

## MEMORANDUM

**DATE:** July 27, 2008

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

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

**SUBJECT:** Bird Monitoring Memo #314, Week of July 7-11, 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) and Garcia and Associates (GANDA) during the week of July 7-11, 2008.

### **Bird Monitoring Activities**

LSA and GANDA conducted monitoring of the active construction areas from GANDA's boat. Construction activities during the bird survey included various construction activities at the Oakland Touchdown Westbound, South-South Detour, and Self-Anchored Suspension construction sites. In addition, preparations were underway for pile-driving at the Pier T1 construction site.

The bird survey was conducted from 1359 to 1659 hours on July 7.

### **Results**

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

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

*California Brown Pelican:* At 1542 hours, one brown pelican was observed flying south under the new bridge, near Piers E2E and E2W, approximately 25 meters (82 feet) from the piers.

*Peregrine Falcon:* No peregrine falcons were observed.

*Double-crested Cormorant:* Approximately 400 double-crested cormorants were perched under the existing bridge and approximately 100 were resting on the cable-crossing structure.

*Western Gull:* Approximately 50 western gulls were observed. Most were perched under the existing bridge. Active nests were observed at existing Piers E6 (2 chicks), E11 (2 chicks), E12 (1 chick), and E16 (3 nests with 1 chick each). The nest on the piling just south of Pier E2 of the existing bridge is apparently no longer active (no adults, chicks, or eggs were observed).

*Other Observations of Birds and Marine Mammals:* The other species observed during the bird survey (and the approximate number of individuals) were harbor seal (1), Canada goose (17), common goldeneye (1), common loon (1), western grebe (5), Clark's grebe (4), western grebe or Clark's grebe (47), Brandt's cormorant (20), great blue heron (1), Heermann's gull (1), pigeon guillemot (3), and rock pigeon (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 monitors did not observe any indications that birds were disturbed due to the East Span construction activities.

cc: Monica Gan