

January 9, 2024

Ms. Heather Beeler
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Sacramento Fish and Wildlife Office
2800 Cottage Way, W2605
Sacramento, CA 95825

Subject: Eleventh Annual Report for Sacramento Municipal Utility District's Special Purpose Utility Permit for Migratory Bird Mortality Monitoring, Solano Wind Project (Permit # MB189818-0)

Dear Ms. Beeler:

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) issued a Special Purpose Utility (SPUT) permit (Permit # MB98730A) for the Solano Wind Project to the Sacramento Municipal Utility District (SMUD) on September 9, 2013. A new SPUT permit (Permit # MB189818-0) was issued on October 09, 2020. Attachment A, the completed Form 3-202-17 spreadsheet, is submitted in accordance with the terms of the SPUT permit. This report fulfills the requirements of both the thirty-seventh quarterly report and the tenth annual report. SMUD is conducting eagle mortality monitoring on the Solano Wind Project Phases 1, 2, and 3 in compliance with the programmatic incidental take permit (ITP, Permit #MB02735B-0) issued by the Service on October 19, 2019. This report describes carcasses detected during the searches conducted during the monthly eagle monitoring and those found during routine operations and maintenance activities from January through December 2023. In January and February 2023, the standard survey protocol (full-plot searches) was followed for all 107 turbines that comprise Solano Wind Project Phases 1, 2, and 3. In March 2023, Solano Wind Project Phase 4 commenced with the decommissioning of the Phase 1 turbines, which will be replaced with the newer and more technologically advanced Phase 4 turbines. Due to active disassembly of these turbines, starting in March 2023, the standard surveys for the Eagle mortality monitoring for the remainder of 2023 were only conducted for the remaining 84 operational turbines that comprise Solano Wind Project Phases 2 and 3.

First quarter Eagle mortality surveys in January were conducted from January 24 through 27, 2023. February searches were conducted on February 17 and from February 21 through February 23, 2023, and March searches were conducted from March 22 through 24, 2023. Three carcasses, including a European starling, red-tailed hawk, and turkey vulture, were detected during the January surveys. Additionally, a red-tailed hawk and red-winged blackbird were recovered incidentally in January. During February searches, three carcasses, including a golden eagle, western meadowlark, and red-tailed hawk, were detected. Two other carcasses, a rock pigeon and American kestrel, were recovered incidentally in February. Finally, one northern harrier carcass was observed during the March surveys.

Second quarter Eagle mortality surveys in April were conducted from April 18 through April 20, 2023. May searches were conducted from May 23 through May 25, and May 31, 2023. June searches were conducted from June 20 through June 23 and June 30, 2023. One carcass, a common parakeet, was detected during the April surveys. During May surveys, one western meadowlark carcass was detected. Additionally, one horned lark carcass was discovered incidentally in May. No carcasses were detected in June.

Third quarter Eagle mortality surveys in July were conducted from July 25 through July 29, 2023 and an additional survey on August 8, 2023. August searches were conducted from August 22 to August 29, 2023. September searches were conducted from September 26 through October 2, 2023. No carcasses were detected in July. During August surveys, four

hoary bat carcasses were detected. During September surveys, three carcasses including one mallard, one Mexican free-tailed bat, and one red-tailed hawk were detected.

Fourth quarter Eagle mortality surveys in October were conducted from October 24 through October 27, 2023. November searches were conducted from November 16 through November 17, 2023 and November 20 through November 21, 2023. December searches were conducted from December 18 through December 21, 2023. During October searches, four carcasses were detected including one hoary bat, one American kestrel, one golden eagle, and one red-tailed hawk. Two carcasses were recovered incidentally in early October, including one ring-necked pheasant and one American kestrel. During November searches, two carcasses were detected including one western meadowlark and one red-tailed hawk. During December searches, three carcasses were detected including two red-tailed hawks and one common raven. One snow goose carcass was recovered incidentally in December.

In accordance with permit requirements, the Service and California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) were notified of incidents involving federally or state protected species. Except for the Golden Eagle remains, which have been provided to the CDFW, all carcasses are stored at an on-site freezer at the SMUD Solano Wind Project facility for at least one calendar year or are being used for searcher efficiency or carcass persistence trials.

If you have any questions, please call me at (916) 732-6334.

Sincerely,

Ammon Rice
Environmental Services, Supervisor

Cc:
Susan Sanders, AECOM
Petra Unger, AECOM

Attachment A – Form 3-202-17 Excel Spreadsheet

ATTACHMENT A

Special Purpose Utility (Avian Take Monitoring) – 2023 Annual Report
Report Form 3-202-17 v. 2.0