comprehensive materials, guides, and lesson plans for biodiversity-relevant standards. As noted in Metric 2.2b, there has been a substantial increase in biodiversity educational visits, suggesting an improvement to additional education initiatives as well. However, exact implementation of the CA NGSS and additional biodiversity initiatives is difficult to definitively determine without a comprehensive survey of LAUSD teachers and Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Math (STEAM) coordinators, highlighting the need for additional data for a more detailed assessment. As such, this metric is assigned a positive score.



Giant keyhole limpet
(Photo: Rosalind Helfand)

2.2b

OFF-CAMPUS BIODIVERSITY EDUCATIONAL VISITS

SCORE:



Metric 2.2b was assessed by evaluating changes in formal biodiversity educational visits from 2018-2020 to 2021-2023. These visits are tracked by the LAUSD Office of Outdoor and Environmental Education, which indicated a substantial increase in biodiversity educational visits but was unable to quantify the exact change due to data privacy limitations for this report. As such, a positive score is assigned for this metric.



LA River with mountains
(Photo: Rosalind Helfand)

2.2c

CAMPUS NATURE EDUCATION GARDENS

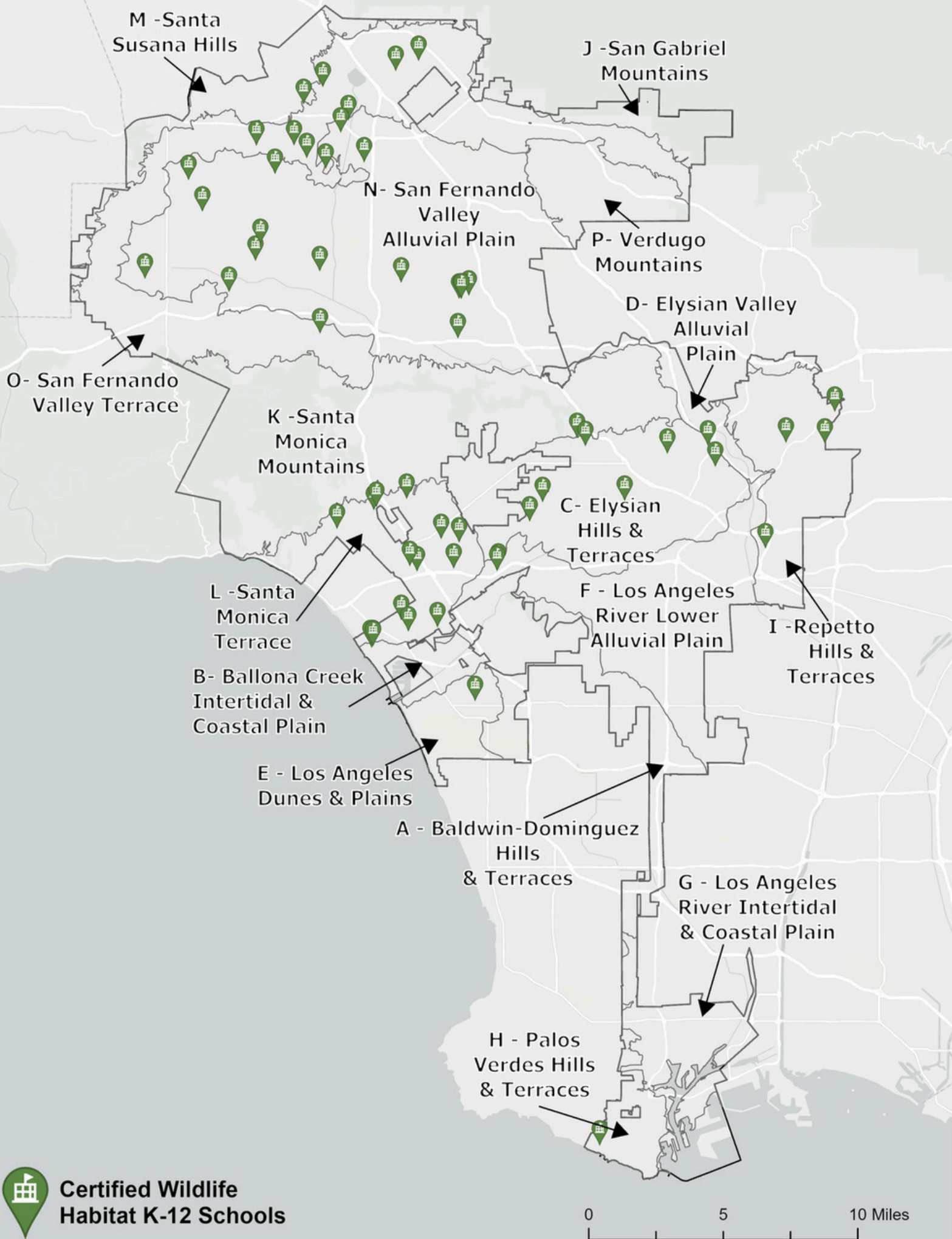
SCORE: *

Metric 2.2c was assessed by evaluating new National Wildlife Federation (NWF) Certified Wildlife Habitat K-12 schools within the City of Los Angeles from 2021-2023 due to a lack of other reliable datasets that accurately assess the presence of high-quality biodiversity elements in campus gardens. 11 schools were certified from 2021-2023, and 65 schools in total are certified within the City. Additionally, more schools are certified each year, suggesting an improvement in biodiversity elements in campus nature education gardens. Certified schools are particularly abundant in the San Fernando Valley Terrace and the Santa Monica Terrace while more environmentally disadvantaged ecotopes, such as the Los Angeles River Lower Alluvial Plain and the Los Angeles River Intertidal & Coastal Plain, have very few to no certified schools. While this is an increase, it is a very small fraction of K-12 schools, indicating limited engagement with the certification process. Additionally, NWF certifications do not consider the maintenance of these gardens. Because there is no comprehensive survey that assesses education gardens on school campuses, no score is assigned for this metric.

