

Appendix G. USFWS & NMFS Correspondence



United States Department of the Interior



FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
Mississippi Ecological Services Field Office
6578 Dogwood View Parkway, Suite A
Jackson, Mississippi 39213
Phone: (601)965-4900 Fax: (601)965-4340

February 25, 2016

IN REPLY REFER TO:
2016-I-335

Ms. Noel Ardoin
Louisiana Department of Transportation & Development
P. O. Box 94245
Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70804-9245

Dear Ms. Ardoin:

The Fish and Wildlife Service has reviewed the information in your letter dated January 27, 2016, regarding the proposed US 90 Pearl River Bridges rehabilitation/ replacement project in St. Tamany Parish, Louisiana and Hancock County, Mississippi. Our comments are submitted in accordance with the Endangered Species Act (ESA) (87 Stat. 884, as amended; 16 U.S.C. 1531 et seq.).

The USFWS Mississippi Ecological Services Office concurs with your determination that the proposed action, including the implementation of commitments and assurances outlined in your letter, 'may affect, is not likely to adversely affect' the federally threatened Gulf sturgeon (*Acipenser oxyrinchus desotoi*), the federally threatened ringed map turtle (*Graptemys oculifera*), and the federally endangered West Indian manatee (*Trichechus manatus*). Additionally, we concur with your determination that the proposed action 'is not likely to adversely affect' designated critical habitat for Gulf sturgeon.

No further consultation under the ESA is required with this office unless there are changes in the scope or location of the proposed project, or if listed species are discovered during construction. If you have any questions, please contact Amy Carson of our office, telephone: (601) 321-1130.

Sincerely,


Stephen M. Ricks
Field Supervisor
MS Field Office

10.4 Essential Fish Habitat

Based on the potential level of effects from the proposed action (outlined in Section 9.4), it is LADOTD's determination that the proposed action would result in *minor, short- and long-term, adverse* impacts to EFH.

11.0 Requests

By way of this letter, LADOTD is requesting concurrence from the USFWS Louisiana and Mississippi Ecological Services Offices and NOAA that the proposed US 90 Bridges Project *may affect, not likely to adversely affect* the Gulf sturgeon, ringed mapped turtle, and West Indian manatee. In addition, we are requesting concurrence that the US 90 Bridges Project is *not likely to adversely affect* designated critical habitat for the Gulf sturgeon, and will have *no effect* on designated critical habitat for the manatee. We are also requesting any additional conservation measures that may be required.

By way of this letter, LADOTD is also requesting concurrence from the NOAA that the proposed US 90 Bridges Project would result in *minor, short- and long-term, adverse impacts* to EFH. We are also requesting any additional conservation measures that may be required.

If you have any questions or require further information, please contact Ms. Stacie Palmer at the Department of Transportation and Development at (225) 242-4517.

Sincerely,

Stacie Palmer for

Noel Ardoin
Environmental Engineer Administrator

SV

Sent Registered mail return receipt requested

Attachment A: SOV Responses

This project has been reviewed for effects to Federal trust resources under our jurisdiction and currently protected by the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (Act). The project, as proposed,

() Will have no effect on those resources

(x) Is not likely to adversely affect those resources. AS, AS-CH, RMP, manatee

This finding fulfills the requirements under Section 7(a)(2) of the Act.

[Signature]
Acting Supervisor
Louisiana Field Office
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Date

Sept 26, 2016

April 4, 2016

F/SER46:RH:jk
225/389-0508

Mr. Noel Ardoin, Environmental Engineer Administrator
Louisiana Department of Transportation & Development
1201 Capitol Access Road
Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70802

Dear Mr. Ardoin:

NOAA's National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) has received your letter dated January 27, 2016, pertaining to the proposed replacement/repair of the US Highway 90 Pearl River bridges (State project nos. H.000284 and H.000286). The Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development (LDOTD) is evaluating options to repair or replace five bridges associated with US Highway 90 over the Pearl River basin. The LDOTD has indicated an intention to complete an environmental assessment (EA) as part of the decision-making process and included information regarding potential project impacts on essential fish habitat (EFH) in the letter. Your letter identified five bridge repair/remediation alternatives to be evaluated ranging widely in potential for adverse impact to resources of concern. According to information in the letter, LDOTD has determined that the proposed action could result in minor, short- and long-term adverse impacts to EFH.

As noted in your letter, NMFS has previously submitted scoping level comments to LDOTD on this project by letters dated October 27, 2012, and February 13, 2014. Our letters indicated bridge replacement had the potential to adversely impact EFH and recommended any EA developed for the project include sections describing impacts to EFH and associated marine fishery resources. In addition to the EFH determination previously summarized, your letter identified a number of federally managed fishery species having EFH in the project area. The NMFS believes information in your letter includes some of the basic components of an EFH assessment required of all projects having the potential to impact habitat supportive of federally managed fishery species. The NMFS has the following comments regarding information included in the letter and to assist in the completion of the EFH assessment required under provisions of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act.

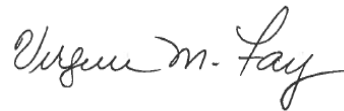
Your letter identifies a number of federally managed fishery resources having EFH in the project area. Of the pelagic species listed, only Spanish mackerel should be considered to have EFH potentially impacted by bridge replacement activities. All other pelagic fishery resources identified in your letter should not be included in the EA. Additionally, only gray snapper and lane snapper should be identified as reef fish potentially impacted by project implementation. The NMFS concurs with the inclusion of red drum, white shrimp and brown shrimp as federally managed species having EFH in the project area.

While the information transmitted in your letter includes many of the basic components of an EFH assessment, no description is provided of mitigation necessary to offset such impacts. The

NMFS understands the EA to be completed for the project will compare impacts of the various alternatives and identify a preferred alternative to repair or replace each bridge. The NMFS recommends the EA quantify impacts of each alternative on the various categories of EFH (e.g., open water, submerged aquatic vegetation, emergent marsh, unconsolidated mud bottoms). Where an alternative would result in long term adverse impacts to EFH, the EA should identify compensatory mitigation necessary to offset such impacts. The compensatory mitigation plan, if determined necessary for the preferred alternative, should contain all the required components of such a plan, including a thorough project description, success criteria, monitoring and adaptive management. If desired, NMFS would be willing to coordinate with LDOTD in advance of the release of a draft EA to ensure sufficient detail on the compensatory mitigation plan is provided in the document.

We appreciate the opportunity to review the draft EFH assessment and provide input on this project. If you wish to discuss this project further, please contact Richard Hartman at (225) 389-0508, extension 203.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Virginia M. Fay".

Virginia M. Fay
Assistant Regional Administrator
Habitat Conservation Division

c:
F/SER46, Swafford
Files



Environmental Section
PO Box 94245 | Baton Rouge, LA 70804-9245
ph: 225-242-4502 | fx: 225-242-4500

John Bel Edwards, Governor
Shawn D. Wilson, Ph.D., Secretary

January 27, 2016

State Project No: H.000284 US 90: Pearl River Bridges and H.000286 East Pearl River Bridge
Federal Aid No: H000284/000286
Name: US 90 Pearl River Bridges
Route: US 90
Parish/County: St. Tammany Parish, LA and Hancock County, MS

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Louisiana Ecological Services Office
Attn: Amy Trahan
646 Cajundome Boulevard, Suite 400
Lafayette, LA 70506

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Mississippi Ecological Services Office
Attn: Amy Carson
6578 Dogwood View Parkway
Jackson, MS 39213

NOAA National Marine Fisheries Service
Southeast Regional Office
Attn: Mr. David Dale
263 13th Avenue South
Saint Petersburg, FL 33701

Subject: Formal Section 7 and Essential Fish Habitat Consultation Initiation

The purpose of this initiation package is to review the proposed US 90 Pearl River Bridges rehabilitation/replacement project in sufficient detail to determine to what extent the proposed action may affect any of the threatened, endangered, proposed, or sensitive species; designated or proposed critical habitats; and/or essential fish habitat (EFH). In addition, the following information is provided to comply with statutory requirements to use the best scientific and commercial information available when assessing the risks posed to listed and/or proposed species, designated and/or proposed critical habitat within the proposed project area, and EFH within the proposed project area by the proposed federal action. This initiation package is prepared in accordance with legal requirements set forth under regulations implementing Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act (ESA) (50 CFR 402; 16 U.S.C. 1536 (c)) and Section 305(b) of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (MSA) (16 U.S.C. 1855(b)).

1.0 Description of the Proposed Action

The Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development (LADOTD), in conjunction with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), is preparing planning and environmental documents for the rehabilitation or replacement of five bridge structures associated with the Pearl River system along US 90. The enclosed Study Area map, Figure 1, shows the limits of the project. The project logical termini are the US 90 intersection with US 190 in St. Tammany Parish, Louisiana and the US 90 intersection with MS 604 in Hancock County, Mississippi.

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Map No.	Structure Number	Structure Type	Water Body Crossing
1	62520060705291	Movable: Lift-Span	West Pearl River
2	62520060706701	Pony Truss - Warren Truss	West Middle Pearl River
3	62520060707111	Pony Truss - Warren Truss	Middle Middle Pearl River
4	62520060707701	Pony Truss - Warren Truss	East Middle Pearl River
5	62520060800001	Movabe: Swing - Through Truss (Parker Truss)	East Pearl River

NOTE: Logical Termini are the intersections of US 90 with US 190 and MS 604 and latitude and longitude data are in decimal format

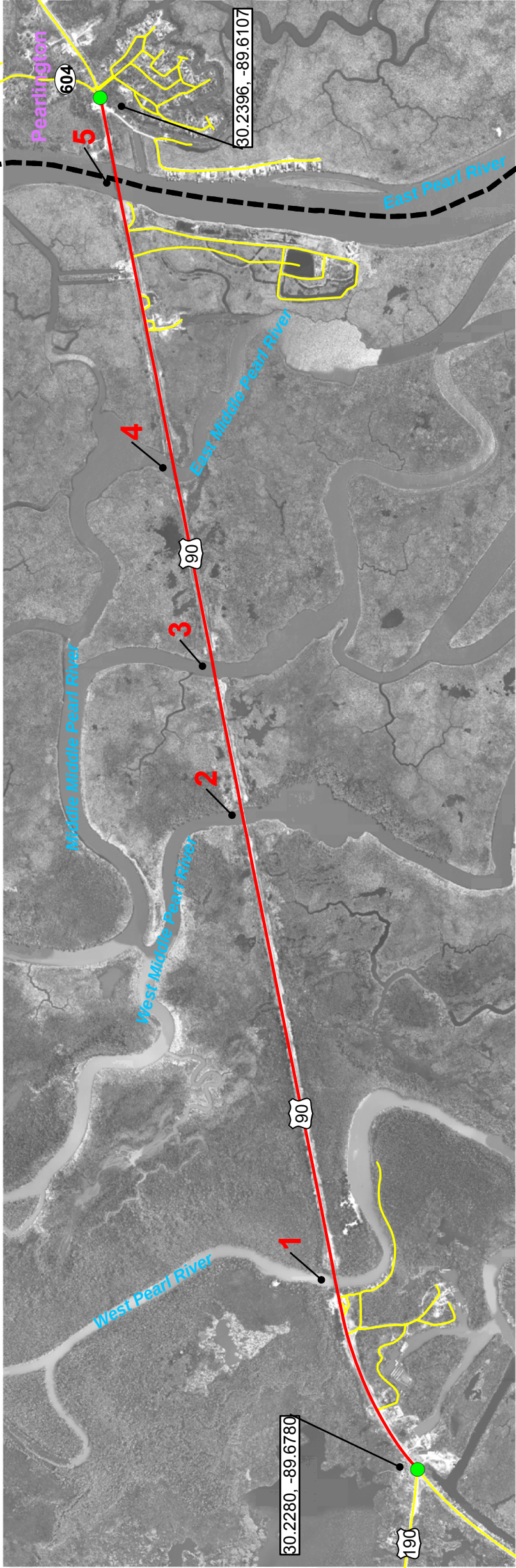


Figure 1
Study Area

Legend

- Logical Termini
- Project Limits
- Roadway Network
- LA/MS State Boundary Line

XX.XXX, XX.XXX Latitude, Longitude



H.000284 US 90: PEARL RIVER BRIDGES AND
H.000286 EAST PEARL RIVER BRIDGE
ROUTE US 90
ST. TAMMANY PARISH, LA

Prepared For:



Source (Citation) for 2010 six inch pixel Imagery Parish Mosais

This imagery was provided by the Louisiana Governor's Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness (GOHSEP) and is the property of the Louisiana Governor's Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness. It is not to be reproduced or distributed without the written permission of the Louisiana state government agencies in the interest of good government practices.

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GOHSEP and the RPC are not responsible for any errors arising from any use of alterations made to the data. Under no circumstances is resale or distribution of the data permitted.

Mosaics were produced and compressed by the Louisiana State University Coastal Studies Institute.

Imagery Information: The red, green, blue (true color) and near-infrared four-band aerial imagery was captured between February 10th and April 1st of 2010 (re-flights for any corrections flown until April 28th, 2010) by Sanborn Map Company, Inc.

The imagery is projected to UTM 15 NAD 83; unit of measure is meters. The spatial resolution is approximately a six inch pixel. Any use of this data must be accompanied with this citation and accompanying scale and logos embedded within.



Prepared By: Neel-Schaffer, Inc.

The existing roadway is a two lane rural arterial roadway (RA-2) with 12 foot travel lanes and 8 foot paved shoulders. Average Daily Traffic is approximately 3,000 vehicles per day.

Five bridges associated with the Pearl River system are crossed as follows:

- Structure no. 62520060705291, West Pearl River Bridge, Movable Lift Span
- Structure no. 62520060706701, West Middle Pearl River Bridge
- Structure no. 62520060707111, Middle Middle Pearl River Bridge
- Structure no. 62520060707701, East Middle Pearl River Bridge
- Structure no. 62520060800001, East Pearl River Bridge, Movable Swing Span

The FHWA is the lead federal agency for the proposed project. LADOTD will be conducting an Environmental Assessment (EA) study for the proposed action.

US 90, through the project limits, will remain open to traffic during bridge rehabilitation or replacement.

2.0 Purpose of the Project

The purposes of the proposed action, which have been approved by FHWA, are:

- To improve the structural integrity and functionality of the bridges.
- To support hurricane evacuations.
- To maintain system linkage on US 90, specifically in the event of a traffic diversion from Interstate 10.

3.0 Preliminary Alternatives

The proposed alternatives to be evaluated for each bridge site are as follows:

- 1) No-Build
- 2) Rehabilitation of existing bridges, with detour bridges
- 3) Replace bridges on alignment, with detour bridges
- 4) Replace bridges on offset alignment, maintain traffic on existing alignment
- 5) National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)-derived alternative

4.0 Consultation to Date

The Environmental Section of LADOTD sent Solicitation of Views (SOV) letters for this project dated September 27, 2012 and again dated January 15, 2014 to the USFWS Lafayette Ecological Services Office. Responses were received from the USFWS Lafayette office dated November 2, 2012 and January 24, 2014. Copies of the SOV responses are included as Attachment A.

Informal discussions between Amy Trahan of the USFWS Lafayette Office, Jerry Bolton of Neel-Schaffer, Inc. (LADOTD's contractor), and Stacie Palmer (LADOTD Environmental) occurred during the months of September and October 2015. These discussions were limited to acquiring guidance on consultation procedures between Lafayette and the USFWS Mississippi Ecological Services office; if USFWS would like a field visit; and whether or not a Biological Assessment (BA) would be required. As a result of these discussions, it was determined that LADOTD should enter into formal consultation with the USFWS.

The Environmental Section of LADOTD sent Solicitation of Views (SOV) letters for this project to NOAA on September 27, 2012 and again dated January 15, 2014. Responses were received from the NOAA on October 30, 2012 and February 13, 2014. Copies of the SOV responses are included as Attachment A.

5.0 Threatened, Endangered, and Proposed Threatened/Endangered Species

According to the SOV responses from USFWS Lafayette Office, the following listed species may be affected by the proposed action:

Gulf Sturgeon, *Acipenser oxyrinchus desotoi*, Threatened
Ringed Map Turtle, *Graptemys oculifera*, Threatened
West Indian Manatee, *Trichechus manatus*, Endangered

6.0 Status of these Species in the Project Area

6.1 Gulf Sturgeon

On September 30, 1991, the Gulf sturgeon was listed as a threatened species under the ESA, and the USFWS designated critical habitat for this species on February 28, 2003.

The Gulf sturgeon is an anadromous fish (*i.e.* a fish that breeds in freshwater after migrating from marine or estuarine environments). The Gulf sturgeon inhabits coastal rivers from Louisiana to Florida during spring and summer, and the estuaries, bays, and marine environments of the Gulf of Mexico during fall and winter. In the spring (from late February to mid-April) when the river surface temperatures are 63°F to 70°F, sexually mature males and females migrate into rivers to spawn (Carr et al. 1996). Spawning occurs in coastal rivers between late winter and early spring (*i.e.* March to May). When river temperatures drop in the fall, Gulf sturgeon return to the coastal shelf areas of the Gulf of Mexico (Carr et al. 1996).

The majority of recent Gulf sturgeon sightings in the Pearl River drainage have occurred downstream of the Pools Bluff Sill near Bogalusa, Louisiana and downstream of the Bogue Chitto Sill on the Bogue Chitto River in St. Tammany Parish, Louisiana. According to the Designation of Critical Habitat for the Gulf Sturgeon (USFWS 2003), between 1992 and 1996, 257 Gulf sturgeon were captured from the Pearl River system (West Middle River, Bogue Chitto River, East

Pearl River, and West Pearl River). The subpopulation in that system was estimated at 292 fish, of which only 2 to 3 percent were adults (Morrow et al. 1998). The annual mortality rate was calculated to be 25 percent. However, due to lack of research since Hurricanes Ivan and Katrina, no data are available to determine the current size of the Gulf sturgeon populations in the western portion of the geographic range (*i.e.*, Pearl and Pascagoula Rivers) of Gulf sturgeon (USFWS 2009).

