

## MEMORANDUM

DATE: July 27, 2008

TO: Ivy Edmonds-Hess  
Parsons Brinckerhoff

FROM: Steve Granholm and Eric Lichtwardt (LSA Associates, Inc.)

SUBJECT: Bird Monitoring Memo #313, Week of June 30 – July 4, 2008  
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

In order to improve the seismic safety of the San Francisco-Oakland Bay Bridge (SFOBB), the State of California, Department of Transportation (Caltrans) is replacing the existing East Span with a new bridge immediately to the north. This is a multi-year effort that will involve a number of construction activities on land as well as in the Bay. Some of these activities could potentially affect federally endangered or threatened bird species and other bird species of special concern.

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 Caltrans monitor the double-crested cormorant colony and American peregrine falcon during the breeding season and prevent the birds from nesting on the existing bridge where potential impacts by construction activities could occur.

As required by the USFWS Biological Opinion and CDFG permit, monitoring efforts focused primarily on three endangered species: the California least tern, California brown pelican, and American peregrine falcon. The objective was to document any take of these species resulting from construction activities. In addition, monitoring was conducted to determine whether construction is having any adverse impacts to the breeding efforts of the double-crested cormorants and western gulls on the existing East Span. Monitoring was conducted in accordance with the *Revised Final Bird Monitoring and Management Plan* (Caltrans 2003). This plan incorporated the requirements of the USFWS, CDFG, and the FEIS, as well as those of the San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission (BCDC) permit, Special Condition F-6.

This memo summarizes the East Span construction bird monitoring activities conducted by LSA Associates, Inc. (LSA) during the week of June 30 – July 4, 2008.

## **Bird Monitoring Activities**

LSA conducted monitoring of the active construction areas from land at the Oakland Touchdown and Yerba Buena Island (YBI). Construction activities during the bird survey included crew boat traffic and various construction activities at the Oakland Touchdown Westbound, South-South Detour, and Self-Anchored Suspension construction sites.

The bird survey was conducted on July 3 (from 1340 to 1520 hours at YBI and from 1545 to 1705 hours at the Oakland Touchdown).

## **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 observed.

*Double-crested Cormorant:* Approximately 40 to 60 double-crested cormorants were observed. Most were flying toward roosting sites under the existing bridge and resting on the cable-crossing structure.

*Western Gull:* Approximately 20 to 40 western gulls were observed. Most were flying or resting. The active nest on Pier T1 was observed (from 1345 to 1445 hours) with a scope from YBI. One of the parents at the nest showed signs of distress when a construction worker approached the plywood barrier at 1349 hours, but in general the adults and chick appeared to be behaving normally. The chick was seen moving around the nest area and at one time entered the crevice between the steel beam and the surface of the marine foundation.

*Other Observations of Birds and Marine Mammals:* The other species observed during the bird survey (and the approximate number of individuals) were Clark's grebe (25), pelagic cormorant (1), great blue heron (1), cliff swallow (1), white-crowned sparrow (1), and house finch (1).

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

Peregrine falcon monitoring has been concluded for this year's nesting season because observations up to this time indicate that the East Span nesting territory is not occupied this season.

## **Conclusions**

The monitor did not observe any indications that birds were disturbed due to the East Span construction activities.

cc: Monica Gan