Number of New Certified Wildlife Habitat Schools per Year in the City of LA in 2018-2023



Cabbage white butterfly at Sage Hill
(Photo: Nurit Katz)



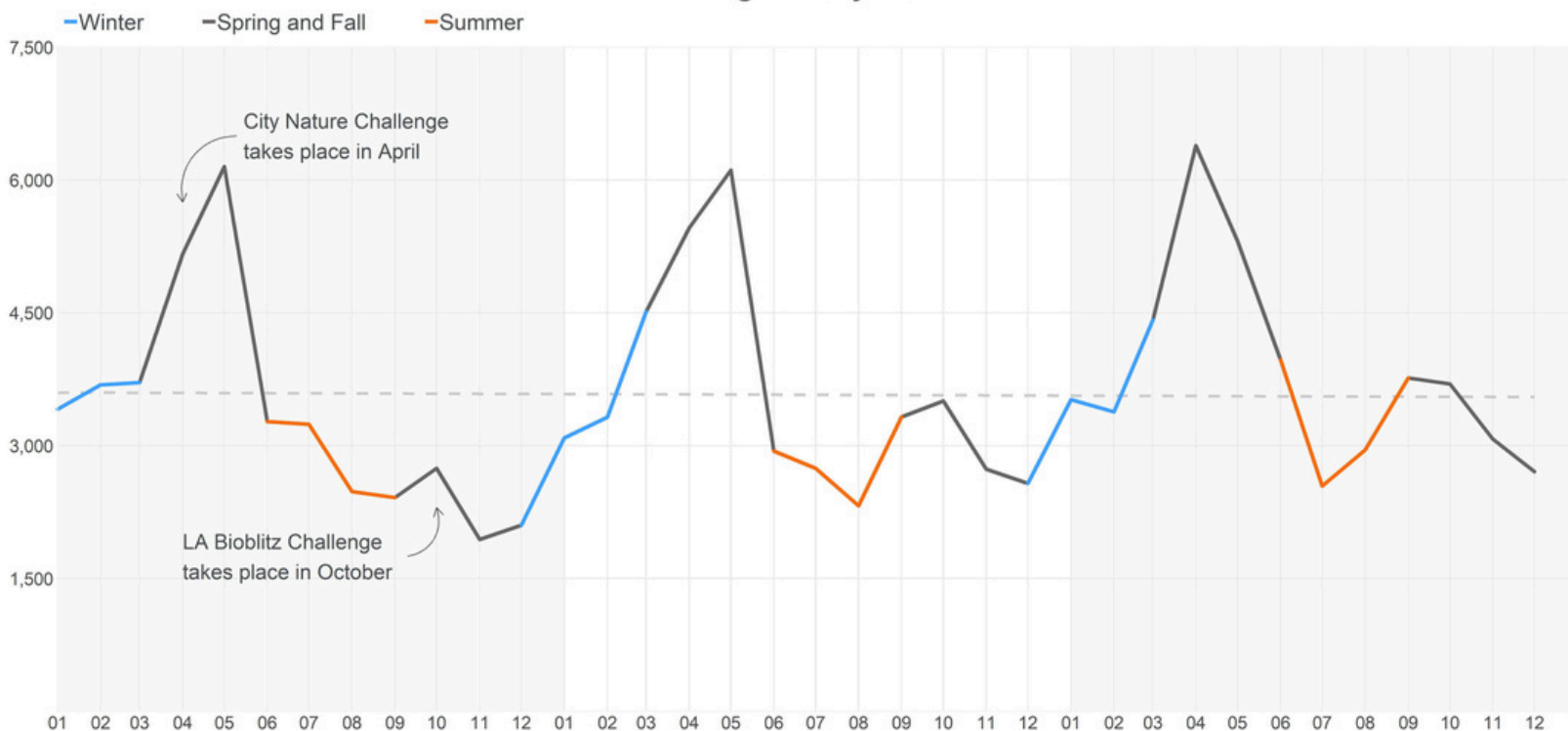
2.3a

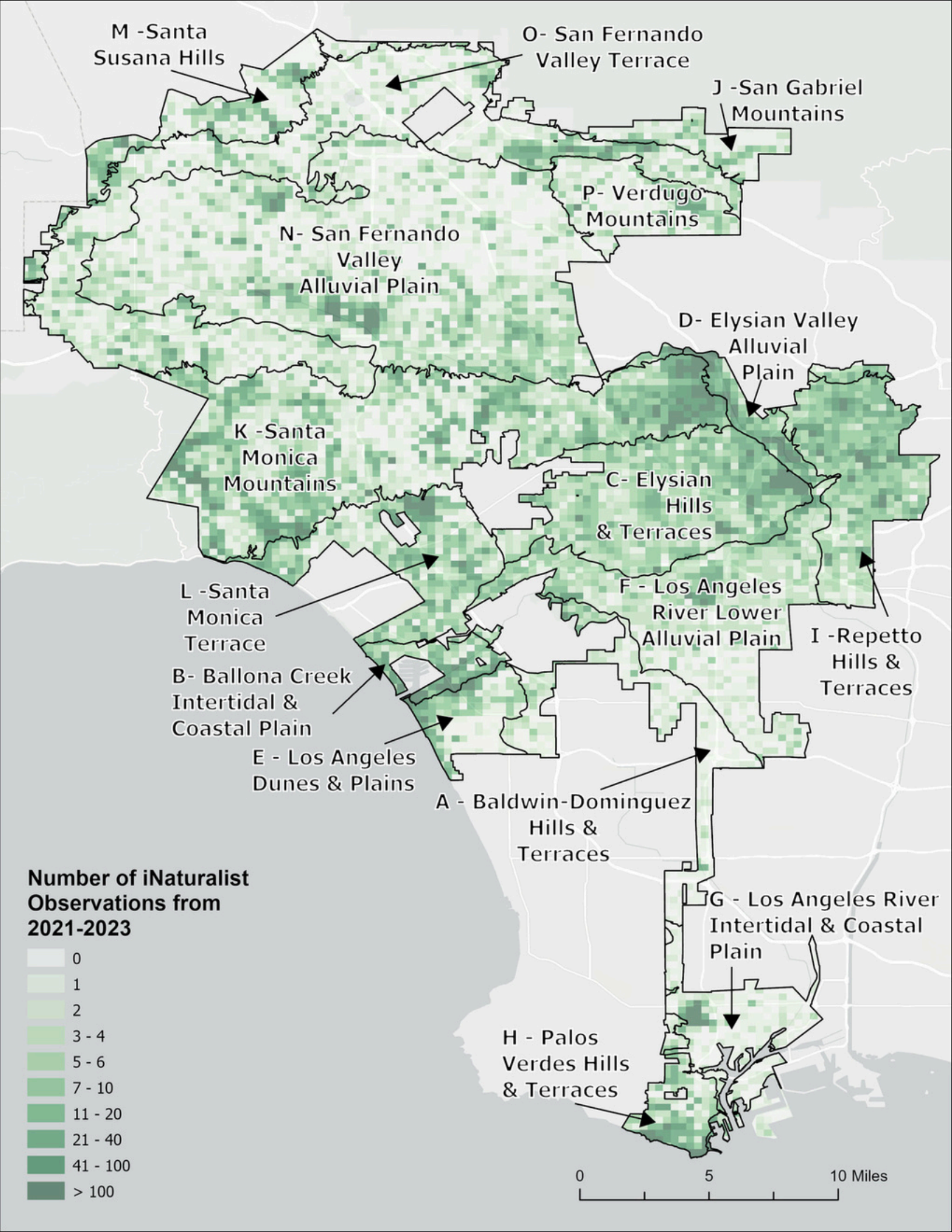
COMMUNITY SCIENTIST ACTIVITIES AND APP UTILIZATION

SCORE: ↑

Metric 2.3a was assessed by measuring the number of iNaturalist observations over time. When scaled for the population loss observed in the City from 2019 to 2023, there was an increase of 63.95% in observations from 2018-2020 to 2021-2023, resulting in a positive score for this metric. Observations are clustered in ecotopes with accessible natural areas like the Elysian Valley Alluvial Plain, and cold spots are present in highly urban ecotopes like the Baldwin-Dominguez Hills & Terraces and in highly natural, but inaccessible, ecotopes like the San Gabriel Mountains. There is a large peak in observations associated with the City Nature Challenge in April and a smaller peak associated with the LA BioBlitz Challenge in October.

