

# MEMORANDUM

**DATE:** January 12, 2010

**TO:** Ivy Edmonds-Hess  
Parsons Brinckerhoff

**FROM:** Steve Granholm, Bird Monitoring Task Leader  
LSA Associates, Inc.

**FOR:** California Department of Transportation

**SUBJECT:** Bird Monitoring Memo #392, Week of January 4 – 9, 2010  
San Francisco – Oakland Bay Bridge East Span Project

**PURSUANT TO:** US Fish and Wildlife Service Biological Opinion and California Department of Fish and Game Incidental Take Permit

## Introduction

The California Department of Transportation (Department) is in the process of replacing the East Span of the San Francisco-Oakland Bay Bridge (SFOBB) with a new bridge immediately to the north of the existing span (Figure 1). Construction of the San Francisco-Oakland Bay Bridge East Span Seismic Safety Project (SFOBB Project) is a multi-year effort that will involve a number of construction activities on land as well as in San Francisco Bay. Some of these activities could potentially affect federally and State endangered or threatened bird species and other bird species of special concern.

Figure 1. San Francisco-Oakland Bay Bridge Seismic Safety Project Location Map

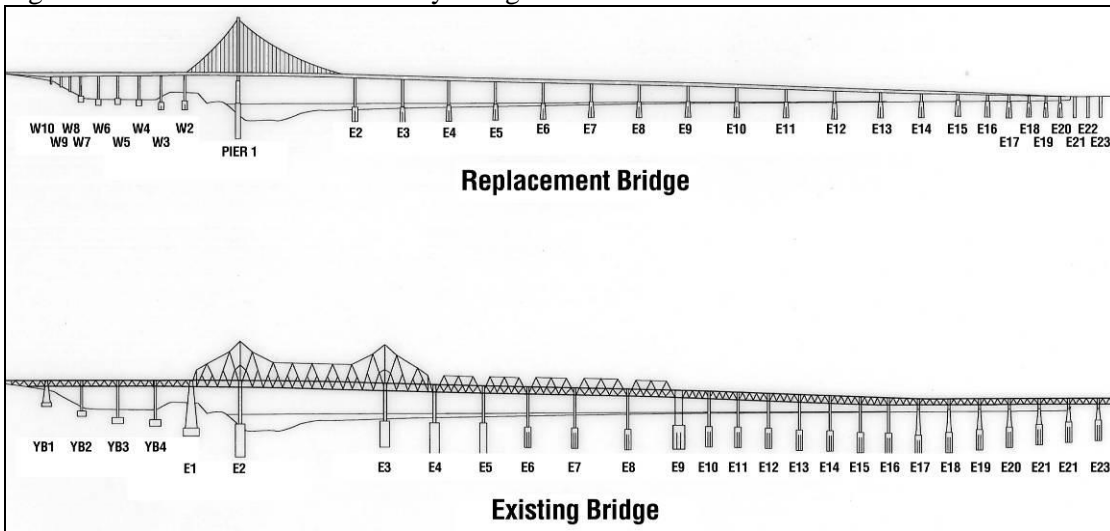


The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) Biological Opinion (page 22) and the California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG) Incidental Take Permit (Fully Protected Species Items 1 and 2 on pages 4 and 5) require monitoring of the California least tern and California brown pelican. The CDFG is also concerned about potential impacts to the American peregrine falcon and the double-

crested cormorant and required a management plan for these species (Fully Protected Species Item 3 on page 5). In addition, the San Francisco-Oakland Bay Bridge East Span Seismic Safety Project Final Environmental Impact Statement/Statutory Exemption and Final Section 4(f) Evaluation (FEIS) (page 4-130) requires that the Department monitor the double-crested cormorant colony and American peregrine falcon during the breeding season.

As required by the USFWS Biological Opinion and CDFG Incidental Take Permit, the monitoring efforts are focused primarily on three endangered species: the California least tern, California brown pelican, and American peregrine falcon. The primary objectives of these monitoring efforts are to minimize impacts to these three species and document any take of these species resulting from construction activities. In addition, monitoring is conducted to assess: 1) potential impacts to the behavior of American peregrine falcons and double-crested cormorants on the existing SFOBB East Span; 2) seasonal Canada goose activities along an exclusion fence built between a portion of the Emeryville Crescent and I-80; and 3) potential impacts on breeding activities of western gulls, which are known to nest on both the existing and new bridges (Figure 2). Monitoring is conducted in accordance with the *Final (Revised) Bird Monitoring and Management Plan* (Department, 2003). This plan incorporated the requirements of the USFWS, the CDFG, and the FEIS, as well as those of the San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission (BCDC) Permit No. 8-01, Special Condition F-6.

Figure 2. San Francisco-Oakland Bay Bridge Pier Locations



The bird monitors are required to conduct a survey once a week for three hours, if construction activities are underway. This memo summarizes the SFOBB Project bird monitoring activities conducted by LSA Associates (LSA) and Garcia and Associates (GANDA) during the week of January 4 – 8, 2010.

### **Bird Monitoring Activities**

LSA and GANDA conducted monitoring of the active construction areas from GANDA's boat and GANDA conducted peregrine falcon monitoring from a temporary truss north of the existing bridge. Construction activities during the weekly bird survey included workers conducting various activities at the Self-Anchored Suspension, South-South Detour, and Oakland Touchdown construction sites and crew boat traffic on San Francisco Bay. Construction activities during the peregrine falcon monitoring included work on a segment of the temporary trusses and demolition of existing bridge portions no longer in use on Yerba Buena Island.