The primary threats to the Gulf sturgeon are incidental catch in trammel and gill nets; harvest of adults for meat and eggs (caviar); habitat alteration, especially the construction of dams, which limits access to the spawning areas; and continued modification of rivers by constructing dams or dredging, which affects habitat quality and availability.

The proposed action involves the rehabilitation or replacement of the bridges over the West Pearl, West Middle Pearl, Middle Middle Pearl, East Middle Pearl, and East Pearl Rivers. All five rivers are known to support gulf sturgeon. Surveys for Gulf sturgeon for this project will not be conducted because of the complexity of surveys and the risk of harm to the species. LADOTD assumes presence of the Gulf sturgeon in the proposed project area.

6.2 Ringed Map Turtle

On December 23, 1986, the ringed map turtle was listed as a threatened species under the ESA.

The ringed map turtle is a small to medium sized riverine species that typically inhabits rivers with a moderate current, sandy bottom, and numerous basking logs. The river must be wide enough to allow sun penetration for several hours. Nesting habitat consists of large, high sand and gravel bars adjacent to the river. Good water quality is necessary for the production of snails and other mollusks on which the ringed map turtle feeds. Eggs are deposited on sandbars in early June (Cagle 1953).

The ringed map turtle is restricted to the Pearl River and its major tributaries in Mississippi and Louisiana. According to the USFWS SOV letters, “In Louisiana, it occurs in the Bogue Chitto River south of Franklinton, and in the Pearl River north of Louisiana Highway 190 in St. Tammany and Washington Parishes.”

The primary threats to the ringed map turtle are habitat modification and water quality deterioration, reservoir construction, channelization, de-snagging for navigation, siltation, and the subsequent loss of invertebrate food sources.

The proposed action involves the rehabilitation or replacement of the bridges over the West Pearl, West Middle Pearl, Middle Middle Pearl, East Middle Pearl, and East Pearl Rivers. The West and East Pearl Rivers are known to support ringed map turtle, and the likelihood of occurrence of this species in the West Middle, Middle Middle, and East Middle is high. Surveys for ringed map

turtle for this project will not be conducted because this species is elusive and startles easily when approached. LADOTD assumes presence of the ringed map turtle in the proposed project area.

6.3 West Indian Manatee

On March 11, 1967, the West Indian manatee was listed as an endangered species under the ESA, and the USFWS designated critical habitat for this species on September 22, 1977.

The manatee is a docile marine mammal that inhabits freshwater, brackish, and marine habitats and can move freely among all such waters. They are often found in open marine water, bays, and rivers, as well as shallow, slow-moving rivers, estuaries and canals.

According to the USFWS SOV, the manatee “is known to regularly occur in Lakes Ponchartrain and Maurepas and their associated coastal waters and streams. It also can be found less regularly in other Louisiana coastal areas, most likely while the average water temperature is warm. Based on data maintained by the LNHP, over 80% of reported manatee sightings (1999-2011) in Louisiana have occurred from the months of June through December.” Sightings of the West Indian manatee in Louisiana have occurred in the Amite, Blind, Tchefuncte, Tickfaw, and Atchafalaya Rivers, Mississippi River Gulf Outlet Canal (MRGO), and in canals within the adjacent coastal marshes of Louisiana. However, there is no known population thriving in the State.

The primary threats to the West Indian manatee are collisions with boats and barges, death due to flood-control structures, poaching and vandalism, habitat loss, pollution, harassment by boaters and divers, and natural factors such as unusually cold weather and outbreaks of red tide.

The proposed action involves the rehabilitation or replacement of the bridges over the West Pearl, West Middle Pearl, Middle Middle Pearl, East Middle Pearl, and East Pearl Rivers. All five rivers could potentially support West Indian manatee. In fact, the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries (LDWF) has placed a “Manatee Area” sign at the boat launch on the East Pearl to encourage boaters to proceed with caution. Surveys for West Indian manatee for this proposed project will not be conducted because this species is highly mobile and may not occur in the area during the majority of the year. LADOTD assumes presence of the West Indian manatee in the proposed project area.

7.0 Critical Habitat

7.1 Gulf Sturgeon

According to the USFWS SOV response:

“On March 19, 2003, the Service and the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) published a final rule in the Federal Register (Volume 68, No. 53)

designating critical habitat for the Gulf sturgeon in Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, and Florida. Portions of the Pearl and Bogue Chitto Rivers, Lake Pontchartrain east of the Lake Pontchartrain Causeway, all of Little Lake, The Rigolets, Lake St. Catherine, and Lake Borgne within Louisiana were included in that designation. The primary constituent elements essential for the conservation of Gulf sturgeon are those habitat components that support feeding, resting, sheltering, reproduction, migration, and physical features necessary for maintaining the natural processes that support those habitat components; those elements should be considered when determining potential project impacts.”

Critical habitat for the Gulf sturgeon is comprised of 14 geographic areas or units. The proposed project falls within the Pearl River Critical Habitat Unit (Unit 1). This unit includes the West Pearl, West Middle Pearl, Middle Middle Pearl, East Middle Pearl, and East Pearl Rivers (Figure 2). Unit 1 encompasses a total of 795 river kilometers or 494 river miles. The lateral extent of Unit 1 is the ordinary high water line on each bank of the associated rivers.

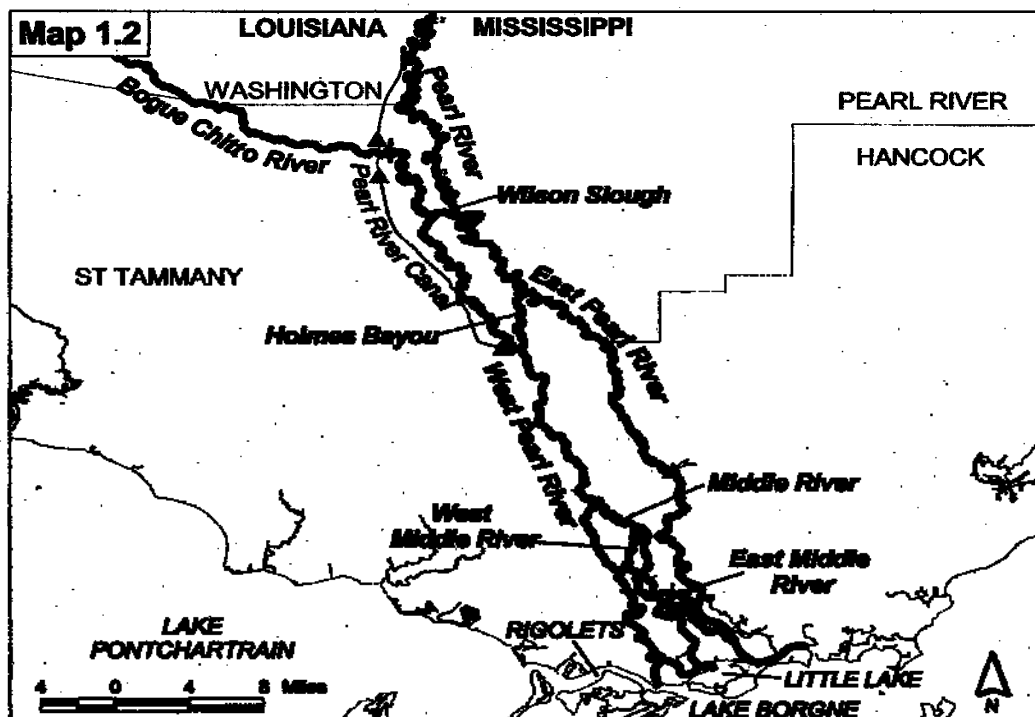


Figure 2. Gulf Sturgeon Critical Habitat within Project Area (USFWS 2003)

The proposed action involves the rehabilitation or replacement of the bridges over the West Pearl, West Middle Pearl, Middle Middle Pearl, East Middle Pearl, and East Pearl Rivers. All five bridge crossings occur within designated critical habitat for the Gulf sturgeon.

7.2 West Indian Manatee

Critical habitat has been designated for the West Indian manatee; however, the extent of the designation is within the State of Florida.

8.0 Essential Fish Habitat

The Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act of 1976 (MSA) (16 U.S.C. 1801 et seq.) established jurisdiction over marine fishery resources within the U.S. Exclusive Economic Zone. The MSA mandated the formation of eight fishery management councils (FMC), which function to conserve and manage certain fisheries within their geographic jurisdiction. The Councils are required to prepare and maintain a Fishery Management Plan (FMP) for each fishery that requires management. Amendments contained in the Sustainable Fisheries Act of 1996 (Public Law 104-267) require the Councils to identify EFH for each fishery covered under a FMP. EFH is defined as the waters and substrate necessary for spawning, breeding, or growth to maturity. The term “fish” is defined as “finfish, mollusks, crustaceans, and all other forms of marine animals and plant life other than marine mammals and birds.”

In addition to the regional FMCs, the Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission (GSMFC) and NOAA Fisheries also have management responsibilities for certain fisheries. The GSMFC is an organization of five states from the Gulf Coast of Florida to Texas that manages fishery resources in state waters of the Gulf of Mexico. The GSMFC provides coordination and administration for a number of cooperative state/federal marine fishery resources. NOAA Fisheries has jurisdiction over highly migratory species in federal waters of the Gulf of Mexico. Typically, the GSMFC and NOAA Fisheries work closely with regional Councils in preparing and implementing fishery management strategies.

The GMFMC manages seven fishery resources in federal waters off the coasts of Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, and the west coast of Florida to Key West (Table 1). Within the project area, EFH has been designated for coastal migratory pelagics, red drum, reef fish, and shrimp. The coastal migratory pelagics FMP consists of king mackerel, Spanish mackerel, dolphin, little tunny, cero, bluefish, and cobia. The reef fish FMP includes 43 species of snappers, groupers, sea bass, triggerfish, jacks, wrasses, sand perch, and tilefish. Shrimp species include brown, white, pink, and royal red.

According to the NOAA SOV, “wetlands in the project area consist of intermediate marsh vegetated primarily with saltmeadow cordgrass and switchgrass. These wetlands in the project area are categorized as EFH under the provisions of the Magnuson-Stevens Fisheries Conservation and Management Act. Aquatic and tidally influenced wetland habitats in the project area are designated as EFH for post larval and juvenile life stages of white shrimp and red drum.”

Table 1. Managed Species for which EFH has been Identified in the Gulf of Mexico

NOAA and GSFMC Jurisdiction	
Managed Species or Species Group	EFH Designation in the Project Area
Coastal Migratory Pelagics (7 species)	West Pearl, West Middle Pearl, Middle Middle Pearl, East Middle Pearl, and East Pearl Rivers
Coral and Coral Reefs (over 300 species)	N/A
Red Drum	West Pearl, West Middle Pearl, Middle Middle Pearl, East Middle Pearl, and East Pearl Rivers
Reef Fish (43 species)	West Pearl, West Middle Pearl, Middle Middle Pearl, East Middle Pearl, and East Pearl Rivers
Shrimp (4 species)	West Pearl, West Middle Pearl, Middle Middle Pearl, East Middle Pearl, and East Pearl Rivers
Spiny Lobster	N/A
Stone Crab	N/A

Source: NOAA 2015.

N/A = EFH designation is not affected by the proposed project

9.0 Effects of the Proposed Action

9.1 Gulf Sturgeon

Effects from the proposed action to the Gulf Sturgeon could include:

- Noise from construction during Gulf sturgeon migration (*i.e.*, effects of pile driving, drilling, demolition, blasting, and boat operations)
- Disturbance of sediment and increased turbidity
- Exposure to contaminants as a result of storm and wastewater runoff
- Direct mortality/incidental take

Behavioral responses as a result of the proposed bridge rehabilitation/replacement are expected to be temporal and limited to the area and time when underwater noise levels are greatest and as such will be limited to only several hours at a time. These behavioral responses could range from a temporary startle to avoidance of the project area. Construction activities as a result of the proposed action are not anticipated to cause any significant delay to spawning migrations or the abandonment of spawning migrations. Any minor changes in behavior resulting from exposure to increased underwater noise associated with construction are not anticipated to prevent the Gulf sturgeon from completing any essential behaviors such as resting, foraging, or migrating. It is LADOTD's opinion that all effects of exposure to increased underwater noise, turbidity, and contaminants will be insignificant and discountable.

LADOTD will make every effort to ensure that the potential for incidental take of Gulf sturgeon is minimized by observing a number of environmental commitments and assurances. These include:

- 1) Testing of various noise abatement and sediment containment measures during the project
- 2) Reduction of noise impacts through the implementation of BMPs and by limiting the duration of pile-driving activities with impact hammers, particularly during biologically significant time periods (e.g., spawning migrations from March to May)
- 3) Use of vibratory hammers to the fullest extent possible in lieu of traditional pile driving equipment
- 4) Maintenance of a corridor of passage outside of the immediate construction area to allow fish migration
- 5) Minimization of suspended sediments using cofferdams and silt curtains
- 6) Limiting construction to a maximum of 12 hours per day
- 7) Scheduling work at a time of the year where it is less likely for sturgeon to be present

In regards to critical habitat, LADOTD expects the proposed action to cause temporary adverse effects to some essential features of critical habitat, including water quality, substrate, migration conditions, and forage grounds. However, LADOTD expects these effects to be temporary, and ceasing upon completion of the project. Construction would require the development and implementation of an erosion and sediment control plan, which would specify BMPs to be used prior to construction activities and periodic maintenance and inspection procedures during construction. The plan would be designed to reduce suspended solids, turbidity, and downstream sedimentation that may degrade water quality and adversely impact aquatic life (including Gulf sturgeon). It is LADOTD's opinion that all effects to designated critical habitat in the project area associated with bridge rehabilitation/replacement will be insignificant and discountable through implementation of the erosion and sediment control plan.

9.2 Ringed Map Turtle

Effects from the proposed action to the ringed map turtle could include:

- Noise from construction
- Disturbance of sediment and increased turbidity
- Exposure to contaminants as a result of storm and wastewater runoff
- Habitat loss, fragmentation, and alternation (e.g., changes in temperature, moisture, light, noise, pollutants, or quality of available habitat)
- Injury or mortality occurring during construction (e.g., inadvertent burial or crushing) or subsequent physical contact with construction vehicles

The ringed map turtle tends to startle easily and is fast moving in water. As a result, construction activities and noise would most likely result in only minor disturbances (temporary displacement).

The likelihood of injury or mortality is low because this species will most likely remove itself from the project area during construction. Construction would require the development and implementation of an erosion and sediment control plan, which would specify BMPs to be used prior to construction activities and periodic maintenance and inspection procedures during construction. In addition, construction activities would be limited to a small section of potentially suitable habitat for the species. Ample habitat can be found upstream and downstream of the proposed bridge locations. Habitat loss, fragmentation, and alteration as a result of the proposed action is not anticipated to impact the species' abundance, reproduction, distribution, diversity, or habitat quality or function on a regional scale. It is LADOTD's opinion that all effects of exposure to increased underwater noise, turbidity, and contaminants will be insignificant and discountable.

9.3 West Indian Manatee

If West Indian manatees are present within the project area during construction activities, it is anticipated that the proposed action would result in only minor disturbance (temporary displacement). The manatees would likely move and relocate to other nearby areas for foraging or resting purposes. However, in-water work has the potential to directly injure or kill manatees. LADOTD will make every effort to ensure that the potential for incidental take of manatees is minimized by observing a number of environmental commitments and assurances. These include:

- 1) All personnel associated with the project shall be instructed about the presence of manatees and manatee speed zones, and the need to avoid collisions with and injury to manatees. LADOTD shall advise all construction personnel that there are civil and criminal penalties for harming, harassing, or killing manatees which are protected under the Marine Mammal Protection Act of 1972 and the Endangered Species Act of 1973.
- 2) All on-site project personnel are responsible for observing water-related activities for the presence of manatee(s). All in-water operations, including vessels, must be shut down if a manatee(s) comes within 50 feet of the operation. Activities will not resume until the manatee(s) has moved beyond the 50-foot radius of the project operation, or until 30 minutes elapses if the manatee(s) has not reappeared within 50 feet of the operation. Animals must not be herded away or harassed into leaving.
- 3) If a manatee(s) is sighted near the project area, all vessels associated with the project shall operate at "Idle Speed/No Wake" at all times while in the area and while in water where the draft of the vessel provides less than a four-foot clearance from the bottom. All vessels will follow routes of deep water whenever possible.
- 4) Siltation or turbidity barriers shall be made of material in which manatees cannot become entangled, shall be properly secured, and shall be regularly monitored to avoid manatee entanglement or entrapment. Barriers must not impede manatee movement.
- 5) Temporary signs concerning manatees shall be posted prior to and during all in-water project activities. Each vessel involved in construction activities shall display the sign at

the vessel control station or in a prominent location, visible to all employees operating the vessel, a temporary sign at least 8½" by 11" reading language similar to the following: "CAUTION BOATERS; MANATEE AREA/IDLE SPEED IS REQUIRED IN CONSTRUCTION AREA AND WHERE THERE IS LESS THAN FOUR FOOT BOTTOM CLEEARANCE WHEN MANATEE IS PRESENT". A second temporary sign measuring 8½" by 11" shall be posted at a location prominently visible to all personnel engaged in water-related activities and should read language similar to the following: "CAUTION: MANATEE AREA/EQUIPMENT MUST BE SHUTDOWN IMMEDIATELY IF A MANATEE COMES WITHIN 50 FEET OF OPERATION". The Contractor shall remove the signs upon completion of construction.

- 6) Any collision with, injury to, or sightings of a manatee(s) shall be reported immediately to USFWS Louisiana Ecological Services Office (337-291-3100); the USFWS Mississippi Ecological Services Office (601-965-4900); the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries, Natural Heritage Program (225-765-2821); and the Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries, and Parks, Mississippi Natural Heritage Program (601-576-6000).
- 7) The contractor shall be held responsible for any manatee harmed, harassed, or killed as a result of construction activities not conducted in accordance with these specifications.