Number of iNaturalist Observations made in Los Angeles City in 2021-2023





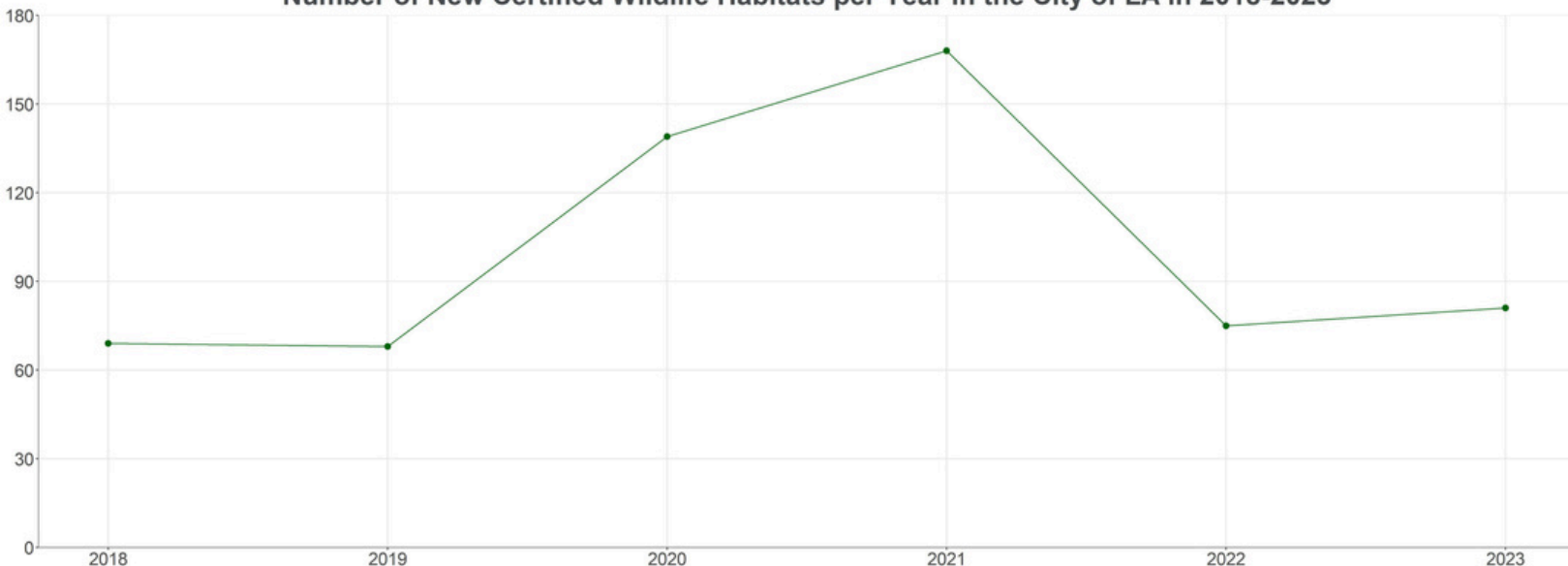
2.3b

CERTIFIED BIODIVERSITY-FRIENDLY AREAS

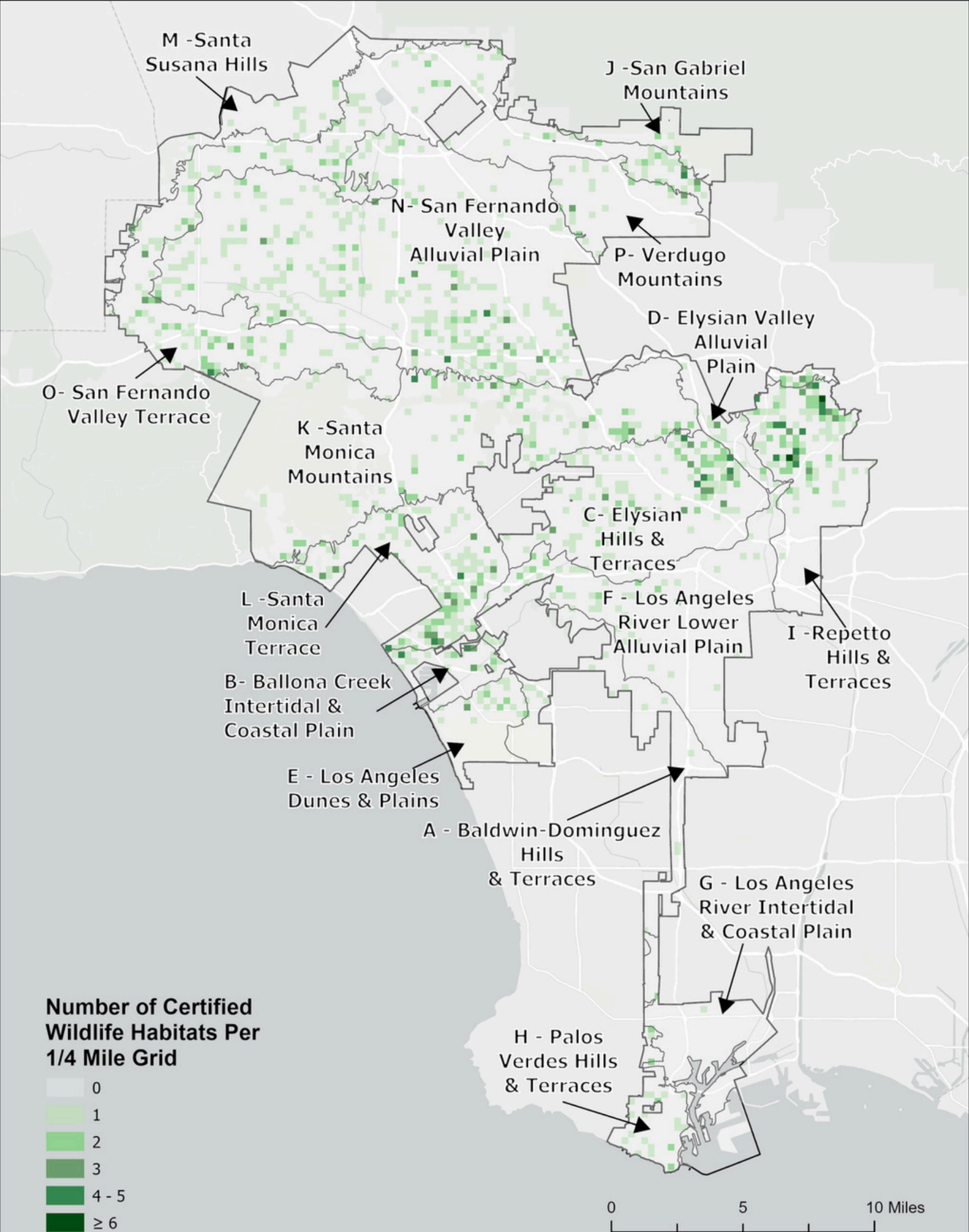
SCORE: ↑ ↓

Metric 2.3b was assessed by calculating the number of new National Wildlife Federation (NWF) Certified Wildlife Habitats per year in the City of Los Angeles from 2018-2023. There were 172 new certified wildlife habitats in the City from 2021-2023 while there were 138 new certified wildlife habitats from 2018-2020. Additionally, there are 1,552 certified wildlife habitats in total within the City in 2023. However, the number of new certifications decreased from 2021 to 2022 and 2023, suggesting that while there is an overall increase in certifications, the rate at which locations are certified is decreasing. Additionally, certain ecotopes—particularly the Los Angeles River Lower Alluvial Plain, the Baldwin Dominguez Hills & Terraces, and the Los Angeles River Intertidal & Coastal Plain—continue to have very few new certified wildlife habitats, corresponding to some of the most environmentally disadvantaged neighborhoods in the City. As such, this metric is assigned a mixed score.