The weekly bird survey was conducted from 0930 to 1245 hours on January 6, 2010. Peregrine falcon monitoring was conducted from 1101 to 1201 hours on January 4, 2010.

## **Results**

### **Monitoring of Active Construction Areas**

*California Least Tern:* No least terns were observed.

*California Brown Pelican:* No brown pelicans were observed.

*Peregrine Falcon:* No peregrine falcons were seen.

*Double-crested Cormorant:* Approximately 35 double-crested cormorants were observed. Most were flying over the bay or resting on various structures in the study area. No cormorants were seen on the constructed nest structures on the new bridge.

*Western Gull:* Approximately 40 western gulls were observed resting, flying, and/or foraging in the study area.

*Observations of Additional Bird Species:* Other bird species observed during the survey (and the approximate number of individuals) were Canada goose (2), greater scaup (119), surf scoter (31), bufflehead (57), common goldeneye (1), ruddy duck (30), common loon (2), horned grebe (16), western grebe (2), Clark's grebe (42), western or Clark's grebe (103), Brandt's cormorant (13), mew gull (35), California gull (30), glaucous-winged gull (1), Forster's tern (1), red-tailed hawk (1), American crow (3), and European starling (65). In addition, a red-throated loon was seen just north of the study area in Clipper Cove. Seven black-crowned night-herons were seen at their traditional roost site in the cypress tree and adjacent black acacias on the south shore of Treasure Island.

### **American Peregrine Falcon Nest Monitoring**

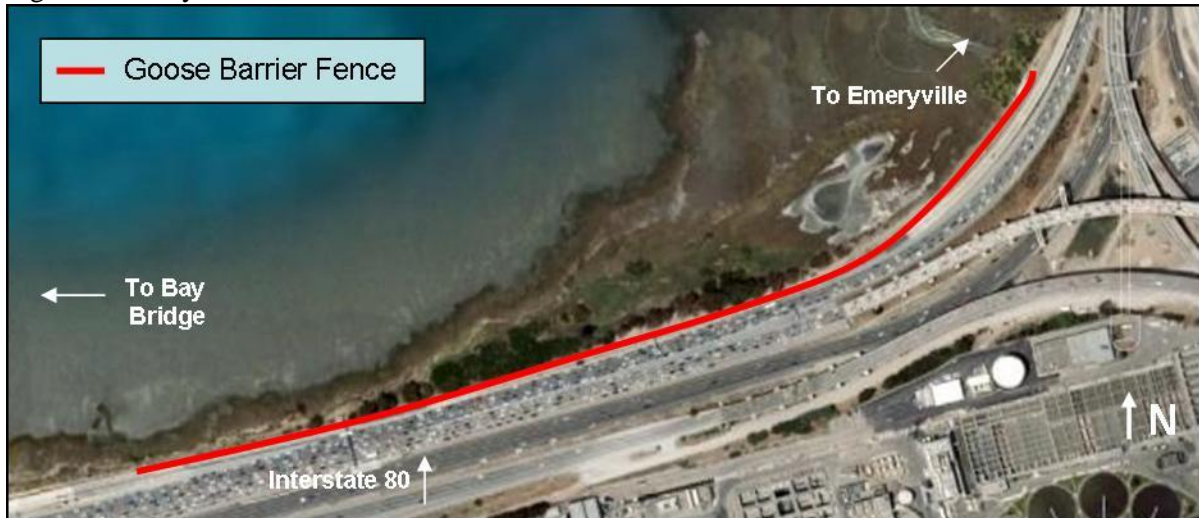
An adult male peregrine was observed perched on the handrail of the northern ladder platform on Pier E3 of the existing bridge at the start of the survey. At 1122 hours, the male took flight and flushed a female peregrine from the south side of the existing bridge between Pier E2 and E3. After this brief flight, the male perched on top of the bridge between Piers E3 and E4, and the female returned to the south side of the bridge between Piers E2 and E3. At 1127 hours, the male flew below the deck and perched between Piers E3 and E4. At 1138 hours, the male flew a short distance to the north, returning seconds later and perching on top of the bridge between Piers E2 and E3. At 1154 hours, the male flew east below the bridge and perched on the cross beam immediately below the lower deck at Pier E5. No further observations were recorded for the remainder of the monitoring period.

*Other Bird Species Observed:* Other bird species observed during the peregrine monitoring were Canada goose, double-crested cormorant, and western gull. The number of other bird species observed during the peregrine falcon monitoring is not recorded because this activity would distract the monitor from watching for peregrine falcons.

### **Canada Goose Monitoring along the I-80 Roadway Adjacent to the Emeryville Crescent**

Bird monitors are required to conduct Canada goose monitoring along the I-80 roadway adjacent to the Emeryville Crescent during March through August (Figure 3). The monitoring season may be extended through September or October, if warranted, based on the presence of geese that may be at risk. The monitoring objective is to assess the effectiveness of an 850-meter (2,800-foot) long fence that was designed to exclude Canada geese from entering the I-80 roadway.

Figure 3. Emeryville Crescent Goose Exclusion Fence



Canada goose monitoring has concluded for the 2009 nesting season. Monitoring for the 2010 season will begin in March 2010.

### Conclusions

The monitors did not observe any indications that birds were disturbed due to SFOBB Project construction activities.

cc: Stefan Galvez, California Department of Transportation