9.4 Essential Fish Habitat

The proposed action likely would result in both short- and long-term adverse effects to EFH and managed species, but measures under consideration would keep those impacts to a minimum. The temporary effects to EFH of bridge pile placement and other bottom disturbance would be a short-term increase in noise, turbidity, benthic disturbance (including sediment removal), and siltation. Suspended fine sediments would settle and could result in burial of organisms and/or sediment drift, which depending on the currents, could spread outside the direct impact area. The result would be short-term adverse effects from bridge construction on biota and managed species that use benthic habitats. However, benthic organisms would be expected to recover after construction ceases and other organisms also are expected to recolonize the area afterwards. The aquatic substrate could be slow to recover if temporary construction impacts persist and adverse effects would vary depending on areas disturbed and post-construction sediment composition. Associated construction activities such as drainage improvements and approach construction for the proposed action would result in similar temporary, short-term impacts as discussed above; however, they would occur at much lower levels. Preventative measures would be implemented in terrestrial construction areas (e.g., silt fences), thus greatly reducing runoff (and associated increases in turbidity and sedimentation) into EFH areas. Construction would require the development and implementation of an erosion and sediment control plan, which would specify BMPs to be used prior to construction activities and periodic maintenance and inspection procedures during construction.

Short-term impacts would occur during construction, but the aquatic substrate would be expected to recover after construction. Impacts would result in primarily bottom disturbance and associated

re-suspension of sediments, but most adult fish are mobile and would actively avoid direct impacts. Some impairment of ability of EFH managed species to find prey items could occur, but this effect would be temporary and spatially limited to the immediate vicinity of construction activities.

Because of the location of this project, it can be assumed that wetlands will be impacted by the proposed action. Long-term, adverse impacts to EFH are anticipated as a result of the permanent loss of wetland habitats categorized as EFH. Impact acreages to wetlands is unknown at this time, as initial design of the alternatives is not finalized. Impacts to wetlands from each alternative and efforts to avoid and minimize wetland impacts will be outlined in detail in the EA. Mitigation to compensate for these impacts will be required.

Because of the temporary nature of the effects on benthic invertebrates (the area will recolonize) and the compensation provided for the permanent wetland fill, the cumulative effects of this project on EFH are anticipated to be minor.

10.0 Conclusions

10.1 Gulf Sturgeon

With the implementations of LADOTD's commitments and assurances (outlined in Section 9.1), it is our determination that the proposed action *may affect, not likely to adversely affect* the Gulf sturgeon.

In addition, it is our determination that the proposed action is *not likely to adversely affect* designated critical habitat for the Gulf sturgeon.

10.2 Ringed Map Turtle

Based on the potential level of effects from the proposed action (outlined in Section 9.2), it is LADOTD's determination that the proposed action *may affect, not likely to adversely affect* the ringed map turtle.

10.3 West Indian Manatee

With the implementations of LADOTD's commitments and assurances (outlined in Section 9.3), it is our determination that the proposed action *may affect, not likely to adversely affect* the West Indian manatee.

In addition, it is our determination that the proposed action will have *no effect* on designated critical habitat for the manatee.

10.4 Essential Fish Habitat

Based on the potential level of effects from the proposed action (outlined in Section 9.4), it is LADOTD's determination that the proposed action would result in **minor, short- and long-term, adverse** impacts to EFH.

11.0 Requests

By way of this letter, LADOTD is requesting concurrence from the USFWS Louisiana and Mississippi Ecological Services Offices and NOAA that the proposed US 90 Bridges Project **may affect, not likely to adversely affect** the Gulf sturgeon, ringed mapped turtle, and West Indian manatee. In addition, we are requesting concurrence that the US 90 Bridges Project is **not likely to adversely affect** designated critical habitat for the Gulf sturgeon, and will have **no effect** on designated critical habitat for the manatee. We are also requesting any additional conservation measures that may be required.

By way of this letter, LADOTD is also requesting concurrence from the NOAA that the proposed US 90 Bridges Project would result in **minor, short- and long-term, adverse impacts** to EFH. We are also requesting any additional conservation measures that may be required.

If you have any questions or require further information, please contact Ms. Stacie Palmer at the Department of Transportation and Development at (225) 242-4517.

Sincerely,

Stacie Palmer for

Noel Ardoin
Environmental Engineer Administrator

Sent Registered mail return receipt requested

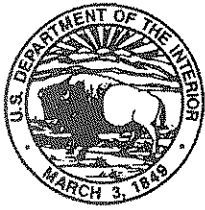
Attachment A: SOV Responses

References

- Cagle, Fred R. 1953. Tulane Studies in Zoology: An Outline for the Study of a Reptile Life History. Tulane University, New Orleans.
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- USFWS. 2003. Endangered and Threatened Wildlife and Plants; Designation of Critical Habitat for the Gulf Sturgeon. Federal Register Volume 68, Number 53. March 19, 2003

Attachment A.

SOV Responses



United States Department of the Interior

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
646 Cajundome Blvd.
Suite 400
Lafayette, Louisiana 70506



November 2, 2012

Ms. Noel Ardoin
Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development
P.O. Box 94245
Baton Rouge, LA 70804-9245

Dear Ms. Ardoin:

Please reference your September 27, 2012, letter, received in our office October 9, 2012, requesting our review of the proposed rehabilitation of four bridges located on US 90 in St. Tammany Parish, Louisiana. The Service has reviewed the information provided, and offers the following comments in accordance with provisions of the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (87 Stat. 884, as amended; 16 U.S.C. 1531 et seq.).

The Gulf sturgeon (*Acipenser oxyrinchus desotoi*), federally listed as a threatened species, is an anadromous fish that occurs in many rivers, streams, and estuarine waters along the northern Gulf coast between the Mississippi River and the Suwannee River, Florida. In Louisiana, Gulf sturgeon have been reported at Rigolets Pass, rivers and lakes of the Lake Pontchartrain basin, and adjacent estuarine areas. Spawning occurs in coastal rivers between late winter and early spring (i.e., March to May). Adults and sub-adults may be found in those rivers and streams until November, and in estuarine or marine waters during the remainder of the year. Sturgeon less than two years old appear to remain in riverine habitats and estuarine areas throughout the year, rather than migrate to marine waters. Habitat alterations such as those caused by water control structures that limit and prevent spawning, poor water quality, and over-fishing have negatively affected this species. This project proposal includes construction work for the rehabilitation of four bridges in the Pearl River, known to support the gulf sturgeon.

On March 19, 2003, the Service and the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) published a final rule in the Federal Register (Volume 68, No. 53) designating critical habitat for the Gulf sturgeon in Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, and Florida. Portions of the Pearl and Bogue Chitto Rivers, Lake Pontchartrain east of the Lake Pontchartrain Causeway, all of Little Lake, The Rigolets, Lake St. Catherine, and Lake Borgne within Louisiana were included in that designation. The primary constituent elements essential for the conservation of Gulf sturgeon are those habitat components that support feeding, resting, sheltering, reproduction, migration, and physical features necessary for maintaining the natural processes that support those habitat components; those elements should be considered when determining potential project impacts. The primary constituent elements for Gulf sturgeon critical habitat include:

- abundant prey items within riverine habitats for larval and juvenile life stages, and within estuarine and marine habitats for juvenile, sub-adult, and adult life stages;
- riverine spawning sites with substrates suitable for egg deposition and development, such as limestone outcrops and cut limestone banks, bedrock, large gravel or cobble beds, marl, soapstone, or hard clay;
- riverine aggregation areas, also referred to as resting, holding and staging areas, used by adult, sub-adult, and/or juveniles, generally, but not always, located in holes below normal river bend depths, believed necessary for minimizing energy expenditures during freshwater residency and possibly for osmoregulatory functions;
- a flow regime (i.e., the magnitude, frequency, duration, seasonality, and rate-of-change of freshwater discharge over time) necessary for normal behavior, growth, and survival of all life stages in the riverine environment, including migration, breeding site selection, courtship, egg fertilization, resting, and staging; and necessary for maintaining spawning sites in suitable condition for egg attachment, egg sheltering, resting, and larvae staging;
- water quality, including temperature, salinity, pH, hardness, turbidity, oxygen content, and other chemical characteristics, necessary for normal behavior, growth, and viability of all life stages;
- sediment quality, including texture and other chemical characteristics, necessary for normal behavior, growth, and viability of all life stages; and
- safe and unobstructed migratory pathways necessary for passage within and between riverine, estuarine, and marine habitats (e.g., a river unobstructed by a permanent structure, or a dammed river that still allows for passage).

In that critical habitat designation, responsibility for consultation with specific Federal agencies was also identified for the Service and for the NMFS. For estuarine waters in Louisiana, the NMFS is responsible for consultations regarding impacts to the sturgeon and its critical habitat with all Federal agencies, except the Department of Transportation, the Environmental Protection Agency, the U.S. Coast Guard, and the Federal Emergency Management Agency, which consult with the Service. In riverine waters, the Service is responsible for all consultations regarding Gulf sturgeon and critical habitat, while in marine waters the NMFS is responsible for consultation. Should the proposed project directly or indirectly affect the Gulf sturgeon or its critical habitat in Louisiana, further consultation with this office will be necessary.

The proposed project is also located within threatened ringed-map (=sawback) turtle (*Graptemys oculifera*) occupied habitat. The ringed map turtle is endemic to the Pearl River system. In Louisiana, it occurs in the Bogue Chitto River south of Franklinton, and in the Pearl River north of Louisiana Highway 190 in St. Tammany and Washington Parishes. It is found in riverine habitats with moderate currents, channels wide enough to

permit sunlight penetration for several hours each day, numerous logs for basking, and large, sandy banks that are used for nesting. Habitat loss (i.e., loss of exposed sandbars, basking areas) and water quality degradation (which decreases food supply) have contributed to the decline of this species. Should the proposed project directly or indirectly affect the ringed map turtle or its habitat, further consultation with this office will be necessary.

The endangered West Indian manatee (*Trichechus manatus*) is known to regularly occur in Lakes Pontchartrain and Maurepas and their associated coastal waters and streams. It also can be found less regularly in other Louisiana coastal areas, most likely while the average water temperature is warm. Based on data maintained by the Louisiana Natural Heritage Program (LNHP), over 80 percent of reported manatee sightings (1999-2011) in Louisiana have occurred from the months of June through December. Manatee occurrences in Louisiana appear to be increasing and they have been regularly reported in the Amite, Blind, Tchefuncte, and Tickfaw Rivers, and in canals within the adjacent coastal marshes of southeastern Louisiana. Manatees may also infrequently be observed in the Mississippi River and coastal areas of southwestern Louisiana. Cold weather and outbreaks of red tide may adversely affect these animals. However, human activity is the primary cause for declines in species number due to collisions with boats and barges, entrapment in flood control structures, poaching, habitat loss, and pollution.

During in-water work in areas that potentially support manatees all personnel associated with the project should be instructed about the potential presence of manatees, manatee speed zones, and the need to avoid collisions with and injury to manatees. All personnel should be advised that there are civil and criminal penalties for harming, harassing, or killing manatees which are protected under the Marine Mammal Protection Act of 1972 and the Endangered Species Act of 1973. Additionally, personnel should be instructed not to attempt to feed or otherwise interact with the animal, although passively taking pictures or video would be acceptable.

- All on-site personnel are responsible for observing water-related activities for the presence of manatee(s). We recommend the following to minimize potential impacts to manatees in areas of their potential presence:
- All work, equipment, and vessel operation should cease if a manatee is spotted within a 50-foot radius (buffer zone) of the active work area. Once the manatee has left the buffer zone on its own accord (manatees must not be herded or harassed into leaving), or after 30 minutes have passed without additional sightings of manatee(s) in the buffer zone, in-water work can resume under careful observation for manatee(s).
- If a manatee(s) is sighted in or near the project area, all vessels associated with the project should operate at “no wake/idle” speeds within the construction area and at all times while in waters where the draft of the vessel provides less than a four-foot clearance from the bottom. Vessels should follow routes of deep water whenever possible.

- If used, siltation or turbidity barriers should be properly secured, made of material in which manatees cannot become entangled, and be monitored to avoid manatee entrapment or impeding their movement.
- Temporary signs concerning manatees should be posted prior to and during all in-water project activities and removed upon completion. Each vessel involved in construction activities should display at the vessel control station or in a prominent location, visible to all employees operating the vessel, a temporary sign at least 8½ " X 11" reading language similar to the following: "CAUTION BOATERS: MANATEE AREA/ IDLE SPEED IS REQUIRED IN CONSRUCTION AREA AND WHERE THERE IS LESS THAN FOUR FOOT BOTTOM CLEARANCE WHEN MANATEE IS PRESENT". A second temporary sign measuring 8½ " X 11" should be posted at a location prominently visible to all personnel engaged in water-related activities and should read language similar to the following: "CAUTION: MANATEE AREA/ EQUIPMENT MUST BE SHUTDOWN IMMEDIATELY IF A MANATEE COMES WITHIN 50 FEET OF OPERATION".
- Collisions with, injury to, or sightings of manatees should be immediately reported to the Service's Louisiana Ecological Services Office (337/291-3100) and the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries, Natural Heritage Program (225/765-2821). Please provide the nature of the call (i.e., report of an incident, manatee sighting, etc.); time of incident/sighting; and the approximate location, including the latitude and longitude coordinates, if possible.

Should a proposed action directly or indirectly affect the West Indian manatee, further consultation with this office will be necessary.

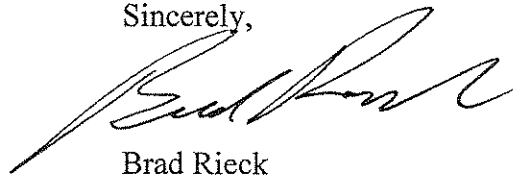
Disconnected The proposed project would be located within the Pearl River Wildlife Management Area (WMA). Please contact the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries, Region 8 Office (504/568-7685), for further information regarding any additional permits that may be required to perform work on that WMA.

The proposed project is within the Pearl River, designated as a Louisiana Natural and Scenic River. Please contact the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries, Scenic Rivers Program (225/765-2334) for further information regarding any additional permits that may be required to perform work on the above referenced creek.

The proposed project may impact wetlands. For a complete jurisdictional wetland delineation of the proposed project, please contact Mr. Robert Heffner (504/862-2274) at the New Orleans District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps). If the Corps determines that the proposed project is within their regulatory jurisdiction, official Service comments will be provided in response to the corresponding Public Notice.

We appreciate the opportunity to provide comments regarding the proposed project. Should you have further questions, please contact Amy Trahan (337/291-3126) of this office.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Brad Rieck', with a stylized, flowing script.

Brad Rieck
Deputy Field Supervisor
Louisiana Ecological Services Office

cc: USACE, New Orleans, LA
LDWF, Scenic Rivers Program, Baton Rouge, LA
LDWF, Region 8, New Orleans, LA
LDWF, Natural Heritage Program, Baton Rouge, LA



United States Department of the Interior

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
646 Cajundome Blvd.
Suite 400
Lafayette, Louisiana 70506



January 24, 2014

Ms. Noel Ardoin
Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development
P.O. Box 94245
Baton Rouge, LA 70804-9245

Dear Ms. Ardoin:

Please reference your January 15, 2014, letter, received in our office via electronic mail on January 21, 2014, requesting our review of the proposed rehabilitation of five bridges located on US 90 in St. Tammany Parish, Louisiana. The Service has reviewed the information provided, and offers the following comments in accordance with provisions of the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (87 Stat. 884, as amended; 16 U.S.C. 1531 et seq.).

The Gulf sturgeon (*Acipenser oxyrinchus desotoi*), federally listed as a threatened species, is an anadromous fish that occurs in many rivers, streams, and estuarine waters along the northern Gulf coast between the Mississippi River and the Suwannee River, Florida. In Louisiana, Gulf sturgeon have been reported at Rigolets Pass, rivers and lakes of the Lake Pontchartrain basin, and adjacent estuarine areas. Spawning occurs in coastal rivers between late winter and early spring (i.e., March to May). Adults and sub-adults may be found in those rivers and streams until November, and in estuarine or marine waters during the remainder of the year. Sturgeon less than two years old appear to remain in riverine habitats and estuarine areas throughout the year, rather than migrate to marine waters. Habitat alterations such as those caused by water control structures that limit and prevent spawning, poor water quality, and over-fishing have negatively affected this species. This project proposal includes construction work for the rehabilitation of four bridges in the Pearl River, known to support the gulf sturgeon.

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- If a manatee(s) is sighted in or near the project area, all vessels associated with the project should operate at “no wake/idle” speeds within the construction area and at all times while in waters where the draft of the vessel provides less than a four-foot clearance from the bottom. Vessels should follow routes of deep water whenever possible.
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- Collisions with, injury to, or sightings of manatees should be immediately reported to the Service’s Louisiana Ecological Services Office (337/291-3100) and the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries, Natural Heritage Program (225/765-2821). Please provide the nature of the call (i.e., report of an incident, manatee sighting, etc.); time of incident/sighting; and the approximate location, including the latitude and longitude coordinates, if possible.

Should a proposed action directly or indirectly affect the West Indian manatee, further consultation with this office will be necessary.

The proposed project would be located within the Pearl River Wildlife Management Area (WMA). Please contact the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries, Region 8 Office (504/568-7685), for further information regarding any additional permits that may be required to perform work on that WMA.

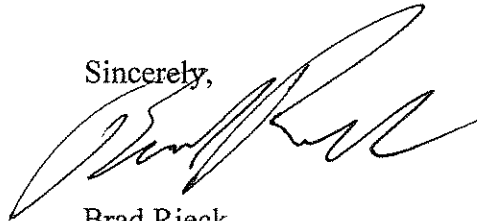
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The proposed project may impact wetlands. For a complete jurisdictional wetland delineation of the proposed project, please contact Mr. Robert Heffner (504/862-2274) at

the New Orleans District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps). If the Corps determines that the proposed project is within their regulatory jurisdiction, official Service comments will be provided in response to the corresponding Public Notice.