Number of New Certified Wildlife Habitats per Year in the City of LA in 2018-2023



UCLA Mathias Botanical Gardens
(Photo: Lily Carlson)



THEME 3:

GOVERNANCE & MANAGEMENT



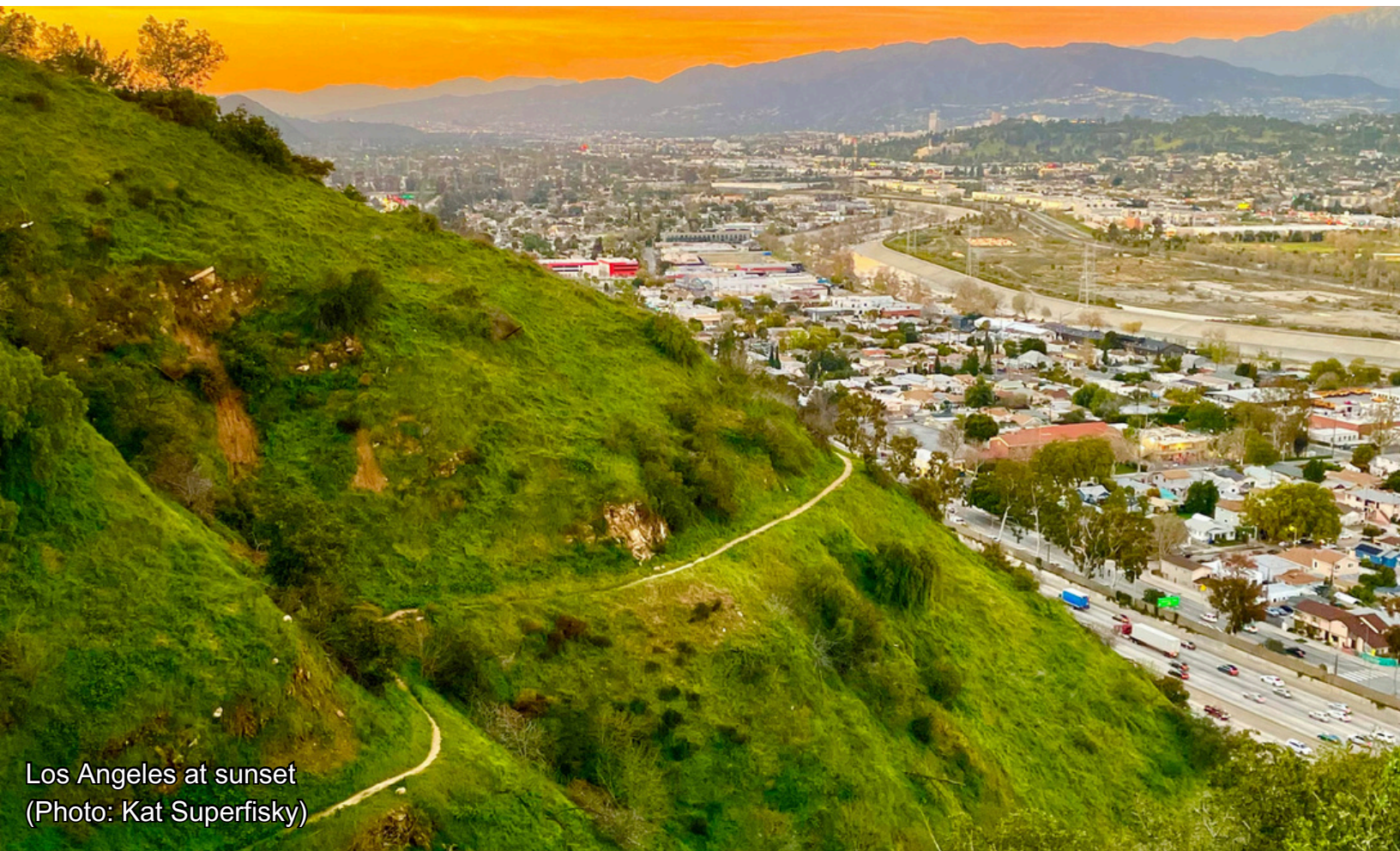
Los Angeles City Hall
(Photo: Lily Carlson)

3.1a

BIODIVERSITY VISION / ACTION PLAN

SCORE: 

Metric 3.1a was assessed by evaluating progress on LA’s Local Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (LBSAP), as well as by determining the current number of local biodiversity initiatives and actions being taken by 15 departments Citywide. As part of a collaboration with UCLA practicum students, guidelines covering actions to take, areas and species to prioritize, and expected budget and timeline were produced. A workshop with the Biodiversity Expert Council in August 2024 was held, and the expert feedback is currently being integrated into the goals and actions of the LBSAP. The City will proceed to conduct community engagement—particularly with Indigenous tribes and environmentally disadvantaged communities—to determine community priorities, followed by workshopping with City departments and strategizing how to link local biodiversity work with the global United Nations Convention on Biodiversity Global Biodiversity Framework targets, which will result in an expected publish date of late 2025. This effort represents an expansion of the 70 initiatives currently being worked on across 15 departments and demonstrates a substantial improvement, resulting in a positive score being assigned to this metric.



