

Key Meeting Outcomes

Altamont Pass Wind Resource Area Scientific Review Committee

Meeting 12-14 February 2008

Developed with the SRC on 2/14/08

Presentation of Monitoring Team Draft Report on Altamont Pass Bird Fatality Study, Oct. 05-Sept. 07

The Altamont Pass Wind Resource Area (APWRA) Monitoring Team presented its latest analysis of two years of Altamont raptor mortality data to the Scientific Review Committee and at a technical workshop on Feb. 12 when interested parties had an opportunity to ask questions on the results and on the monitoring program in general. The latest draft of the report will be made available on the web at www.altamontsrc.org.

The SRC and Monitoring Team members agreed to a communication plan to develop the next phase of the report, which emphasizes transparency as well as the separate roles of the two bodies. SRC members decided that Monitoring Team members can discuss data with SRC member Shawn Smallwood, who conducted the 2004 Altamont avian mortality study that formed the baseline. The Monitoring Team will log its calls and other discussion points, draft brief memos, and periodically brief the SRC in a public conference call on its progress. The first public SRC briefing will be scheduled for mid-March to consider statistical issues.

Measuring 50% Reduction in Mortality of Focal Raptor Species

SRC members agreed that bird use data should be integrated into the mortality analysis to the extent possible so the estimates account for raptor population fluctuations that might influence fatality statistics. To work toward this goal, they agreed that all possible bird abundance and use data for the four focal species should be gathered for evaluation and possible integration. The SRC reiterated its recommendation for acquiring power generation or turbine operating hour data to develop a more precise and comparable measurement.

To analyze current mortality with baseline mortality, the SRC supported creating a shared public database containing data from Monitoring Team (2008) and Smallwood and Thelander (2004) studies.

The SRC agreed that there will be four analyses in the baseline comparison:

- One analysis would use sample data extrapolated to the entire APWRA, as directed by settling parties.
- A second analysis would consider only turbines searched both in the 2004 and 2008 studies, which represent about 20% of Altamont turbines.
- Each of these analyses would be developed using both 2004 as well as 2008 assumptions to ensure matched comparisons since the baseline established by the settling parties is based on 2004 study.

Burrowing Owl Behavior Study

In light of the Monitoring Team's data showing unexpectedly high annual mortality estimates and winter shutdown fatalities for burrowing owls, the SRC strongly reiterated its recommendation for a focused burrowing owl behavior study to gather information on factors that may be causing the fatalities.

Existing American Kestrel and Burrowing Owl Study

To gather information for potentially refining scavenger removal rates (a factor in equations of avian mortality analysis), the SRC agreed that the Monitoring Team will continue tracking feather spots found in the second month of the American Kestrel Burrowing Owl Study this spring through the end of May, visiting sites once per week for the search interval (approximately 37 days).

Hazardous Turbine Ranking

The SRC reiterated its previously made recommendation that turbines it ranked 8-10 on a hazard scale of 1-10 be removed as one measure toward achieving the 50% reduction in raptor mortality required by the Settlement Agreement. Since the winter shutdown was shorter than three months, the SRC additional recommendation to remove turbines assigned ratings 7 and 7.5 is in effect. (See P68_Turbine List for SRC Selection of Dangerous Wind Turbines 12/21/07 and P69_SRC Hazardous Rating Scale 2/1/08).