We appreciate the opportunity to provide comments regarding the proposed project. Should you have further questions, please contact Seth Bordelon (337/291-3138) of this office.

Sincerely,



Brad Rieck
Deputy Field Supervisor
Louisiana Ecological Services Office

cc: USACE, New Orleans, LA
LDWF, Scenic Rivers Program, Baton Rouge, LA
LDWF, Region 8, New Orleans, LA
LDWF, Natural Heritage Program, Baton Rouge, LA



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE

Southeast Regional Office
263 13th Avenue, South
St. Petersburg, Florida 33701

October 30, 2012 F/SER46/LA:jk
225/389-0508

Mr. Noel A. Ardoin
Environmental Engineer Administrator
Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development
Post Office Box 94245
Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70804-9245

Dear Mr. Ardoin;

NOAA's National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) has reviewed the project information transmitted in the Solicitation of Views (SOV) for State Project number H.000284 dated September 27, 2012. The Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development (LDOTD) is proposing to replace four existing bridges located on US 90 in St. Tammany Parish, Louisiana. In your SOV, you requested the identification of possible adverse environmental effects or concerns.

Wetlands in the project area consist of intermediate marsh vegetated primarily with saltmeadow cordgrass and switchgrass. These wetlands in the project area are categorized as essential fish habitat (EFH) under provisions of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (Magnuson-Stevens Act). Aquatic and tidally influenced wetland habitats in the project area are designated as EFH for post larval and juvenile life stages of white shrimp and red drum. Fishery management plans for these species have been developed by the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council (GMFMC). Detailed information on federally-managed fisheries and their EFH is provided in the 2005 generic amendment of the fishery management plan for the Gulf of Mexico prepared by the GMFMC. The generic amendment was prepared as required by the Magnuson-Stevens Act.

In addition to being designated as EFH for various federally managed species, wetlands in the project area provide nursery and foraging habitats for a variety of economically important marine fishery species such as blue crab, Gulf menhaden, spotted seatrout, sand seatrout, southern flounder and striped mullet. Some of these species serve as prey for other fish species managed under the Magnuson-Stevens Act by the GMFMC (e.g., mackerels, snappers, and groupers) and highly migratory species managed by NMFS (e.g., billfishes and sharks). Wetlands in the project area also produce nutrients and detritus, important components of the aquatic food web, which contribute to the overall productivity of the Mississippi Sound estuary.

The project alternatives for the four bridges have yet to be described, but any alternative in which the bridge is relocated could have the potential to adversely impact wetland habitats categorized as EFH. Provisions of the Clean Water Act require sequential efforts to avoid and

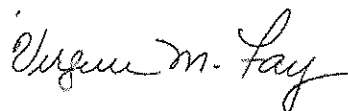


then reduce impacts to wetlands to the maximum extent practicable. LDOTD should evaluate all alternatives in an effort to minimize wetland impacts and, after selecting an alternative, evaluate construction methods and designs that would further reduce adverse impacts. Once all efforts have been completed to avoid or minimize wetland impacts, a compensatory mitigation plan should be developed to completely offset project related impacts to EFH and associated marine fishery resources. The Environmental Assessment to be developed for this project should thoroughly describe all resources potentially impacted by bridge construction activities, detail all efforts to avoid and minimize wetland impacts, and describe the mitigation plan to be used to compensate for all adverse impacts to resources of concern.

Provisions of the Magnuson-Stevens Act require coordination with NMFS on any federal action, including funding of an action, which has the potential to adversely impact EFH. As identified above, this project has the potential to adversely impact EFH. If more than one federal agency is responsible for an action, one of those agencies can be designated as a lead agency responsible for fulfilling coordination requirements. In this case, it is likely that the Federal Highway Administration would be providing funds to help pay for the bridge and the Corps of Engineers will be responsible for permitting of the bridge under Section 10 of the Rivers and Harbors Act and Section 404 of the Clean Water Act. Therefore, coordination requirements can be fulfilled through our review of the Environmental Assessment for this project, or through the Clean Water Act permitting process and either agency could be responsible for fulfilling EFH coordination requirements. If LDOTD will be responsible for fulfilling EFH coordination requirements, that designation should be provided to NMFS in writing.

We appreciate the opportunity to provide early input into this project. If you have questions regarding our comments, please contact Lisa Abernathy of my staff at (225) 389-0508, extension 209.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Virginia M. Fay".

Virginia M. Fay
Assistant Regional Administrator
Habitat Conservation Division

c:
FWS, Lafayette, Walther
EPA, Dallas, Mick
FHA, Mahoney
NOD Regulatory, Serio
LDNR Consistency, Lovell
Files



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE
Southeast Regional Office
263 13th Avenue, South
St. Petersburg, Florida 33701

February 13, 2014 F/SER46/LA:jk
225/389-0508

Mr. Noel A. Ardoin
Environmental Engineer Administrator
Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development
Post Office Box 94245
Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70804-9245

Dear Mr. Ardoin;

NOAA's National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) has reviewed the project information transmitted in the Solicitation of Views (SOV) for State Project number H.000284/H.000286 dated January 15, 2014. The Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development (LDOTD) is proposing to replace five existing bridges located on US Highway 90 in St. Tammany Parish, Louisiana. In your SOV, you requested the identification of possible adverse environmental effects or concerns.

Wetlands in the project area consist of intermediate marsh vegetated primarily with saltmeadow cordgrass and switchgrass. These wetlands are categorized as essential fish habitat (EFH) under provisions of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (Magnuson-Stevens Act). Aquatic and tidally influenced wetland habitats in the project area are designated as EFH for post larval and juvenile life stages of white shrimp and red drum. Fishery management plans for these species have been developed by the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council (GMFMC). Detailed information on federally-managed fisheries and their EFH is provided in the 2005 generic amendment of the fishery management plan for the Gulf of Mexico prepared by the GMFMC. The generic amendment was prepared as required by the Magnuson-Stevens Act.

In addition to being designated as EFH for various federally managed species, wetlands in the project area provide nursery and foraging habitats for a variety of economically important marine fishery species such as blue crab, Gulf menhaden, spotted seatrout, sand seatrout, southern flounder and striped mullet. Some of these species serve as prey for other fish species managed under the Magnuson-Stevens Act by the GMFMC (e.g., mackerels, snappers, and groupers) and highly migratory species managed by NMFS (e.g., billfishes and sharks). Wetlands in the project area also produce nutrients and detritus, important components of the aquatic food web, which contribute to the overall productivity of the Mississippi Sound estuary.

The project alternatives for the five bridges have yet to be described, but any alternative in which the bridge is relocated could have the potential to adversely impact wetland habitats categorized as EFH. Provisions of the Clean Water Act require sequential efforts to avoid and then reduce

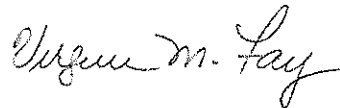


impacts to wetlands to the maximum extent practicable. LDOTD should evaluate all alternatives in an effort to minimize wetland impacts and, after selecting an alternative, evaluate construction methods and designs which would further reduce adverse impacts. Once all efforts have been completed to avoid or minimize wetland impacts, a compensatory mitigation plan should be developed to completely offset project related impacts to EFH and associated marine fishery resources. The Environmental Assessment to be developed for this project should thoroughly describe all resources potentially impacted by bridge construction activities, detail all efforts to avoid and minimize wetland impacts, and describe the mitigation plan to be used to compensate for all unavoidable adverse impacts to resources of concern.

Provisions of the Magnuson-Stevens Act require coordination with NMFS on any federal action, including funding of an action, which has the potential to adversely impact EFH. As identified above, this project has the potential to adversely impact EFH. If more than one federal agency is responsible for an action, one of those agencies can be designated as a lead agency responsible for fulfilling coordination requirements. In this case, it is likely the Federal Highway Administration would be providing funds to help pay for the bridge and the US Army Corps of Engineers will be responsible for permitting of the bridge under Section 10 of the Rivers and Harbors Act and Section 404 of the Clean Water Act. Therefore, coordination requirements can be fulfilled through our review of the Environmental Assessment for this project, or through the Clean Water Act permitting process and either agency could be responsible for fulfilling EFH coordination requirements. If LDOTD will be responsible for fulfilling EFH coordination requirements, that designation should be provided to NMFS in writing.

We appreciate the opportunity to provide early input into this project. If you have questions regarding our comments, please contact Lisa Abernathy of my staff at (225) 389-0508, extension 209.

Sincerely,



Virginia M. Fay
Assistant Regional Administrator
Habitat Conservation Division

c:
FWS, Lafayette, Walther
EPA, Dallas, Keeler
FHA, Mahoney
NOD Regulatory, Mayer
LDNR Consistency, Haydel
Files



US 90 Pearl River Bridges

**Project No. H.000284 &
H.000286**

T&E Report



Prepared By

LADOTD – Environmental Section
1201 Capitol Access Road
Baton Rouge, LA 70802
March 2025

Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development

US 90 Pearl River Bridges State Project #: H.000284 & H.000286 St. Tammany Parish

INTRODUCTION

The Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development (LADOTD) and the Mississippi Department of Transportation (MDOT) in cooperation with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) are proposing to replace five bridge structures associated with the Pearl River system along US 90 (Vicinity Map – **Attachment A**) in St. Tammany Parish, Louisiana and Hancock County, Mississippi as follows:

- Structure No. 62520060705291, West Pearl River Bridge, Movable Lift Span
- Structure No. 62520060706701, West Middle Pearl River Bridge
- Structure No. 62520060707111, Middle Middle Pearl River Bridge
- Structure No. 62520060707701, East Middle Pearl River Bridge
- Structure No. 62520060800001, East Pearl River Bridge, Movable Swing Span

An Environmental Assessment (EA) is being prepared to evaluate potential rehabilitation or replacement concepts and to determine the environmental impacts associated with the proposed projects. The logical termini for the projects study area are the US 90 intersection with US 190 in St. Tammany Parish, Louisiana and the US 90 intersection with Kelly Road/7th Avenue in Pearlinton, Hancock County, Mississippi. These logical termini were identified by LADOTD and the MDOT and approved by FHWA. Most of the study area is comprised of maintained right-of-way (ROW) and rural residential development (within the Pearlinton community).

Bridge Name	Recall No.	Latitude	Longitude
West Pearl River	58710	30.23116856	-89.6687847
West Middle	58720	30.23451834	-89.64595216
Middle Middle	58730	30.23555327	-89.63873803
East Middle	58740	30.23698999	-89.62899433
East Pearl River	58750	30.23904777	-89.61504766

Table 1. Bridge Locations for H.000284 and H.000286

The existing damaged overpass span will be replaced within the existing footprint.

FEDERALLY-LISTED THREATENED AND ENDANGERED SPECIES

A U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) Official Species List was obtained from the Information for Planning and Consultation (IPaC)¹ System on January 17, 2025. See **Attachment B** for the Official Species List. The Official Species List identified the following species as occurring in the project action area or potentially may be affected by the construction activities: Northern Long-eared Bat *Myotis septentrionalis*, Tricolored Bat

Perimyotis subflavus, West Indian Manatee *Trichechus manatus*, Eastern Black Rail *Laterallus jamaicensis* ssp. *jamaicensis*, Piping Plover *Charadrius melodus*, Red-cockaded Woodpecker *Dryobates borealis*, Rufa Red Knot *Calidris canutus rufa*, Monarch Butterfly (*Danaus plexippus*), Alligator Snapping Turtle (*Macrochelys temminckii*), Gopher Tortoise *Gopherus Polyphemus*, Hawksbill Sea Turtle *Eretmochelys imbricate*, Kemp's Ridley Sea Turtle *Lepidochelys kempii*, Leatherback Sea Turtle *Dermochelys coriacea*, Ringed Map Turtle *Graptemys oculifera*, Dusky Gopher Frog *Rana sevosa*, and Gulf Sturgeon *Acipenser oxyrinchus* (=oxyrhynchus) *desotoi*. **No critical habitat was identified.**

The USFWS Louisiana Endangered Species Act project review and guidance for other federal trust resources determination key (Louisiana DKey)² was utilized to provide a preliminary effect determination of “may effect-Not likely to Adversely Affect” for the Northern Long-eared Bat based on the proposed project actions. The attached consistency letter states no consultation is required (**Attachment B**).

SURVEY RESULTS

On February 13, 2025, LaDOTD biologists conducted a biological survey of the project site to determine if the species or suitable habitat was present (**Attachment C – Site Photos**). The project action area is an undeveloped stretch of US 90 surrounded brackish/saline marsh. Pedestrian surveys of all 5 structures were completed.

FEDERALLY RECOGNIZED MIGRATORY BIRDS

At the time of the survey on February 13, 2025, inactive barn swallow nests were observed (**Attachment C**) under the span proposed to be replaced. According to the USFWS: “All swallows are state and federally protected under the Migratory Bird Wildlife Service. Inactive (empty) nests do not require a permit to destroy.” Therefore, it is recommended that old nests be remove in advance of the birds arriving from winter migration as the likelihood of reuse is fairly high. During construction, wash away mud nest frequently before they become active with eggs or chicks. Swallow breeding season lasts from March 1st through September 30th often producing two clutches per year.

CONCLUSION

After desktop and field surveys, LaDOTD biologists have concluded that **no effects** are expected from the proposed action on any state or federally listed threatened or endangered species within the project area. No evidence of suitable habitat was observed within or near the project area for federally noted threatened or endangered species. However, evidence of active migratory birds were observed at the time of the site visit

February 13, 2025. It is recommended that action be taken, such as removing old nests and regular maintenance cleaning of spans and columns preventing them from becoming active on the structure between the months of March and September.

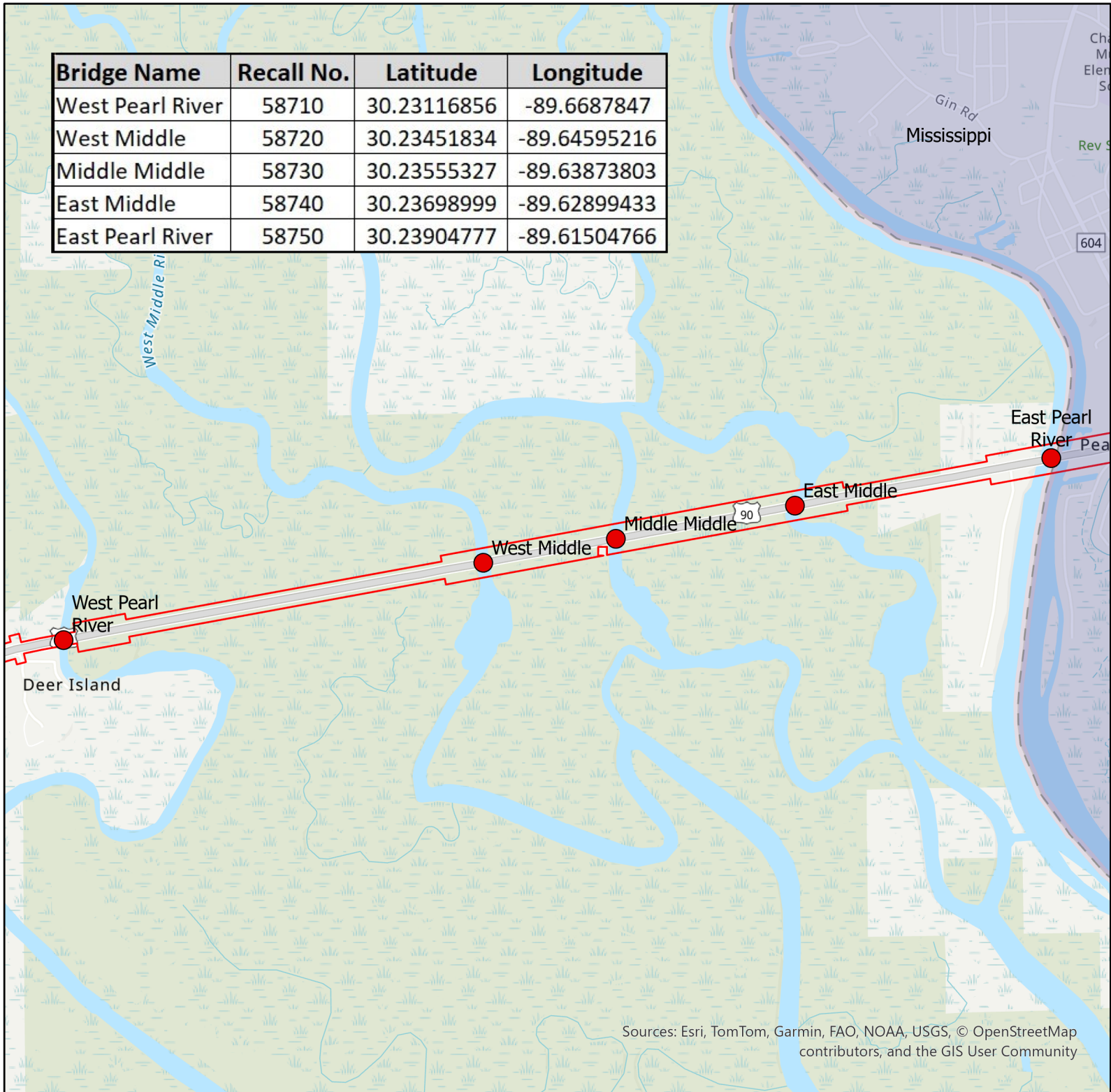
1- IPAC: <https://ipac.ecosphere.fws.gov/>

2- La DKey: <https://www.fws.gov/library/collections/project-review-resources-louisiana-ecological-services-field-office>

ATTACHMENT A

Vicinity Maps

Bridge Name	Recall No.	Latitude	Longitude
West Pearl River	58710	30.23116856	-89.6687847
West Middle	58720	30.23451834	-89.64595216
Middle Middle	58730	30.23555327	-89.63873803
East Middle	58740	30.23698999	-89.62899433
East Pearl River	58750	30.23904777	-89.61504766



Sources: Esri, TomTom, Garmin, FAO, NOAA, USGS, © OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community



Vicinity Map

0 30 60 120 180 240 Miles

State Project Nos.: H.000284/
H.000286 Federal Aid Project
Nos.: H000284/H000286
US Pearl River Bridges
St. Tammany Parish, LA

Legend

- Bridges
- Mississippi



ATTACHMENT B

IPac Species List, NLAA



United States Department of the Interior

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
Louisiana Ecological Services Field Office
200 Dulles Drive
Lafayette, LA 70506
Phone: (337) 291-3100 Fax: (337) 291-3139



In Reply Refer To:

11/06/2025 21:18:06 UTC

Project Code: 2025-0044031

Project Name: H.000284 US 90: PEARL RIVER BRIDGES (HBI)

Subject: List of threatened and endangered species that may occur in your proposed project location or may be affected by your proposed project

To Whom It May Concern:

The enclosed species list identifies threatened, endangered, and candidate species, as well as designated and proposed critical habitat that may occur within the boundary of your proposed project and may be affected by your proposed project. The Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) is providing this list under section 7 (c) of the Endangered Species Act (Act) of 1973, as amended (16 U.S.C. 1531 et seq.). Changes in this species list may occur due to new information from updated surveys, changes in species habitat, new listed species and other factors. Because of these possible changes, feel free to contact our office (337-291-3109) for more information or assistance regarding impacts to federally listed species. The Service recommends visiting the IPaC site or the Louisiana Ecological Services Field Office website (<https://www.fws.gov/southeast/lafayette>) at regular intervals during project planning and implementation for updated species lists and information. An updated list may be requested through the IPaC system by completing the same process used to receive the enclosed list.