Los Angeles at sunset
(Photo: Kat Superfisky)

3.1b

% DEPARTMENTS WITH BIODIVERSITY PROGRAMS & POLICIES SCORE: ↑

Metric 3.1b was assessed by evaluating the departments currently participating in annual biodiversity reporting. At the time of the baseline report, 10 departments had biodiversity actions and goals. Since then, that number has expanded to 15 departments through the creation of annual biodiversity reporting beginning with the 2022-2023 fiscal year. Of those 15 departments, 11 are participating in full biodiversity reporting, which involves identifying at least 5 initiatives, strategizing how to improve the score of the LA Biodiversity Index, identifying interdepartmental collaboration, and reporting on other biodiversity elements of the department's work. Four departments report on biodiversity considerations, which involves identifying biodiversity-relevant actions and initiatives and strategizing how the department's work can enhance biodiversity. The 5 new departments working on biodiversity and the robust expansion of biodiversity reporting result in a positive score for this metric.

Departments Fully Reporting on Biodiversity:

- LA Sanitation and Environment (LASAN)
- Department of City Planning (DCP)
- Bureau of Engineering (BOE)
- LA World Airports (LAWA)
- LA Department of Water and Power (LADWP)
- Harbor Department of the Port of LA (Harbor)
- Bureau of Street Services (StreetsLA)
- LA Department of Transportation (LADOT)
- LA Public Library (LAPL)
- LA Zoo (Zoo)
- Recreation and Parks (RAP)

Departments With Biodiversity Considerations:

- Bureau of Street Lighting (BSL)
- Department of Animal Services (DAS)
- Department of General Services (GSD)
- LA Department of Building and Safety (LADBS)



Western gull in LA's Harbor
(Photo: Rosalind Helfand)

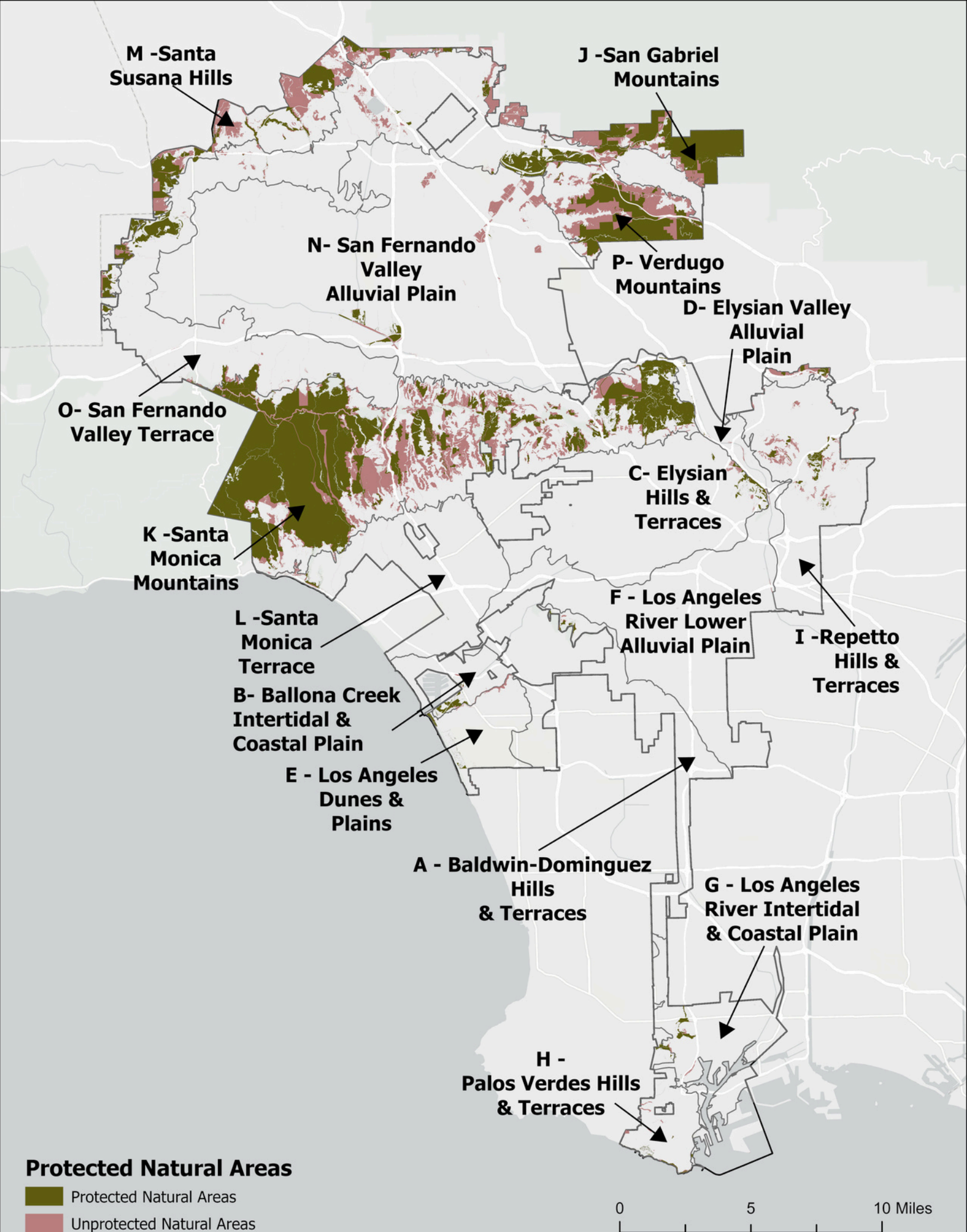
3.2a % PROTECTED NATURAL AREAS

SCORE: *

Metric 3.2a was assessed by comparing the percentage of natural areas that are protected within the City using most recent data. The California Protected Areas Database (CPAD) and the California Conservation Easement Database (CCED) were utilized for this assessment. Using this dataset and the natural areas baseline measurement from metric 1.1a, the percentage of natural areas that are protected is 65.97%. However, because there is no updated measurement for natural areas, it is not possible to detect changes in this metric. In order to assess changes in the percentage of natural areas that are protected, vegetation alliances must be newly mapped. As such, no score is assigned for this metric.



