

# MEMORANDUM

DATE: December 28, 2009

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 #388, Week of December 7 – 11, 2009  
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

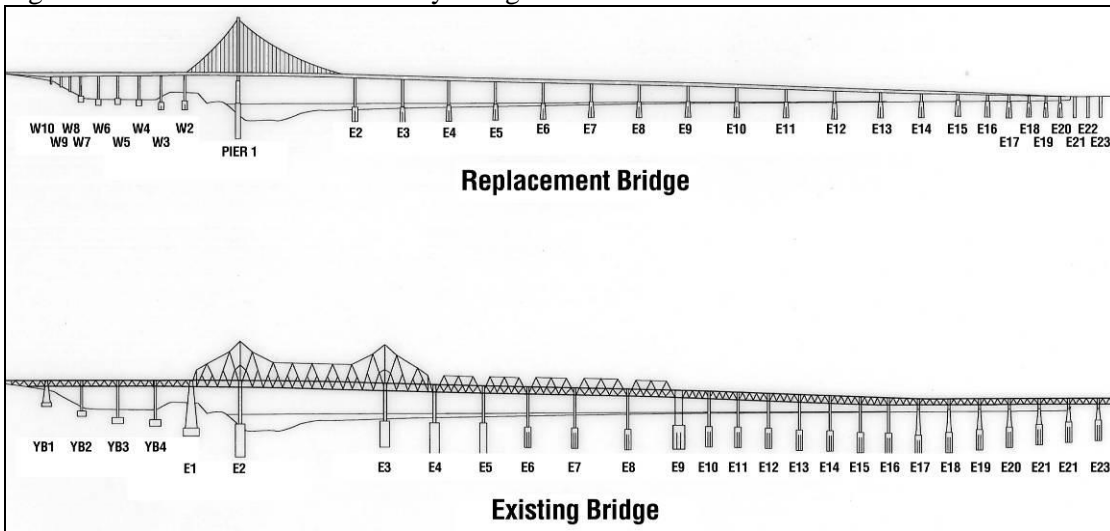


The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) Biological Opinion (page 22) and the California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG) Incidental Take Permit (Fully Protected Species Items 1 and 2 on pages 4 and 5) require monitoring of the California least tern and California brown pelican. The CDFG is also 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 December 7 – 11, 2009.

### **Bird Monitoring Activities**

LSA and GANDA conducted monitoring of the active construction areas from GANDA's boat, and GANDA conducted peregrine falcon monitoring from the 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, including crane work at the Self-Anchored Suspension construction site. Construction activities during the peregrine falcon monitoring included the Left Coast Lifter crane

adding a segment to the temporary trusses, work on the access trestle to T1, and demolition of existing bridge portions no longer in use on Yerba Buena Island.

The weekly bird survey was conducted from 0925 to 1227 hours on December 8, 2009. Peregrine falcon monitoring was conducted from 1030 to 1130 hours on December 11, 2009.

## **Results**

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

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

*California Brown Pelican:* The bird monitors recorded nine observations of brown pelicans (the observations may have included repeated sightings of some individual pelicans):

- At 0935 hours, one was flying between Piers E16 and E17 of the existing bridge and then landed on new Pier E11;
- At 0945 hours, one was flying southward from Clipper Cove to the Self-Anchored Suspension construction area;
- At 1019 hours, one was flying southward between Piers E2 and E3 of the existing bridge;
- At 1031 hours, one was flying westward about 300 meters (984 feet) south of Pier E7 of the existing bridge;
- At 1035 hours, two were resting on the south side of the cable-crossing structure;
- At 1140 hours, one was flying over Clipper Cove;
- At 1215 hours, one was flying southward about 300 meters (984 feet) north of the new bridge, in the vicinity of the PG&E pipeline structure; and
- At 1226 hours, one was flying southward toward Pier E14 of the existing bridge, about 300 meters (984 feet) north of the new bridge. In addition, one was seen on the floating dock in Clipper Cove, just north of the study area boundary.

*Peregrine Falcon:* At 1026 hours, one peregrine falcon flew east from Pier E4 of the existing bridge and then to the top horizontal beam of Pier E6 of the existing bridge, just below the roadbed. At 1220 hours, one (likely the same bird) was perched on the northwest corner of the sign structure on top of the new bridge.

*Double-crested Cormorant:* Approximately 15 double-crested cormorants were observed in the study area. Two were roosting under the existing bridge and the others were in the Port of Oakland Outer Harbor or in the water near the existing bridge. No cormorants were seen on the constructed nest structures on the new bridge.

*Western Gull:* Approximately 35 western gulls were observed in the study area. Most were perched on the existing bridge.

*Observations of Additional Bird Species:* Other bird species observed during the survey (and the approximate number of individuals) were greater scaup (85), surf scoter (30), bufflehead (90), common goldeneye (1), ruddy duck (70), common loon (3), horned grebe (16), eared grebe (1), western grebe (7), Clark's grebe (7), Brandt's cormorant (23), pelagic cormorant (1), mew gull (30),

California gull (41), red-tailed hawk (1), belted kingfisher (1), American crow (2), and common raven (2). In addition, five black-crowned night-herons were seen in the cypress tree on the south shore of Treasure Island (north shore of Clipper Cove).

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

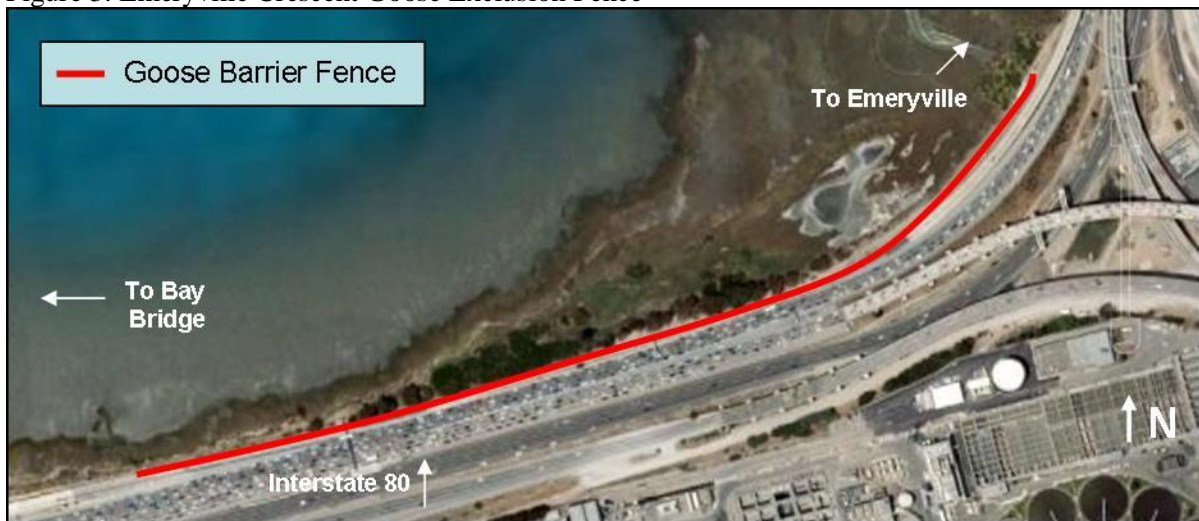
No peregrine falcons were observed.

*Other Bird Species Observed:* Other bird species observed during the peregrine monitoring were western grebe, double-crested cormorant, great egret, 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