The purpose of the Act is to provide a means whereby threatened and endangered species and the habitats upon which they depend may be conserved. Under sections 7(a)(1) and 7(a)(2) of the Act and its implementing regulations (50 CFR 402 et seq.), Federal agencies are required to utilize their authorities to carry out programs for the conservation of Federal trust resources and to determine whether projects may affect Federally listed species and/or designated critical habitat.

A Biological Assessment is required for construction projects (or other undertakings having similar physical impacts) that are major Federal actions significantly affecting the quality of the human environment as defined in the National Environmental Policy Act (42 U.S.C. 4332(2) (c)).

Bald eagles have recovered and were removed from the List of Endangered and Threatened Species as of August 8, 2007. Although no longer listed, please be aware that bald eagles are protected under the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act (BGEPA) (16 U.S.C. 668 et seq.).

The Service developed the National Bald Eagle Management (NBEM) Guidelines to provide landowners, land managers, and others with information and recommendations to minimize potential project impacts to bald eagles, particularly where such impacts may constitute “disturbance”, which is prohibited by the BGEPA. A copy of the NBEM Guidelines is available at: <https://www.fws.gov/migratorybirds/pdf/management/nationalbaldeaglenanagementguidelines.pdf>

Those guidelines recommend: (1) maintaining a specified distance between the activity and the nest (buffer area); (2) maintaining natural areas (preferably forested) between the activity and nest trees (landscape buffers); and (3) avoiding certain activities during the breeding season. Onsite personnel should be informed of the possible presence of nesting bald eagles within the project boundary, and should identify, avoid, and immediately report any such nests to this office. If a bald eagle nest occurs or is discovered within or adjacent to the proposed project area, then an evaluation must be performed to determine whether the project is likely to disturb nesting bald eagles. That evaluation may be conducted on-line at: <https://www.fws.gov/southeast/our-services/eagle-technical-assistance/>. Following completion of the evaluation, that website will provide a determination of whether additional consultation is necessary. The Division of Migratory Birds for the Southeast Region of the Service (phone: 404/679-7051, e-mail: SEmigratorybirds@fws.gov) has the lead role in conducting any necessary consultation.

Activities that involve State-designated scenic streams and/or wetlands are regulated by the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, respectively. We, therefore, recommend that you contact those agencies to determine their interest in proposed projects in these areas.

Activities that would be located within a National Wildlife Refuge are regulated by the refuge staff. We, therefore, recommend that you contact them to determine their interest in proposed projects in these areas.

Additional information on Federal trust species in Louisiana can be obtained from the Louisiana Ecological Services website at: <https://www.fws.gov/southeast/lafayette>

We appreciate your concern for threatened and endangered species. The Service encourages Federal agencies to include conservation of threatened and endangered species into their project planning to further the purposes of the Act. Please include the Consultation Tracking Number in the header of this letter with any request for consultation or correspondence about your project that you submit to our office.

Note: IPaC has provided all available attachments because this project is in multiple field office jurisdictions.

Attachment(s):

- Official Species List
- USFWS National Wildlife Refuges and Fish Hatcheries
- Bald & Golden Eagles

- Migratory Birds
- Marine Mammals
- Wetlands

OFFICIAL SPECIES LIST

This list is provided pursuant to Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act, and fulfills the requirement for Federal agencies to "request of the Secretary of the Interior information whether any species which is listed or proposed to be listed may be present in the area of a proposed action".

This species list is provided by:

Louisiana Ecological Services Field Office

200 Dulles Drive
Lafayette, LA 70506
(337) 291-3100

This project's location is within the jurisdiction of multiple offices. However, only one species list document will be provided for all offices. The species and critical habitats in this document reflect the aggregation of those that fall in each of the affiliated office's jurisdiction. Other offices affiliated with the project:

Mississippi Ecological Services Field Office

6578 Dogwood View Parkway, Suite A
Jackson, MS 39213-7856
(601) 965-4900

PROJECT SUMMARY

Project Code: 2025-0044031

Project Name: H.000284 US 90: PEARL RIVER BRIDGES (HBI)

Project Type: Bridge - Replacement

Project Description: The project proposes to replace 5 bridges (4 in Louisiana, 1 in Mississippi) within the same alignment.

Project Location:

The approximate location of the project can be viewed in Google Maps: <https://www.google.com/maps/@30.2344231,-89.64568342839897,14z>



Counties: Louisiana and Mississippi

ENDANGERED SPECIES ACT SPECIES

There is a total of 13 threatened, endangered, or candidate species on this species list.

Species on this list should be considered in an effects analysis for your project and could include species that exist in another geographic area. For example, certain fish may appear on the species list because a project could affect downstream species.

IPaC does not display listed species or critical habitats under the sole jurisdiction of NOAA Fisheries¹, as USFWS does not have the authority to speak on behalf of NOAA and the Department of Commerce.

See the "Critical habitats" section below for those critical habitats that lie wholly or partially within your project area under this office's jurisdiction. Please contact the designated FWS office if you have questions.

-
1. [NOAA Fisheries](#), also known as the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), is an office of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration within the Department of Commerce.

MAMMALS

NAME	STATUS
Northern Long-eared Bat <i>Myotis septentrionalis</i> No critical habitat has been designated for this species. Species profile: https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/9045 General project design guidelines: https://ipac.ecosphere.fws.gov/project/75F677TLN5BXZJXKJOPK23CTKY/documents/generated/7127.pdf	Endangered
Tricolored Bat <i>Perimyotis subflavus</i> No critical habitat has been designated for this species. Species profile: https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/10515 General project design guidelines: https://ipac.ecosphere.fws.gov/project/75F677TLN5BXZJXKJOPK23CTKY/documents/generated/7127.pdf	Proposed Endangered
West Indian Manatee <i>Trichechus manatus</i> There is final critical habitat for this species. Your location does not overlap the critical habitat. <i>This species is also protected by the Marine Mammal Protection Act, and may have additional consultation requirements.</i> Species profile: https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/4469 General project design guidelines: https://ipac.ecosphere.fws.gov/project/75F677TLN5BXZJXKJOPK23CTKY/documents/generated/7127.pdf	Threatened

BIRDS

NAME	STATUS
Eastern Black Rail <i>Laterallus jamaicensis ssp. jamaicensis</i> No critical habitat has been designated for this species. Species profile: https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/10477 General project design guidelines: https://ipac.ecosphere.fws.gov/project/75F677TLN5BXZJXKJOPK23CTKY/documents/generated/7127.pdf	Threatened
Piping Plover <i>Charadrius melodus</i> Population: [Atlantic Coast and Northern Great Plains populations] - Wherever found, except those areas where listed as endangered. There is final critical habitat for this species. Your location does not overlap the critical habitat. Species profile: https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/6039 General project design guidelines: https://ipac.ecosphere.fws.gov/project/75F677TLN5BXZJXKJOPK23CTKY/documents/generated/7127.pdf	Threatened
Red-cockaded Woodpecker <i>Dryobates borealis</i> No critical habitat has been designated for this species. Species profile: https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/7614 General project design guidelines: https://ipac.ecosphere.fws.gov/project/75F677TLN5BXZJXKJOPK23CTKY/documents/generated/7127.pdf	Threatened

NAME	STATUS
Rufa Red Knot <i>Calidris canutus rufa</i> There is proposed critical habitat for this species. Your location does not overlap the critical habitat. Species profile: https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/1864 General project design guidelines: https://ipac.ecosphere.fws.gov/project/75F677TLN5BXZJXKJOPK23CTKY/documents/generated/7127.pdf	Threatened

REPTILES

NAME	STATUS
Alligator Snapping Turtle <i>Macrochelys temminckii</i> No critical habitat has been designated for this species. Species profile: https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/4658 General project design guidelines: https://ipac.ecosphere.fws.gov/project/75F677TLN5BXZJXKJOPK23CTKY/documents/generated/7127.pdf	Proposed Threatened
Gopher Tortoise <i>Gopherus polyphemus</i> Population: Western DPS No critical habitat has been designated for this species. Species profile: https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/6994 General project design guidelines: https://ipac.ecosphere.fws.gov/project/75F677TLN5BXZJXKJOPK23CTKY/documents/generated/7127.pdf	Threatened
Ringed Map Turtle <i>Graptemys oculifera</i> No critical habitat has been designated for this species. Species profile: https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/2664 General project design guidelines: https://ipac.ecosphere.fws.gov/project/75F677TLN5BXZJXKJOPK23CTKY/documents/generated/7127.pdf	Threatened

AMPHIBIANS

NAME	STATUS
Dusky Gopher Frog <i>Rana sevosa</i> There is final critical habitat for this species. Your location does not overlap the critical habitat. Species profile: https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/5600 General project design guidelines: https://ipac.ecosphere.fws.gov/project/75F677TLN5BXZJXKJOPK23CTKY/documents/generated/7127.pdf	Endangered

FISHES

NAME	STATUS
Gulf Sturgeon <i>Acipenser oxyrinchus (=oxyrhynchus) desotoi</i> There is final critical habitat for this species. Your location overlaps the critical habitat. Species profile: https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/651	Threatened

NAME	STATUS
General project design guidelines: https://ipac.ecosphere.fws.gov/project/75F677TLN5BXZJXKJOPK23CTKY/documents/generated/7127.pdf	

INSECTS

NAME	STATUS
Monarch Butterfly <i>Danaus plexippus</i> There is proposed critical habitat for this species. Your location does not overlap the critical habitat. Species profile: https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/9743 General project design guidelines: https://ipac.ecosphere.fws.gov/project/75F677TLN5BXZJXKJOPK23CTKY/documents/generated/7127.pdf	Proposed Threatened

CRITICAL HABITATS

There is 1 critical habitat wholly or partially within your project area under this office's jurisdiction.

NAME	STATUS
Gulf Sturgeon <i>Acipenser oxyrinchus (=oxyrhynchus) desotoi</i> https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/651#crithab	Final

USFWS NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE LANDS AND FISH HATCHERIES

Any activity proposed on lands managed by the [National Wildlife Refuge](#) system must undergo a 'Compatibility Determination' conducted by the Refuge. Please contact the individual Refuges to discuss any questions or concerns.

THERE ARE NO REFUGE LANDS OR FISH HATCHERIES WITHIN YOUR PROJECT AREA.

BALD & GOLDEN EAGLES

Bald and Golden Eagles are protected under the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act ² and the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA) ¹. Any person or organization who plans or conducts activities that may result in impacts to Bald or Golden Eagles, or their habitats, should follow appropriate regulations and consider implementing appropriate avoidance and minimization measures, as described in the various links on this page.

1. The [Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act](#) of 1940.
2. The [Migratory Birds Treaty Act](#) of 1918.
3. 50 C.F.R. Sec. 10.12 and 16 U.S.C. Sec. 668(a)

There are Bald Eagles and/or Golden Eagles in your [project](#) area.

Measures for Proactively Minimizing Eagle Impacts

For information on how to best avoid and minimize disturbance to nesting bald eagles, please review the [National Bald Eagle Management Guidelines](#). You may employ the timing and activity-specific distance recommendations in this document when designing your project/activity to avoid and minimize eagle impacts. For bald eagle information specific to Alaska, please refer to [Bald Eagle Nesting and Sensitivity to Human Activity](#).

The FWS does not currently have guidelines for avoiding and minimizing disturbance to nesting Golden Eagles. For site-specific recommendations regarding nesting Golden Eagles, please consult with the appropriate Regional [Migratory Bird Office](#) or [Ecological Services Field Office](#).

If disturbance or take of eagles cannot be avoided, an [incidental take permit](#) may be available to authorize any take that results from, but is not the purpose of, an otherwise lawful activity. For assistance making this determination for Bald Eagles, visit the [Do I Need A Permit Tool](#). For assistance making this determination for golden eagles, please consult with the appropriate Regional [Migratory Bird Office](#) or [Ecological Services Field Office](#).

Ensure Your Eagle List is Accurate and Complete

If your project area is in a poorly surveyed area in IPaC, your list may not be complete and you may need to rely on other resources to determine what species may be present (e.g. your local FWS field office, state surveys, your own surveys). Please review the [Supplemental Information on Migratory Birds and Eagles](#), to help you properly interpret the report for your specified location, including determining if there is sufficient data to ensure your list is accurate.

For guidance on when to schedule activities or implement avoidance and minimization measures to reduce impacts to bald or golden eagles on your list, see the "Probability of Presence Summary" below to see when these bald or golden eagles are most likely to be present and breeding in your project area.

NAME	BREEDING SEASON
Bald Eagle <i>Haliaeetus leucocephalus</i> This is not a Bird of Conservation Concern (BCC) in this area, but warrants attention because of the Eagle Act or for potential susceptibilities in offshore areas from certain types of development or activities. https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/1626	Breeds Sep 1 to Jul 31

PROBABILITY OF PRESENCE SUMMARY

The graphs below provide our best understanding of when birds of concern are most likely to be present in your project area. This information can be used to tailor and schedule your project activities to avoid or minimize impacts to birds. Please make sure you read ["Supplemental Information on Migratory Birds and Eagles"](#), specifically the FAQ section titled "Proper Interpretation and Use of Your Migratory Bird Report" before using or attempting to interpret this report.

Probability of Presence (■)

Green bars; the bird's relative probability of presence in the 10km grid cell(s) your project overlaps during that week of the year.

Breeding Season (■)

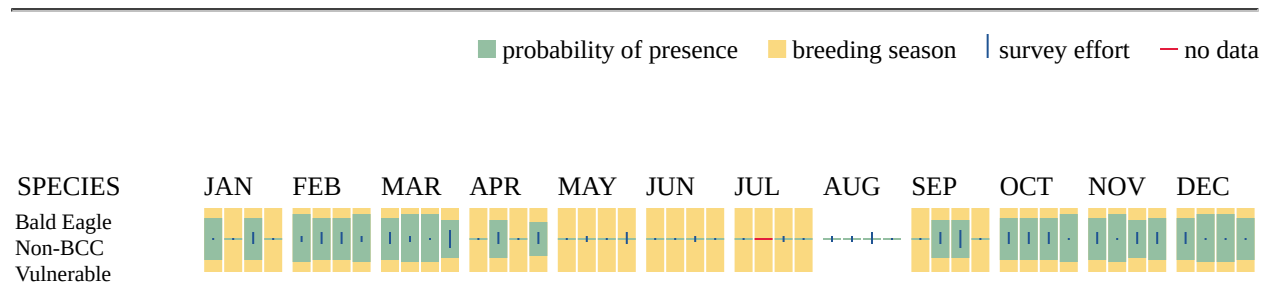
Yellow bars; liberal estimate of the timeframe inside which the bird breeds across its entire range.

Survey Effort (|)

Vertical black lines; the number of surveys performed for that species in the 10km grid cell(s) your project area overlaps.

No Data (—)

A week is marked as having no data if there were no survey events for that week.



Additional information can be found using the following links:

- Eagle Management <https://www.fws.gov/program/eagle-management>
- Measures for avoiding and minimizing impacts to birds <https://www.fws.gov/library/collections/avoiding-and-minimizing-incidental-take-migratory-birds>
- Nationwide avoidance and minimization measures for birds <https://www.fws.gov/sites/default/files/documents/nationwide-standard-conservation-measures.pdf>
- Supplemental Information for Migratory Birds and Eagles in IPaC <https://www.fws.gov/media/supplemental-information-migratory-birds-and-bald-and-golden-eagles-may-occur-project-action>

MIGRATORY BIRDS

The Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA) ¹ prohibits the take (including killing, capturing, selling, trading, and transport) of protected migratory bird species without prior authorization by the Department of Interior U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service).

-
1. The [Migratory Birds Treaty Act](#) of 1918.
 2. The [Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act](#) of 1940.
 3. 50 C.F.R. Sec. 10.12 and 16 U.S.C. Sec. 668(a)

For guidance on when to schedule activities or implement avoidance and minimization measures to reduce impacts to migratory birds on your list, see the "Probability of Presence Summary" below to see when these birds are most likely to be present and breeding in your project area.