Sepulveda Basin
(Photo: Nurit Katz)



3.2b

PROTECTED NATURAL AREAS MANAGEMENT AND MONITORING

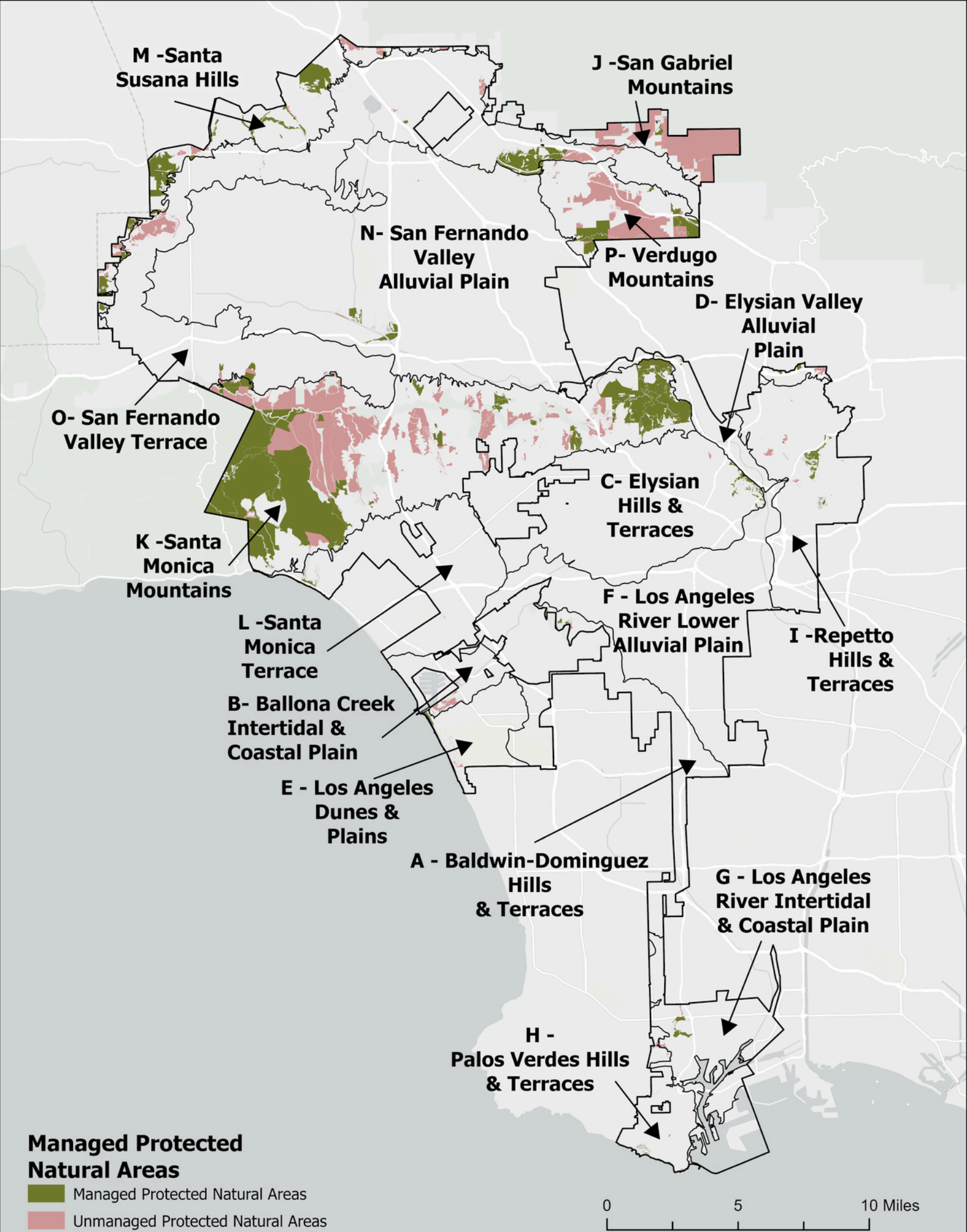
SCORE:

*

Metric 3.2b was assessed by calculating the percentage of protected natural areas in the City that are managed by either the City's Department of Recreation and Parks or by the State. Using the protected natural areas calculated for metric 3.2a, the percentage of protected natural areas that are managed is 53.67%. Additionally, the overall area of managed protected natural areas is 8,072 acres. However, because there are no recent natural areas data, no change is able to be measured for this metric. Vegetation alliances across the City need to be newly mapped in order to measure changes in managed protected natural areas. As such, no score is assigned for this metric.



Griffith Park
(Photo: Lily Carlson)



3.2c

MANAGEMENT OF INVASIVE SPECIES & PESTS

SCORE:



Metric 3.2c was assessed by evaluating the annual biodiversity reports for the 2022-2023 and 2023-2024 fiscal years, as well as by distributing a survey to departmental Chief Sustainability Officers who track the management of invasive species over the last three years. Seven departments were identified as having actions relating to the management of invasive species, and all of these departments demonstrated an improvement or expansion of their efforts to manage invasive species. As such, this improvement results in a positive score for this metric. While this result is encouraging, an inventory of invasive species still does not exist for the City, indicating the need for further action to be taken to best manage invasive species.