NAME	BREEDING SEASON
Bald Eagle <i>Haliaeetus leucocephalus</i> This is not a Bird of Conservation Concern (BCC) in this area, but warrants attention because of the Eagle Act or for potential susceptibilities in offshore areas from certain types of development or activities. https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/1626	Breeds Sep 1 to Jul 31
Black Skimmer <i>Rynchops niger</i> This is a Bird of Conservation Concern (BCC) throughout its range in the continental USA and Alaska. https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/5234	Breeds May 20 to Sep 15
Chimney Swift <i>Chaetura pelagica</i> This is a Bird of Conservation Concern (BCC) throughout its range in the continental USA and Alaska. https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/9406	Breeds Mar 15 to Aug 25
Forster's Tern <i>Sterna forsteri</i> This is a Bird of Conservation Concern (BCC) only in particular Bird Conservation Regions (BCRs) in the continental USA https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/11953	Breeds Mar 1 to Aug 15
Gull-billed Tern <i>Gelochelidon nilotica</i> This is a Bird of Conservation Concern (BCC) throughout its range in the continental USA and Alaska. https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/9501	Breeds May 1 to Jul 31
King Rail <i>Rallus elegans</i> This is a Bird of Conservation Concern (BCC) throughout its range in the continental USA and Alaska. https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/8936	Breeds May 1 to Sep 5
Least Tern <i>Sternula antillarum antillarum</i> This is a Bird of Conservation Concern (BCC) throughout its range in the continental USA and Alaska. https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/11919	Breeds Apr 25 to Sep 5
Lesser Yellowlegs <i>Tringa flavipes</i> This is a Bird of Conservation Concern (BCC) throughout its range in the continental USA and Alaska. https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/9679	Breeds elsewhere
Painted Bunting <i>Passerina ciris</i> This is a Bird of Conservation Concern (BCC) only in particular Bird Conservation Regions (BCRs) in the continental USA https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/9511	Breeds Apr 25 to Aug 15

NAME	BREEDING SEASON
Pectoral Sandpiper <i>Calidris melanotos</i> This is a Bird of Conservation Concern (BCC) throughout its range in the continental USA and Alaska. https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/9561	Breeds elsewhere
Prairie Loggerhead Shrike <i>Lanius ludovicianus excubitorides</i> This is a Bird of Conservation Concern (BCC) only in particular Bird Conservation Regions (BCRs) in the continental USA https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/8833	Breeds Feb 1 to Jul 31
Prothonotary Warbler <i>Protonotaria citrea</i> This is a Bird of Conservation Concern (BCC) throughout its range in the continental USA and Alaska. https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/9439	Breeds Apr 1 to Jul 31
Red-headed Woodpecker <i>Melanerpes erythrocephalus</i> This is a Bird of Conservation Concern (BCC) throughout its range in the continental USA and Alaska. https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/9398	Breeds May 10 to Sep 10
Sandwich Tern <i>Thalasseus sandvicensis</i> This is a Bird of Conservation Concern (BCC) only in particular Bird Conservation Regions (BCRs) in the continental USA https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/9731	Breeds Apr 25 to Aug 31
Swallow-tailed Kite <i>Elanoides forficatus</i> This is a Bird of Conservation Concern (BCC) throughout its range in the continental USA and Alaska. https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/8938	Breeds Mar 10 to Jun 30
Willet <i>Tringa semipalmata</i> This is a Bird of Conservation Concern (BCC) throughout its range in the continental USA and Alaska. https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/10669	Breeds Apr 20 to Aug 5

PROBABILITY OF PRESENCE SUMMARY

The graphs below provide our best understanding of when birds of concern are most likely to be present in your project area. This information can be used to tailor and schedule your project activities to avoid or minimize impacts to birds. Please make sure you read "[Supplemental Information on Migratory Birds and Eagles](#)", specifically the FAQ section titled "Proper Interpretation and Use of Your Migratory Bird Report" before using or attempting to interpret this report.

Probability of Presence (■)

Green bars; the bird's relative probability of presence in the 10km grid cell(s) your project overlaps during that week of the year.

Breeding Season (■)

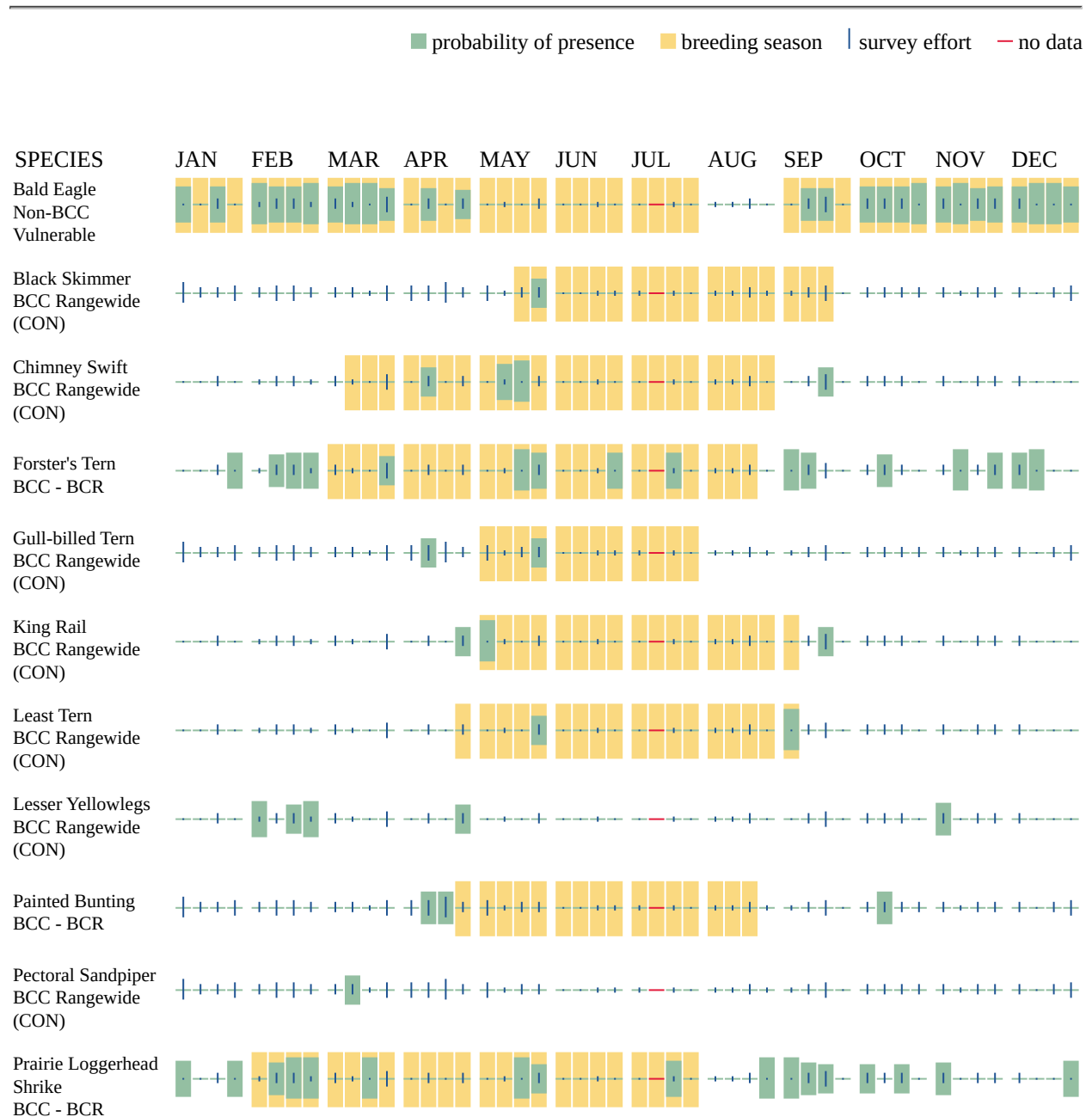
Yellow bars; liberal estimate of the timeframe inside which the bird breeds across its entire range.

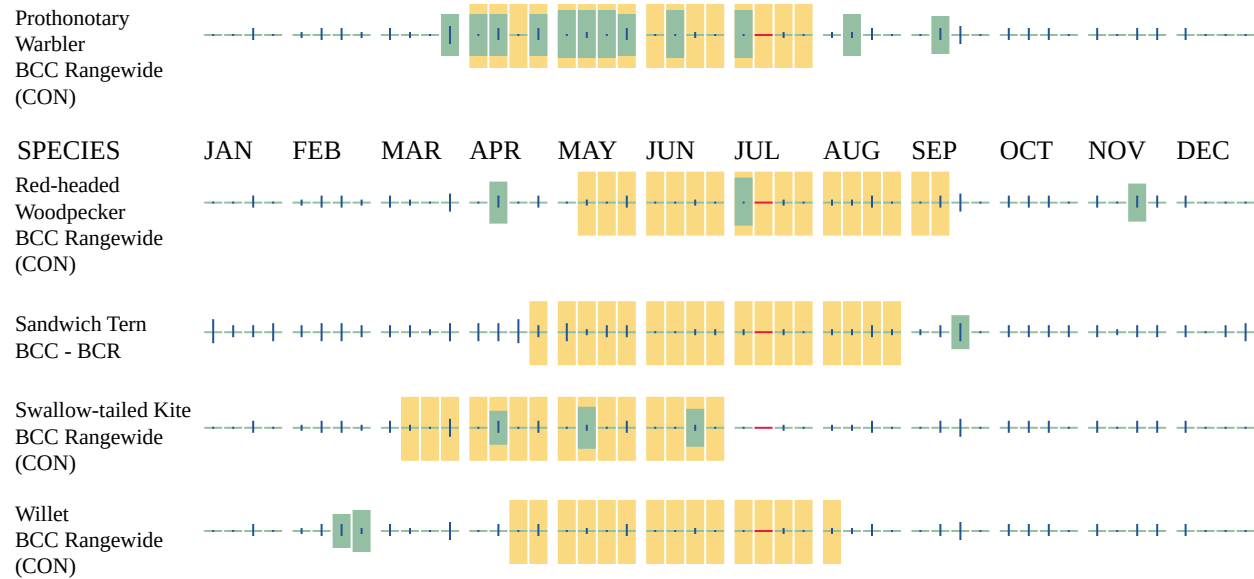
Survey Effort (|)

Vertical black lines; the number of surveys performed for that species in the 10km grid cell(s) your project area overlaps.

No Data (—)

A week is marked as having no data if there were no survey events for that week.





Additional information can be found using the following links:

- Eagle Management <https://www.fws.gov/program/eagle-management>
- Measures for avoiding and minimizing impacts to birds <https://www.fws.gov/library/collections/avoiding-and-minimizing-incidental-take-migratory-birds>
- Nationwide avoidance and minimization measures for birds
- Supplemental Information for Migratory Birds and Eagles in IPaC <https://www.fws.gov/media/supplemental-information-migratory-birds-and-bald-and-golden-eagles-may-occur-project-action>

MARINE MAMMALS

Marine mammals are protected under the [Marine Mammal Protection Act](#). Some are also protected under the Endangered Species Act¹ and the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora².

The responsibilities for the protection, conservation, and management of marine mammals are shared by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service [responsible for otters, walruses, polar bears, manatees, and dugongs] and NOAA Fisheries³ [responsible for seals, sea lions, whales, dolphins, and porpoises]. Marine mammals under the responsibility of NOAA Fisheries are **not** shown on this list; for additional information on those species please visit the [Marine Mammals](#) page of the NOAA Fisheries website.

The Marine Mammal Protection Act prohibits the take of marine mammals and further coordination may be necessary for project evaluation. Please contact the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Field Office shown.

1. The [Endangered Species Act](#) (ESA) of 1973.

2. The [Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora](#) (CITES) is a treaty to ensure that international trade in plants and animals does not threaten their survival in the wild.
3. [NOAA Fisheries](#), also known as the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), is an office of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration within the Department of Commerce.

NAME

West Indian Manatee *Trichechus manatus*

Species profile: <https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/4469>

WETLANDS

Impacts to [NWI wetlands](#) and other aquatic habitats may be subject to regulation under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act, or other State/Federal statutes.

For more information please contact the Regulatory Program of the local [U.S. Army Corps of Engineers District](#).

Please note that the NWI data being shown may be out of date. We are currently working to update our NWI data set. We recommend you verify these results with a site visit to determine the actual extent of wetlands on site.

FRESHWATER POND

- PUBV

FRESHWATER FORESTED/SHRUB WETLAND

- PFO1/2F
- PFO1S
- PSS1R
- PFO1/2T
- PSS1S
- PSS1T
- PFO1T
- PFO1C

RIVERINE

- R1UBVx
- R1UBV

FRESHWATER EMERGENT WETLAND

- PEM1T
- PEM1/SS1S

- PEM1F

ESTUARINE AND MARINE DEEPWATER

- E1UBL

LAKE

- L1ABV

IPAC USER CONTACT INFORMATION

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Phone: 2252424524



United States Department of the Interior

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

Assistant Director-Ecological Services

1849 C Street Nw

Room 3345

Washington, DC 20240-0001

Phone: (202) 208-4646 Fax: (202) 208-5618



In Reply Refer To:

11/06/2025 21:27:29 UTC

Project code: 2025-0044031

Project Name: H.000284 US 90: PEARL RIVER BRIDGES (HBI)

Subject: Not Likely to Adversely Affect Concurrence verification letter for the 'H.000284 US 90: PEARL RIVER BRIDGES (HBI)' project under the December 13, 2024, FHWA, FRA, FTA Programmatic Biological Opinion for Transportation Projects within the Range of the Indiana Bat, Northern Long-eared Bat, and Tricolored Bat.

To whom it may concern:

This letter records the determination of effects to federally listed (or proposed) bat species anticipated to result from the H.000284 US 90: PEARL RIVER BRIDGES (HBI) (the Project). This determination is based upon information you entered into the assisted determination key (Dkey) associated with the above referenced Programmatic Biological Opinion/Conference Opinion (PBO/PCO) in the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's (Service) Information for Planning and Consultation (IPaC) system on the date listed above to verify that the Project may rely on the concurrence provided in the PBO/PCO to satisfy requirements under section 7(a)(2) of the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (ESA) (16 USC 1536), as amended.

Ensuring Accurate Determinations When Using IPaC:

The Service developed the IPaC system and this Dkey in accordance with the ESA and based on the PBO/PCO. All information submitted by the project proponent into IPaC must accurately represent the full scope and details of the Project.

Failure to accurately represent or implement the Project as detailed in the Dkey invalidates this letter. Answers to certain questions in the Dkey commit the project proponent to implementation of conservation measures that must be followed for the ESA determinations to remain valid. Carefully review this letter, your ESA requirements are NOT yet complete.

Determinations:

Based on the information you provided (Project Description shown below), you have determined that the Project is within the scope and adheres to the criteria of the PBO/PCO, including the adoption of applicable avoidance and minimization measures. Based on your IPaC submission and the PBO/PCO, the Project is consistent with the following effect determinations:

Species	Listing Status	Determination
Northern Long-eared Bat (<i>Myotis septentrionalis</i>)	Endangered	NLAA
Tricolored Bat (<i>Perimyotis subflavus</i>)	Proposed Endangered	NLAA

The tricolored bat is proposed for listing as endangered under the ESA, but not yet listed. For actions that may affect a proposed species, agencies cannot consult, but they can confer under the authority of section 7(a)(4) of the ESA. Such conferences can follow the procedures for a consultation and be adopted as such if the proposed species is listed. Should the tricolored bat be listed, agencies must review projects that are not yet complete, or projects with ongoing effects within the tricolored bat range that previously received a no effect or not likely to adversely affect (NLAA) determination from the key to confirm that the determination is still accurate.

The Service has 14 calendar days to notify the lead Federal action agency or designated non-federal representative if we determine that the Project does not meet the criteria for a NLAA determination under the PBO/PCO. **If the Service does not notify the lead Federal action agency or designated non-federal representative within that timeframe, you may proceed with the Project under the terms of the NLAA concurrence provided in the PBO/PCO.** This verification period allows Service Field Offices to apply local knowledge to implementation of the PBO, as we may identify a small subset of actions having impacts that were unanticipated. In such instances, Service Field Offices may request additional information that is necessary to verify inclusion of the proposed action under the PBO/PCO.

If the Project is modified, or new information reveals that it may affect the Indiana bat, northern long-eared bat, or tricolored bat in a manner or to an extent not considered in the PBO/PCO, further review to conclude the requirements of ESA section 7(a)(2) may be required.

For Proposed Actions that include bridge/culvert or structure removal, replacement, and/or maintenance activities:

If your initial bridge, culvert, or structure assessment failed to detect Indiana bat, northern long-eared bat, or tricolored bat use or occupancy, yet bats are later detected prior to, or during construction, promptly notify the local Service Field Office within 2 working days of the discovery. In addition, please document whether incidental take occurred, and if so, the type (i.e. kill or harm) and amount (i.e. number of individuals) and submit documentation to the local Service Field Office within 5 working days from the completion of the bridge, culvert, or structure construction (use Appendix E - Post Assessment Discovery of Bats at Bridge/Culvert or Structure Form in the [User's Guide](#)). In these instances, potential incidental take of Indiana bats, northern long-eared bats, or tricolored bats may be exempted provided that the take is reported to

the Service. In these instances, potential incidental take of Indiana bats, northern long-eared bats, or tricolored bats may be exempted provided that the take is reported to the Service.

If the Project may affect any other federally listed or proposed species and/or designated critical habitat, additional consultation between the lead Federal action agency and this Service Field Office is required for those species/designated critical habitat. If the Project has the potential to take bald or golden eagles, additional coordination with the Service under the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act may also be required. In either of these circumstances, please advise the lead Federal action agency to contact this Service Field Office

The following species may occur in your project area and **are not** covered by this determination:

- Alligator Snapping Turtle *Macrochelys temminckii* Proposed Threatened
- Dusky Gopher Frog *Rana sevosa* Endangered
- Eastern Black Rail *Laterallus jamaicensis ssp. jamaicensis* Threatened
- Gopher Tortoise *Gopherus polyphemus* Threatened
- Gulf Sturgeon *Acipenser oxyrinchus (=oxyrhynchus) desotoi* Threatened
- Monarch Butterfly *Danaus plexippus* Proposed Threatened
- Piping Plover *Charadrius melodus* Threatened
- Red-cockaded Woodpecker *Dryobates borealis* Threatened
- Ringed Map Turtle *Graptemys oculifera* Threatened
- Rufa Red Knot *Calidris canutus rufa* Threatened
- West Indian Manatee *Trichechus manatus* Threatened

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The following project name and description was collected in IPaC as part of the endangered species review process.

NAME

H.000284 US 90: PEARL RIVER BRIDGES (HBI)

DESCRIPTION

The project proposes to replace 5 bridges (4 in Louisiana, 1 in Mississippi) within the same alignment.

The approximate location of the project can be viewed in Google Maps: <https://www.google.com/maps/@30.2344231,-89.64568342839897,14z>



DETERMINATION KEY RESULT

Based on your answers provided, this project(s) may affect, but is not likely to adversely affect the Indiana bat, northern long-eared bat or tricolored bat, therefore, consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service pursuant to Section 7(a)(2) of the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (ESA) (87 Stat. 884, as amended 16 U.S.C. 1531 et seq.) is required. However, also based on your answers provided, this project may rely on the concurrence provided in the Programmatic Biological Opinion/Conference Opinion for Transportation Projects in the Range of the Indiana bat, northern long-eared bat, and tricolored bat, dated December 13, 2024.

QUALIFICATION INTERVIEW

1. Which Federal Agency is the lead federal agency the action?

A) Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)

2. Your project overlaps with Zone 2 of the areas where northern long-eared bats and/or tricolored bats may be present and roosting in trees year-round.

Automatically answered

Yes

3. Your project overlaps with an area where northern long-eared bats or tricolored bats may be present and roosting in trees year-round.

Do you understand that your project may impact bats roosting in trees at any time during the year?

Yes

4. Does the Action Area intersect the species list area of the Northern long-eared bat?

Automatically answered

Yes

5. Does the Action Area intersect the species list area of the tricolored Bat (TCB)?

Automatically answered

Yes

6. [Semantic] Is any portion of the action area within a 0.5 mile radius of an entrance/opening to any known NLEB or TCB hibernacula?

Note: The map queried for this question contains proprietary information and cannot be displayed. If you need additional information, please contact the Field Office listed in the letterhead of this letter.

Automatically answered

No

7. Does your project's activities include raising the road profile above the tree canopy in documented habitat for the Indiana bat, NLEB, or TCB?

Note: For the definition of documented habitat, refer to Appendix A: <https://www.fws.gov/media/users-guide-range-wide-programmatic-consultation-indiana-bat-and-northern-long-eared-bat>

No

8. Is your project located within a karst area?

No

9. Will the project include bridge, culvert, or structure removal, replacement, and/or alteration activities?

Note: For definitions of bridge, culvert, and structure, refer to Appendix A: <https://www.fws.gov/media/users-guide-range-wide-programmatic-consultation-indiana-bat-and-northern-long-eared-bat>.

Yes

10. Do your project's activities involve tree removal/trimming, temporary lighting, new/additional permanent lighting, ground disturbance, percussives that involves noise/vibration above existing background levels, vibrations, or slash pile burning?

No

11. Is there suitable summer habitat for the Indiana bat, NLEB, or TCB within the project action area?

Note: See the Service's summer survey guidance for current definitions of suitable habitat [<https://www.fws.gov/midwest/endangered/mammals/inba/inbasummersurveyguidance.html>].

No

12. Will the project include **bridge** removal, replacement, and/or alteration activities?

Yes

13. Has a Bridge Bat Assessment been conducted **within the last 24 months** to determine if the bridge is being used by the Indiana bat, NLEB, or TCB? If yes, upload assessment.

Note: Refer to the Service's current survey guidance for acceptable assessment practices and validity timeframe of bridge/culvert and structure bat assessments: <https://www.fws.gov/library/collections/range-wide-indiana-bat-and-northern-long-eared-bat-survey-guidelines>.

Yes

SUBMITTED DOCUMENTS

- West Pearl River Bridge structure survey.pdf <https://ipac.ecosphere.fws.gov/project/75F677TLN5BXZJXKJOPK23CTKY/projectDocuments/157918737>
- West Middle Pearl River Bridge structure survey.pdf <https://ipac.ecosphere.fws.gov/project/75F677TLN5BXZJXKJOPK23CTKY/projectDocuments/157918739>
- Middle Middle Pearl River Bridge structure survey.pdf <https://ipac.ecosphere.fws.gov/project/75F677TLN5BXZJXKJOPK23CTKY/projectDocuments/157918741>
- East Pearl River Bridge structure survey.pdf <https://ipac.ecosphere.fws.gov/project/75F677TLN5BXZJXKJOPK23CTKY/projectDocuments/157918742>
- East Middle Pearl River Bridge structure survey.pdf <https://ipac.ecosphere.fws.gov/project/75F677TLN5BXZJXKJOPK23CTKY/projectDocuments/157918743>

14. Please select one of the following results of the Bridge Bat Assessment:

*c) Indicates the **absence** of Indiana bats, NLEBs, or TCBs roosting in/under the bridge (no bats, guano, etc.)?*

15. Does the project include **culvert** removal, replacement, and/or alteration activities?

No

16. Does the project include **structure** removal, replacement, and/or alteration activities?

No

17. Does the Action Area intersect the species list area of the tricolored Bat (TCB)?

Automatically answered

Yes

18. Does the Action Area intersect the species list area of the northern long-eared bat (NLEB)?

Automatically answered

Yes

PROJECT QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Have you made a No Effect determinations for all other species included on the FWS IPaC generated species list?

Yes

2. Have you made a May Affect determination for any other species on the FWS IPaC generated list?

No

3. Please enter the date of the bridge assessment.

2/13/2025

AVOIDANCE AND MINIMIZATION MEASURES (AMMS)

This determination key result includes the commitment to implement the following Avoidance and Minimization Measures (AMMs):

GAMM1

Ensure all operators, employees, and contractors working in areas of Indiana bat, NLEB, or TCB suitable habitat are aware of all Transportation Agency environmental commitments, including all applicable AMMs.

DETERMINATION KEY DESCRIPTION: FHWA, FRA, FTA PROGRAMMATIC CONSULTATION FOR TRANSPORTATION PROJECTS AFFECTING IBAT, NLEB, OR TCB

This key was last updated in IPaC on September 11, 2025. Keys are subject to periodic revision.

This decision key is intended for projects/activities funded or authorized by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), Federal Railroad Administration (FRA), and/or Federal Transit Administration (FTA), which may require consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) under Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act (ESA) and may affect the federally listed endangered Indiana bat (*Myotis sodalis*), northern long-eared bat (*Myotis septentrionalis*), and/or federally proposed endangered tricolored bat (*Perimyotis subflavus*).

This decision key should only be used to verify project applicability with the Service's Programmatic Biological Opinion/Conference Opinion for Transportation Projects in the Range of the Indiana bat, northern long-eared bat, and tricolored bat, dated December 13, 2024. The programmatic consultation limited transportation activities that may affect the covered bat species and addresses situations that are both likely and not likely to adversely affect the covered bat species. This decision key will assist in identifying the effect of a specific project/activity and the applicability of the programmatic consultation. The programmatic consultation is not intended to cover all types of transportation actions. Activities outside the scope of the programmatic consultation, or that may affect ESA-listed species other than the Indiana bat, northern long-eared bat, or tricolored bat, or their designated critical habitat, may require additional ESA Section 7 consultation.

IPAC USER CONTACT INFORMATION

Agency: Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development
Name: Craig LeBlanc
Address: 1201 Capitol Access Road
City: Baton Rouge
State: LA
Zip: 70802
Email: craig.leblanc2@la.gov
Phone: 2252424524

APPENDIX D: Bridge/Culvert and Structure Bat Assessment Form

Bridge/Culvert and Structure Bat Assessment Form Instructions

- This form will be completed to document bat occupancy or bat use of bridges, culverts, and other structures. This form (or a different form with the same information) shall be submitted to the appropriate personnel within the DOT and USFWS for recordkeeping (or uploaded into the Information, Planning, and Consultation (IPaC) Determination Key for use of the Programmatic Biological Opinion for Transportation Projects in the Range of the Indiana Bat and Northern Long-Eared Bat) prior to conducting: any activities below the deck surface either from the underside or from above the deck surface that bore down to the underside; any activities within the culvert where bats may be located; any activities that could impact expansion joints; any activities involving deck removal on bridges; or any activities involving structure demolition for bridges, culverts, and/or other structures.
- Assessments must be completed within two (2) years of conducting any work (see the above bullet), regardless of whether assessments have been conducted in the past. Assessments conducted during the bat active season is the preferred time of year; however, we recognize this is not always possible. Assessments must be completed in appropriate weather conditions, suitable for the assessor to observe common signs of bat use.
- Evidence of bat use may include visual observation (live and/or dead), presence of guano, presence of staining, audible observation, and/or odor observation. Presence of one or more indicators is sufficient evidence that bats may be using the bridge, culvert, and/or other structure.
- If bat use of a bridge, culvert, and/or other structure is noted, additional studies may be undertaken during bat active season to identify the specific bat species utilizing the structure, or protected bat species presence can be assumed, in order to comply with threatened and endangered species regulations. Bat active season dates, typically between April and November, vary regionally and by species, so assessors should consult with their local USFWS Field Office for more specific active season dates.
- For use of the Programmatic Biological Opinion for Transportation Projects in the Range of the Indiana Bat and Northern Long-Eared Bat – If the bridge/culvert or structure is 1,000 feet or more from suitable bat habitat¹ (e.g., an urban or agricultural area without suitable foraging habitat or corridors linking the bridge to suitable foraging habitat), check the appropriate box and fill out the table below. **No further assessment is required.**

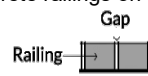
Date & Time of Assessment 2/13/2025, 11:00 AM	DOT Project # H.000284, H.000286	Route/Facility Carried US 90, West Pearl River	County St. Tammany
Federal Structure ID 625200060705291	Structure Coordinates (latitude and longitude) 30.135225, -89.400790	☐ This bridge/culvert or structure is 1,000 feet or more from suitable bat habitat ² Name: <u>Craig LeBlanc</u> Signature: <u>Craig LeBlanc</u>	

- Any questions pertaining to assessments or this form should be directed to the local USFWS Field Office.

¹ Refer to the USFWS's summer survey guidance for the definition of suitable habitat (<http://www.fws.gov/midwest/endangered/mammals/inba/inbasummersurveyguidance.html>).

² This condition is only for use of the Programmatic Biological Opinion for Transportation Projects in the Range of the Indiana bat and Northern long-eared bat.

Bridge/Structure Bat Assessment Form

Date & Time of Assessment 2/13/2025, 11:00 AM		DOT Project H.000284, Number H.000286		Route/Facility US 90, West Pearl River Carried		County St. Tammany	
Federal Structure ID 625200060705291		Structure Coordinates 30.135225, -89.400790 (latitude and longitude)		Structure Height (approximate) 47 ft		Structure Length 570 ft	
Structure Type (check one)				Structure Material (check all that apply)			
Bridge Construction Style				Deck Material		Beam Material	
☐ Cast-in-place 		☐ Pre-stressed Girder 		☐ Metal		☐ None	
☐ Flat Slab/Box 		☐ Steel I-beam 		☒ Concrete		☒ Concrete	
☐ Truss 		☐ Covered 		☐ Timber		☐ Steel	
☐ Parallel Box Beam 		☐ Other: Steel Tower Vertical Lift Span		☐ Open grid		☐ Timber	
				☐ Other:		☐ Other:	
Culvert Type				Culvert Material		Creosote Evidence	
☐ Box		☐ Other Structure		☐ Metal		☐ Yes	
☐ Pipe/Round				☐ Concrete		☒ No	
☐ Other:				☐ Plastic		☐ Unknown	
				☐ Stone/Masonry		Notes:	
				☐ Other:			
Crossings Traversed (check all that apply)				Surrounding Habitat (check all that apply)			
☐ Bare ground		☐ Open vegetation		☐ Agricultural		☐ Grassland	
☐ Rip-rap		☐ Closed vegetation		☐ Commercial		☐ Ranching	
☒ Flowing water		☐ Railroad		☐ Residential-urban		☒ Riparian/wetland	
☐ Standing water		☐ Road/trail - Type:		☒ Residential-rural		☐ Mixed use	
☐ Seasonal water		☐ Other:		☐ Woodland/forested		☐ Other:	
Areas Assessed (check all that apply)							
Check all areas that apply. If an area is not present in the structure, check the "not present" box.							
Document all bat indicators observed during the assessment. Include the species present, if known, and provide photo documentation as indicated.							
Area (check if assessed)		Assessment Notes		Evidence of Bats (include photos if present)			
☐ All crevices and cracks:		☒ Not present		☐ Visual - live #		☐ Audible	
☒ Bridges/culverts: rough surfaces or imperfections in concrete				☐ dead #		☐ Odor	
☐ Other structures: soffits, rafters, attic areas				☐ Guano		☐ Photos	
				☐ Staining			
☒ Concrete surfaces (open roosting on concrete)		☒ Not present		☐ Visual - live #		☐ Audible	
				☐ dead #		☐ Odor	
				☐ Guano		☐ Photos	
				☐ Staining			
☒ Spaces between concrete end walls and the bridge deck		☒ Not present		☐ Visual - live #		☐ Audible	
				☐ dead #		☐ Odor	
				☐ Guano		☐ Photos	
				☐ Staining			
☒ Crack between concrete railings on top of the bridge deck		☒ Not present		☐ Visual - live #		☐ Audible	
				☐ dead #		☐ Odor	
				☐ Guano		☐ Photos	
				☐ Staining			
☒ Vertical surfaces on concrete I-beams		☒ Not present		☐ Visual - live #		☐ Audible	
				☐ dead #		☐ Odor	
				☐ Guano		☐ Photos	
				☐ Staining			
☐ Spaces between walls, ceiling joists		☐ Not present		☐ Visual - live #		☐ Audible	
				☐ dead #		☐ Odor	
				☐ Guano		☐ Photos	
				☐ Staining			
☒ Weep holes, scupper drains, and inlets/pipes		☒ Not present		☐ Visual - live #		☐ Audible	
				☐ dead #		☐ Odor	
				☐ Guano		☐ Photos	
				☐ Staining			
☐ All guiderails		☐ Not present		☐ Visual - live #		☐ Audible	
				☐ dead #		☐ Odor	
				☐ Guano		☐ Photos	
				☐ Staining			
☐ All expansion joints		☐ Not present		☐ Visual - live #		☐ Audible	
				☐ dead #		☐ Odor	
				☐ Guano		☐ Photos	
				☐ Staining			
Name: Craig LeBlanc				Signature: <i>Craig LeBlanc</i>			

APPENDIX D: Bridge/Culvert and Structure Bat Assessment Form

Bridge/Culvert and Structure Bat Assessment Form Instructions

- This form will be completed to document bat occupancy or bat use of bridges, culverts, and other structures. This form (or a different form with the same information) shall be submitted to the appropriate personnel within the DOT and USFWS for recordkeeping (or uploaded into the Information, Planning, and Consultation (IPaC) Determination Key for use of the Programmatic Biological Opinion for Transportation Projects in the Range of the Indiana Bat and Northern Long-Eared Bat) prior to conducting: any activities below the deck surface either from the underside or from above the deck surface that bore down to the underside; any activities within the culvert where bats may be located; any activities that could impact expansion joints; any activities involving deck removal on bridges; or any activities involving structure demolition for bridges, culverts, and/or other structures.
- Assessments must be completed within two (2) years of conducting any work (see the above bullet), regardless of whether assessments have been conducted in the past. Assessments conducted during the bat active season is the preferred time of year; however, we recognize this is not always possible. Assessments must be completed in appropriate weather conditions, suitable for the assessor to observe common signs of bat use.
- Evidence of bat use may include visual observation (live and/or dead), presence of guano, presence of staining, audible observation, and/or odor observation. Presence of one or more indicators is sufficient evidence that bats may be using the bridge, culvert, and/or other structure.
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- For use of the Programmatic Biological Opinion for Transportation Projects in the Range of the Indiana Bat and Northern Long-Eared Bat – If the bridge/culvert or structure is 1,000 feet or more from suitable bat habitat¹ (e.g., an urban or agricultural area without suitable foraging habitat or corridors linking the bridge to suitable foraging habitat), check the appropriate box and fill out the table below. **No further assessment is required.**

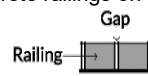
Date & Time of Assessment 2/13/2025, 11:00 AM	DOT Project # H.000284, H.000286	Route/Facility Carried US 90, West Pearl River	County St. Tammany
Federal Structure ID 625200060705291	Structure Coordinates (latitude and longitude) 30.135225, -89.400790	☐ This bridge/culvert or structure is 1,000 feet or more from suitable bat habitat ² Name: <u>Craig LeBlanc</u> Signature: <u>Craig LeBlanc</u>	

- Any questions pertaining to assessments or this form should be directed to the local USFWS Field Office.

¹ Refer to the USFWS's summer survey guidance for the definition of suitable habitat (<http://www.fws.gov/midwest/endangered/mammals/inba/inbasummersurveyguidance.html>).