Invasive red swamp crayfish
(Photo: Rosalind Helfand)

3.2d

MANAGEMENT OF SPECIES OF CONSERVATION CONCERN

SCORE: ↑

Metric 3.2d was assessed by evaluating the annual biodiversity reports for the 2022-2023 and 2023-2024 fiscal years, as well as by distributing a survey to departmental Chief Sustainability Officers, in order to track management of species of conservation concern over the last three years. 7 departments were identified as having actions relating to the management of species of conservation concern, and 5 of these 7 departments demonstrated an improvement or expansion of these efforts while 2 departments demonstrated no significant change in management. As such, this improvement results in a positive score for this metric. While departmental action to address species of conservation concern has improved, a formal monitoring plan for species of conservation concern does not yet exist, highlighting the necessity of tracking key threatened and endangered species in the City.



California Gnatcatcher
(Photo: Nurit Katz)



CONCLUSION

While some of these results are encouraging, most of the improvements were very small or could not be measured with existing data layers. Ambitious goals need to be created and substantial actions need to be implemented in order to effectively protect and enhance all aspects of biodiversity within Los Angeles. This is especially true in the wake of the devastating wildfires at the beginning of 2025, which necessitates that more action be taken to protect the existing biodiversity in the City. Improved collaboration with City leadership to expand on policies that highlight impacts to biodiversity through the City's planning, contractual, and development approval processes will be necessary.

In particular, natural areas should be a focal priority moving forward, especially through the collection of updated data to measure the status of these areas. Natural areas and the connectivity of these patches of habitat need to be increased, particularly in environmentally disadvantaged, highly urbanized ecotopes and in areas where large patches of habitat are being fragmented. Furthermore, key threats to natural areas, namely urban edge effects and wildfire frequency, need to be mitigated to ensure that negative trends are reversed and that significant components of native biodiversity like species of conservation concern are preserved. Additionally, the City's work to enact positive change with education, community engagement, governance, and management should continue, and further initiatives should be supported.

These findings will guide future action, particularly with the creation of Los Angeles' Local Biodiversity Strategy and Action plan. This report indicates where attention needs to be directed to conserve the unique and incredible biodiversity of Los Angeles, making progress towards building an environmentally resilient, biophilic City for all Angelenos.

Hollywood Reservoir
(Photo: Kat Superfisky)



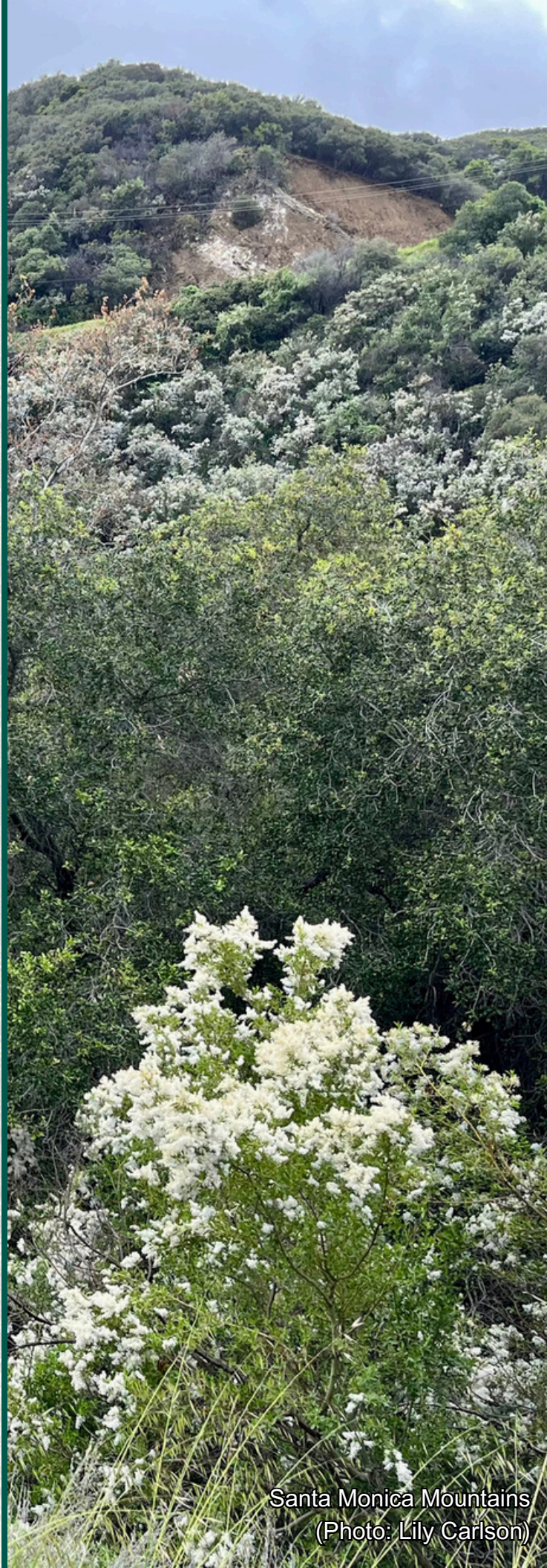
CONTACT US

LASAN is dedicated to protecting public health and the environment for all Angelenos. For more information about the Biodiversity Program, please contact lily.carlson@lacity.org or amanda.amaral@lacity.org or visit us at lacitysan.org/biodiversity.

LA SANITATION & ENVIRONMENT

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Robert Potter, Assistant Director

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Santa Monica Mountains
(Photo: Lily Carlson)