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Bridge/Structure Bat Assessment Form

Date & Time of Assessment 2/13/2025, 11:00 AM		DOT Project H.000284, Number H.000286		Route/Facility US 90, West Pearl River Carried		County St. Tammany	
Federal Structure ID 625200060705291		Structure Coordinates 30.135225, -89.400790 (latitude and longitude)		Structure Height (approximate) 47 ft		Structure Length 570 ft	
Structure Type (check one)				Structure Material (check all that apply)			
Bridge Construction Style				Deck Material		Beam Material	
☐ Cast-in-place 		☐ Pre-stressed Girder 		☐ Metal		☐ None	
☐ Flat Slab/Box 		☐ Steel I-beam 		☒ Concrete		☒ Concrete	
☐ Truss 		☐ Covered 		☐ Timber		☐ Steel	
☐ Parallel Box Beam 		☐ Other: Steel Tower Vertical Lift Span		☐ Open grid		☐ Timber	
				☐ Other:		☐ Other:	
Culvert Type				Culvert Material		Creosote Evidence	
☐ Box		☐ Other Structure		☐ Metal		☐ Yes	
☐ Pipe/Round				☐ Concrete		☒ No	
☐ Other:				☐ Plastic		☐ Unknown	
				☐ Stone/Masonry		Notes:	
				☐ Other:			
Crossings Traversed (check all that apply)				Surrounding Habitat (check all that apply)			
☐ Bare ground		☐ Open vegetation		☐ Agricultural		☐ Grassland	
☐ Rip-rap		☐ Closed vegetation		☐ Commercial		☐ Ranching	
☒ Flowing water		☐ Railroad		☐ Residential-urban		☒ Riparian/wetland	
☐ Standing water		☐ Road/trail - Type:		☒ Residential-rural		☐ Mixed use	
☐ Seasonal water		☐ Other:		☐ Woodland/forested		☐ Other:	
Areas Assessed (check all that apply)							
Check all areas that apply. If an area is not present in the structure, check the "not present" box.							
Document all bat indicators observed during the assessment. Include the species present, if known, and provide photo documentation as indicated.							
Area (check if assessed)		Assessment Notes		Evidence of Bats (include photos if present)			
☐ All crevices and cracks:		☒ Not present		☐ Visual - live #		☐ Audible	
☒ Bridges/culverts: rough surfaces or imperfections in concrete				☐ dead #		☐ Odor	
☐ Other structures: soffits, rafters, attic areas				☐ Guano		☐ Photos	
				☐ Staining			
☒ Concrete surfaces (open roosting on concrete)		☒ Not present		☐ Visual - live #		☐ Audible	
				☐ dead #		☐ Odor	
				☐ Guano		☐ Photos	
				☐ Staining			
☒ Spaces between concrete end walls and the bridge deck		☒ Not present		☐ Visual - live #		☐ Audible	
				☐ dead #		☐ Odor	
				☐ Guano		☐ Photos	
				☐ Staining			
☒ Crack between concrete railings on top of the bridge deck		☒ Not present		☐ Visual - live #		☐ Audible	
				☐ dead #		☐ Odor	
				☐ Guano		☐ Photos	
				☐ Staining			
☒ Vertical surfaces on concrete I-beams		☒ Not present		☐ Visual - live #		☐ Audible	
				☐ dead #		☐ Odor	
				☐ Guano		☐ Photos	
				☐ Staining			
☐ Spaces between walls, ceiling joists		☐ Not present		☐ Visual - live #		☐ Audible	
				☐ dead #		☐ Odor	
				☐ Guano		☐ Photos	
				☐ Staining			
☒ Weep holes, scupper drains, and inlets/pipes		☒ Not present		☐ Visual - live #		☐ Audible	
				☐ dead #		☐ Odor	
				☐ Guano		☐ Photos	
				☐ Staining			
☐ All guiderails		☐ Not present		☐ Visual - live #		☐ Audible	
				☐ dead #		☐ Odor	
				☐ Guano		☐ Photos	
				☐ Staining			
☐ All expansion joints		☐ Not present		☐ Visual - live #		☐ Audible	
				☐ dead #		☐ Odor	
				☐ Guano		☐ Photos	
				☐ Staining			
Name: Craig LeBlanc				Signature: <i>Craig LeBlanc</i>			

APPENDIX D: Bridge/Culvert and Structure Bat Assessment Form

Bridge/Culvert and Structure Bat Assessment Form Instructions

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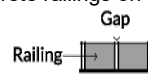
Date & Time of Assessment 2/13/2025, 11:00 AM	DOT Project # H.000284, H.000286	Route/Facility Carried US 90, West Pearl River	County St. Tammany
Federal Structure ID 625200060705291	Structure Coordinates (latitude and longitude) 30.135225, -89.400790	☐ This bridge/culvert or structure is 1,000 feet or more from suitable bat habitat ² Name: <u>Craig LeBlanc</u> Signature: <u>Craig LeBlanc</u>	

- Any questions pertaining to assessments or this form should be directed to the local USFWS Field Office.

¹ Refer to the USFWS's summer survey guidance for the definition of suitable habitat (<http://www.fws.gov/midwest/endangered/mammals/inba/inbasummersurveyguidance.html>).

² This condition is only for use of the Programmatic Biological Opinion for Transportation Projects in the Range of the Indiana bat and Northern long-eared bat.

Bridge/Structure Bat Assessment Form

Date & Time of Assessment 2/13/2025, 11:00 AM		DOT Project Number H.000284, H.000286		Route/Facility Carried US 90, West Pearl River		County St. Tammany	
Federal Structure ID 625200060705291		Structure Coordinates 30.135225, -89.400790 (latitude and longitude)		Structure Height (approximate) 47 ft		Structure Length 570 ft	
Structure Type (check one)				Structure Material (check all that apply)			
Bridge Construction Style				Deck Material		Beam Material	
☐ Cast-in-place 		☐ Pre-stressed Girder 		☐ Metal		☐ None	
☐ Flat Slab/Box 		☐ Steel I-beam 		☒ Concrete		☒ Concrete	
☐ Truss 		☐ Covered 		☐ Timber		☐ Steel	
☐ Parallel Box Beam 		☐ Other: Steel Tower Vertical Lift Span		☐ Open grid		☐ Timber	
				☐ Other:		☐ Other:	
Culvert Type		Other Structure		Culvert Material		Creosote Evidence	
☐ Box		☐		☐ Metal		☐ Yes ☐ No	
☐ Pipe/Round		☐		☐ Concrete		☐ Unknown	
☐ Other:				☐ Plastic		Notes:	
				☐ Stone/Masonry			
				☐ Other:			
Crossings Traversed (check all that apply)				Surrounding Habitat (check all that apply)			
☐ Bare ground		☐ Open vegetation		☐ Agricultural		☐ Grassland	
☐ Rip-rap		☐ Closed vegetation		☐ Commercial		☐ Ranching	
☒ Flowing water		☐ Railroad		☐ Residential-urban		☒ Riparian/wetland	
☐ Standing water		☐ Road/trail - Type:		☒ Residential-rural		☐ Mixed use	
☐ Seasonal water		☐ Other:		☐ Woodland/forested		☐ Other:	
Areas Assessed (check all that apply)							
Check all areas that apply. If an area is not present in the structure, check the "not present" box.							
Document all bat indicators observed during the assessment. Include the species present, if known, and provide photo documentation as indicated.							
Area (check if assessed)		Assessment Notes		Evidence of Bats (include photos if present)			
☐ All crevices and cracks: Bridges/culverts: rough surfaces or imperfections in concrete Other structures: soffits, rafters, attic areas		☒ Not present		☐ Visual - live # dead #		☐ Audible ☐ Species	
☒ Concrete surfaces (open roosting on concrete)		☒ Not present		☐ Guano		☐ Odor	
☒ Spaces between concrete end walls and the bridge deck		☒ Not present		☐ Staining		☐ Photos	
☒ Crack between concrete railings on top of the bridge deck 		☒ Not present		☐ Visual - live # dead #		☐ Audible ☐ Species	
☒ Vertical surfaces on concrete I-beams		☒ Not present		☐ Guano		☐ Odor	
☐ Spaces between walls, ceiling joists		☐ Not present		☐ Staining		☐ Photos	
☒ Weep holes, scupper drains, and inlets/pipes		☒ Not present		☐ Visual - live # dead #		☐ Audible ☐ Species	
☐ All guiderails		☐ Not present		☐ Guano		☐ Odor	
☐ All expansion joints		☐ Not present		☐ Staining		☐ Photos	
Name: Craig LeBlanc				Signature: 			

APPENDIX D: Bridge/Culvert and Structure Bat Assessment Form

Bridge/Culvert and Structure Bat Assessment Form Instructions

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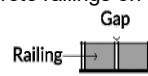
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Bridge/Structure Bat Assessment Form

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Structure Type (check one)				Structure Material (check all that apply)			
Bridge Construction Style				Deck Material		Beam Material	
☐ Cast-in-place 		☐ Pre-stressed Girder 		☐ Metal		☐ None	
☐ Flat Slab/Box 		☐ Steel I-beam 		☒ Concrete		☒ Concrete	
☐ Truss 		☐ Covered 		☐ Timber		☐ Steel	
☐ Parallel Box Beam 		☐ Other: Steel Tower Vertical Lift Span		☐ Open grid		☐ Timber	
				☐ Other:		☐ Other:	
Culvert Type				Culvert Material		End/Back Wall Material	
☐ Box		☐ Other Structure		☐ Metal		☒ Concrete	
☐ Pipe/Round				☐ Concrete		☐ Timber	
☐ Other:				☐ Plastic		☐ Stone/Masonry	
				☐ Stone/Masonry		☐ Other:	
				☐ Other:		Creosote Evidence	
						☐ Yes ☐ No	
						☐ Unknown	
Crossings Traversed (check all that apply)				Surrounding Habitat (check all that apply)			
☐ Bare ground		☐ Open vegetation		☐ Agricultural		☐ Grassland	
☐ Rip-rap		☐ Closed vegetation		☐ Commercial		☐ Ranching	
☒ Flowing water		☐ Railroad		☐ Residential-urban		☒ Riparian/wetland	
☐ Standing water		☐ Road/trail - Type:		☒ Residential-rural		☐ Mixed use	
☐ Seasonal water		☐ Other:		☐ Woodland/forested		☐ Other:	
Areas Assessed (check all that apply)							
Check all areas that apply. If an area is not present in the structure, check the "not present" box.							
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Area (check if assessed)		Assessment Notes		Evidence of Bats (include photos if present)			
☐ All crevices and cracks:		☒ Not present		☐ Visual - live # dead #		☐ Audible	
☒ Bridges/culverts: rough surfaces or imperfections in concrete				☐ Guano		☐ Odor	
☐ Other structures: soffits, rafters, attic areas				☐ Staining		☐ Photos	
						☐ Species	
☒ Concrete surfaces (open roosting on concrete)		☒ Not present		☐ Visual - live # dead #		☐ Audible	
				☐ Guano		☐ Odor	
				☐ Staining		☐ Photos	
						☐ Species	
☒ Spaces between concrete end walls and the bridge deck		☒ Not present		☐ Visual - live # dead #		☐ Audible	
				☐ Guano		☐ Odor	
				☐ Staining		☐ Photos	
						☐ Species	
☒ Crack between concrete railings on top of the bridge deck		☒ Not present		☐ Visual - live # dead #		☐ Audible	
				☐ Guano		☐ Odor	
				☐ Staining		☐ Photos	
						☐ Species	
☒ Vertical surfaces on concrete I-beams		☒ Not present		☐ Visual - live # dead #		☐ Audible	
				☐ Guano		☐ Odor	
				☐ Staining		☐ Photos	
						☐ Species	
☐ Spaces between walls, ceiling joists		☐ Not present		☐ Visual - live # dead #		☐ Audible	
				☐ Guano		☐ Odor	
				☐ Staining		☐ Photos	
						☐ Species	
☒ Weep holes, scupper drains, and inlets/pipes		☒ Not present		☐ Visual - live # dead #		☐ Audible	
				☐ Guano		☐ Odor	
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						☐ Species	
☐ All guiderails		☐ Not present		☐ Visual - live # dead #		☐ Audible	
				☐ Guano		☐ Odor	
				☐ Staining		☐ Photos	
						☐ Species	
☐ All expansion joints		☐ Not present		☐ Visual - live # dead #		☐ Audible	
				☐ Guano		☐ Odor	
				☐ Staining		☐ Photos	
						☐ Species	
Name: Craig LeBlanc				Signature: <i>Craig LeBlanc</i>			

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Bridge/Culvert and Structure Bat Assessment Form Instructions

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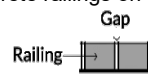
Date & Time of Assessment 2/13/2025, 11:00 AM	DOT Project # H.000284, H.000286	Route/Facility Carried US 90, West Pearl River	County St. Tammany
Federal Structure ID 625200060705291	Structure Coordinates (latitude and longitude) 30.135225, -89.400790	☐ This bridge/culvert or structure is 1,000 feet or more from suitable bat habitat ² Name: <u>Craig LeBlanc</u> Signature: <u>Craig LeBlanc</u>	

- Any questions pertaining to assessments or this form should be directed to the local USFWS Field Office.

¹ Refer to the USFWS's summer survey guidance for the definition of suitable habitat (<http://www.fws.gov/midwest/endangered/mammals/inba/inbasummersurveyguidance.html>).

² This condition is only for use of the Programmatic Biological Opinion for Transportation Projects in the Range of the Indiana bat and Northern long-eared bat.

Bridge/Structure Bat Assessment Form

Date & Time of Assessment 2/13/2025, 11:00 AM		DOT Project Number H.000284, H.000286		Route/Facility Carried US 90, West Pearl River		County St. Tammany	
Federal Structure ID 625200060705291		Structure Coordinates 30.135225, -89.400790 (latitude and longitude)		Structure Height (approximate) 47 ft		Structure Length 570 ft	
Structure Type (check one)				Structure Material (check all that apply)			
Bridge Construction Style				Deck Material		Beam Material	
☐ Cast-in-place 		☐ Pre-stressed Girder 		☐ Metal		☐ None	
☐ Flat Slab/Box 		☐ Steel I-beam 		☒ Concrete		☒ Concrete	
☐ Truss 		☐ Covered 		☐ Timber		☐ Steel	
☐ Parallel Box Beam 		☐ Other: Steel Tower Vertical Lift Span		☐ Open grid		☐ Timber	
				☐ Other:		☐ Other:	
Culvert Type				Culvert Material		Creosote Evidence	
☐ Box		☐ Other Structure		☐ Metal		☐ Yes	
☐ Pipe/Round				☐ Concrete		☐ No	
☐ Other:				☐ Plastic		☐ Unknown	
				☐ Stone/Masonry		Notes:	
				☐ Other:			
Crossings Traversed (check all that apply)				Surrounding Habitat (check all that apply)			
☐ Bare ground		☐ Open vegetation		☐ Agricultural		☐ Grassland	
☐ Rip-rap		☐ Closed vegetation		☐ Commercial		☐ Ranching	
☒ Flowing water		☐ Railroad		☐ Residential-urban		☒ Riparian/wetland	
☐ Standing water		☐ Road/trail - Type:		☒ Residential-rural		☐ Mixed use	
☐ Seasonal water		☐ Other:		☐ Woodland/forested		☐ Other:	
Areas Assessed (check all that apply)							
Check all areas that apply. If an area is not present in the structure, check the "not present" box.							
Document all bat indicators observed during the assessment. Include the species present, if known, and provide photo documentation as indicated.							
Area (check if assessed)		Assessment Notes		Evidence of Bats (include photos if present)			
☐ All crevices and cracks:		☒ Not present		☐ Visual - live #		☐ Audible	
☒ Bridges/culverts: rough surfaces or imperfections in concrete				☐ dead #		☐ Odor	
☐ Other structures: soffits, rafters, attic areas				☐ Guano		☐ Photos	
				☐ Staining			
☒ Concrete surfaces (open roosting on concrete)		☒ Not present		☐ Visual - live #		☐ Audible	
				☐ dead #		☐ Odor	
				☐ Guano		☐ Photos	
				☐ Staining			
☒ Spaces between concrete end walls and the bridge deck		☒ Not present		☐ Visual - live #		☐ Audible	
				☐ dead #		☐ Odor	
				☐ Guano		☐ Photos	
				☐ Staining			
☒ Crack between concrete railings on top of the bridge deck		☒ Not present		☐ Visual - live #		☐ Audible	
				☐ dead #		☐ Odor	
				☐ Guano		☐ Photos	
				☐ Staining			
☒ Vertical surfaces on concrete I-beams		☒ Not present		☐ Visual - live #		☐ Audible	
				☐ dead #		☐ Odor	
				☐ Guano		☐ Photos	
				☐ Staining			
☐ Spaces between walls, ceiling joists		☐ Not present		☐ Visual - live #		☐ Audible	
				☐ dead #		☐ Odor	
				☐ Guano		☐ Photos	
				☐ Staining			
☒ Weep holes, scupper drains, and inlets/pipes		☒ Not present		☐ Visual - live #		☐ Audible	
				☐ dead #		☐ Odor	
				☐ Guano		☐ Photos	
				☐ Staining			
☐ All guiderails		☐ Not present		☐ Visual - live #		☐ Audible	
				☐ dead #		☐ Odor	
				☐ Guano		☐ Photos	
				☐ Staining			
☐ All expansion joints		☐ Not present		☐ Visual - live #		☐ Audible	
				☐ dead #		☐ Odor	
				☐ Guano		☐ Photos	
				☐ Staining			
Name: Craig LeBlanc				Signature: <i>Craig LeBlanc</i>			

ATTACHMENT C

Site Photos



Photo 1: West Pearl River Bridge



Photo 2:



Photo 3:



Photo 4:



Photo 5:



Photo 6:



Photo 7: West Middle Pearl River Bridge



Photo 8:



Photo 9:



Photo 10:



Photo 11: Middle Middle Pearl River Bridge



Photo 12:



Photo 13:



Photo 14:



Photo 15:



Photo 16:



Photo 17:



Photo 18: East Middle Pearl River Bridge



Photo 19:



Photo 20:



Photo 21:



Photo 22: East Pearl River Bridge



Photo 23:



Photo 24: