



September 16, 2020

Ms. Mary Colbert
Environment & Permitting Specialist
Orsted North American Permitting
One International Place, Suite 2610
Boston, MA 02110

VIA EMAIL

Subject: Block Island Wind Farm Beached Bird Survey – Final Summary Report 2019

Dear Ms. Colbert:

Tetra Tech, Inc. (Tetra Tech) is pleased to submit this Final Summary Report of the Block Island Wind Farm (BIWF).

This report concludes the beached bird survey and reporting effort. Tetra Tech is pleased to have supported DWBI with this effort. Should you have any questions please feel free to contact me at (617) 443-7579 or Nathalie.Schils@tetratech.com.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Nathalie Schils'.

Nathalie Schils
Director of Offshore Energy
Tetra Tech, Inc.

Attachment 1: Field Data Sheets

2019 BBS Survey

Introduction

The purpose of our proposed beached bird surveys is to provide baseline data on seabird mortality on Block Island, Rhode Island. Beached bird carcass surveys are considered by some to be an effective monitoring method for showing long-term and spatial trends within seabird populations. These surveys gather data that show responses to changes along the coastline, including habitat change and disruption caused by natural phenomena (i.e. hurricanes), as well as human stressors such as development and oil spills. Beach surveys have also been used to identify and quantify other threats to seabirds such as fishing gear entanglement, marine pollution, disease, marine debris ingestion, and trauma (Harris et al 2006). Data gathered during these surveys are effective aids to the State and Federal agencies that manage and regulate seabirds.

Systematic beached bird surveys in the United States began in the mid 1970's between Long Island, New York and Cape Romain, South Carolina. These surveys proved to be effective tools for monitoring increases in harmful oil exposure rates to seabirds along the Atlantic Coast (Harris et al 2006). In recent years there has been a surge in using beached bird surveys for determining the effects of offshore wind energy production on seabird populations.

Currently there is little known about the efficacy of using beached bird surveys as a tool for determining the effects of offshore wind energy production on seabird populations. Researchers and scientist agree that long-term studies are extremely important in identifying trends in beached bird encounters.

Methods

Beached Bird Surveys (BBS), took place from January of 2019 through December of 2019. The surveys were conducted in accordance with Deepwater Wind Block Island, LLC's (DWBI) agency approved Construction and Post-Construction Avian and Bat Monitoring Plan and associated Beached Bird Monitoring Plan. The Beached Bird Monitoring Plan was based on methodologies established in the Seabird Ecological Assessment Network's (SEANET) Protocol, A Guide for SEANET Volunteers (Version 3.1, 2010). Surveys under this protocol were conducted bi-weekly. The location of each beached bird was recorded with the use of GPS equipment. Data sheets were completed for each survey regardless of findings and included program data, environmental conditions data, and a beached bird record form. Species that could not be identified (i.e. advanced decomposition or scavenged carcass remains) were noted as Unidentified to the lowest taxon possible.

Results

Over the one-year survey period, 19 birds were observed of six species, including Red-necked Grebe (1 observation), Horned Grebe (1 observation), Great Black-backed Gull (11 observations), Common Eider (1 observation), Razorbill (1 observation), and Northern Harrier (1 observation). The northern harrier identification is uncertain as there was not enough evidence to confidently rule out other raptor species. Table 1 provides a summary of the results of the survey efforts from January of 2019 through December of 2019. Attachment 1 contains copies of the field data sheets and associated photographs of the birds encountered.

Table 1. Summary of Beached Bird Surveys for 2019.

Survey Date	Beach	Birds Observed	Species and Number Observed
01/12/2019	Scotch Beach - South of Town Beach (BI-1)	4	3 – Great Black-backed Gull Common Eider
01/12/2019	South of Ballard's Beach (BI-2)	0	
01/13/2019	Snake Hole/Vail Beach (BI-3)	1	1- Common Eider
01/29/2019	Scotch Beach - South of Town Beach (BI-1)	1	1- Razorbill
01/29/2019	South of Ballard's Beach (BI-2)	0	
01/30/2019	Snake Hole/Vail Beach (BI-3)	0	
2/14/2019	Scotch Beach - South of Town Beach (BI-1)	2	1 – Great Black-backed Gull 1 - Common Eider
2/14/2019	South of Ballard's Beach (BI-2)	0	
2/10/2019	Snake Hole/Vail Beach (BI-3)	2	1 - Common Eider 1 – Red-necked Grebe
2/23/2019	Scotch Beach - South of Town Beach (BI-1)	0	
2/23/2019	South of Ballard's Beach (BI-2)	0	
2/26/2019	Snake Hole/Vail Beach (BI-3)	0	
3/9/2019	Scotch Beach - South of Town Beach (BI-1)	0	
3/9/2019	South of Ballard's Beach (BI-2)	0	
3/14/2019	Snake Hole/Vail Beach (BI-3)	0	
3/24/2019	Scotch Beach - South of Town Beach (BI-1)	0	
3/29/2019	South of Ballard's Beach (BI-2)	0	
3/29/2019	Snake Hole/Vail Beach (BI-3)	0	
4/6/2019	Scotch Beach - South of Town Beach (BI-1)	0	
4/14/2019	South of Ballard's Beach (BI-2)	0	
4/14/2019	Snake Hole/Vail Beach (BI-3)	0	

Survey Date	Beach	Birds Observed	Species and Number Observed
4/23/2019	Scotch Beach - South of Town Beach (BI-1)	2	1 – Northern Harrier (some uncertainty) 1 - Great Black-backed Gull
4/27/2019	South of Ballard's Beach (BI-2)	0	
4/27/2019	Snake Hole/Vail Beach (BI-3)	0	
5/7/2019	Scotch Beach - South of Town Beach (BI-1)	0	
5/14/2019	South of Ballard's Beach (BI-2)	0	
5/14/2019	Snake Hole/Vail Beach (BI-3)	0	
5/23/2019	Scotch Beach - South of Town Beach (BI-1)	1	1 – Horned Grebe
5/29/2019	South of Ballard's Beach (BI-2)	0	
5/29/2019	Snake Hole/Vail Beach (BI-3)	0	
6/9/2019	Scotch Beach - South of Town Beach (BI-1)	0	
6/15/2019	South of Ballard's Beach (BI-2)	0	
6/15/2019	Snake Hole/Vail Beach (BI-3)	0	
6/23/2019	Scotch Beach - South of Town Beach (BI-1)	0	
6/29/2019	South of Ballard's Beach (BI-2)	0	
6/29/2019	Snake Hole/Vail Beach (BI-3)	0	
7/14/2019	Scotch Beach - South of Town Beach (BI-1)	0	
7/15/2019	South of Ballard's Beach (BI-2)	0	
7/15/2019	Snake Hole/Vail Beach (BI-3)	0	
7/27/2019	Scotch Beach - South of Town Beach (BI-1)	0	
7/27/2019	South of Ballard's Beach (BI-2)	0	
7/27/2019	Snake Hole/Vail Beach (BI-3)	0	
8/11/2019	Scotch Beach - South of Town Beach (BI-1)	0	
8/11/2019	South of Ballard's Beach (BI-2)	0	
8/11/2019	Snake Hole/Vail Beach (BI-3)	0	
8/31/2019	Scotch Beach - South of Town Beach (BI-1)	0	
8/31/2019	South of Ballard's Beach (BI-2)	0	
8/31/2019	Snake Hole/Vail Beach (BI-3)	0	
9/15/2019	Scotch Beach - South of Town Beach (BI-1)	0	
9/15/2019	South of Ballard's Beach (BI-2)	0	
9/15/2019	Snake Hole/Vail Beach (BI-3)	0	
9/28/2019	Scotch Beach - South of Town Beach (BI-1)	1	1 – Great Black-backed Gull
9/28/2019	South of Ballard's Beach (BI-2)	0	
9/29/2019	Snake Hole/Vail Beach (BI-3)	0	

Survey Date	Beach	Birds Observed	Species and Number Observed
10/13/2019	Scotch Beach - South of Town Beach (BI-1)	0	
10/13/2019	South of Ballard's Beach (BI-2)	0	
10/12/2019	Snake Hole/Vail Beach (BI-3)	0	
10/26/2019	Scotch Beach - South of Town Beach (BI-1)	0	
10/26/2019	South of Ballard's Beach (BI-2)	0	
10/26/2019	Snake Hole/Vail Beach (BI-3)	0	
11/11/2019	Scotch Beach - South of Town Beach (BI-1)	4	4 – Great Black-backed Gull
11/11/2019	South of Ballard's Beach (BI-2)	0	
11/10/2019	Snake Hole/Vail Beach (BI-3)	0	
11/30/2019	Scotch Beach - South of Town Beach (BI-1)	0	
11/30/2019	South of Ballard's Beach (BI-2)	0	
11/28/2019	Snake Hole/Vail Beach (BI-3)	0	
12/15/2019	Scotch Beach - South of Town Beach (BI-1)	0	
12/15/2019	South of Ballard's Beach (BI-2)	0	
12/15/2019	Snake Hole/Vail Beach (BI-3)	0	
12/31/2019	Scotch Beach - South of Town Beach (BI-1)	1	1 – Great Black-backed Gull
12/31/2019	South of Ballard's Beach (BI-2)	0	
12/31/2019	Snake Hole/Vail Beach (BI-3)	0	

Summary 2015-2019

BBS Surveys were completed in June to December 2015 (7 months), January to December 2016 (12 months), January to July 2017 (7 months), and January to December 2019 (12 months). There was a total of 12 individuals observed in 2015, 8 in 2016, 1 in 2017, and 19 in 2019 for a total of 40 birds observed (Table 2). The species most commonly observed during the BBS from 2015 – 2019 was Great Black Backed Gull (16 observations; Table 2). All other species had four or less observations. There were 27 observations on Scotch Beach – South of Town Beach (BI-1) and 13 observations on Snake Hole/Vail Beach (BI-3; Table 3). There was no observation on South of Ballard's Beach (BI-2).

Table 2. Species Observed by Year

Year / Species Observed	Number Observed
2015	
Unidentified Cormorant	4
Unidentified Shearwater	2
Unidentified Loon	1
Unidentified Grebe	1
Great Black-backed Gull	4
Total for 2015	12
2016	
Black Scoter	1
Herring Gull	3
Great Black-backed Gull	3
Northern Gannet	1
Total for 2016	8
2017	
Herring Gull	1
Total for 2017	1
2019	
Great Black-backed Gull	11
Common Eider	4
Razorbill	1
Red-necked Grebe	1
Northern Harrier	1
Horned Grebe	1
Total for 2019	19
Grand Total	40

Table 3. Beach Surveys and Numbers Observed

Beach Surveyed / Species Observed	Numbers Observed
South of Ballard's Beach (BI-2)	
Subtotal	0
Scotch Beach - South of Town Beach (BI-1)	
Black Scoter	1
Unidentified Cormorant	1
Herring Gull	3
Great Black-backed Gull	16
Northern Gannet	1
Common Eider	2
Razorbill	1
Northern Harrier	1
Horned Grebe	1
Subtotal	27
Snake Hole/Vail Beach (BI-3)	
Unidentified Cormorant	3
Herring Gull	1
Unidentified Shearwater	2
Unidentified Loon	1
Unidentified Grebe	1
Great Black-backed Gull	2
Common Eider	2
Red-necked Grebe	1
Subtotal	13
Grand Total	40

There are no discernible patterns in monthly or yearly observations for the entire survey (Figure 1). The months with the highest observation were June 2015 (6 observations) and January 2019 (6 observations; Figure 1). The species most observed in June 2015 were Unidentified Cormorant (2 observations) and Unidentified Shearwater (2 observations). Most of the species observed on January 2019 were Great Black-backed Gulls (3 observations). None of the species observed from 2015 to 2019 BBS are listed as state or federally protected threatened or endangered species.

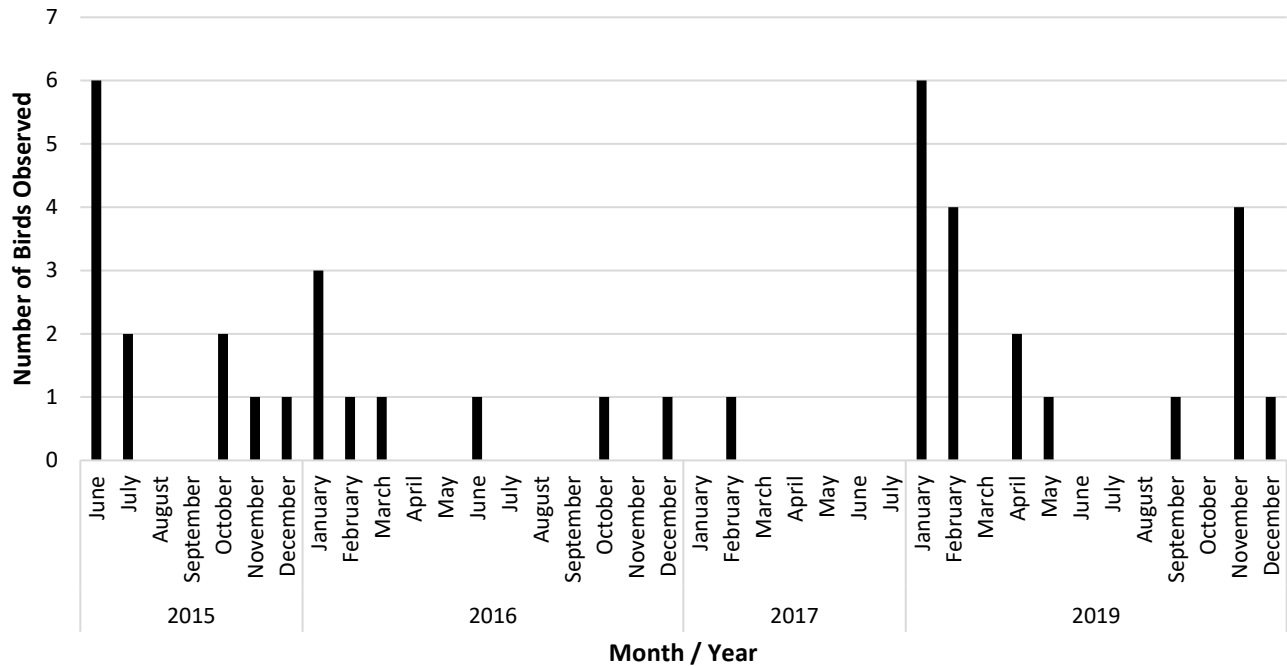


Figure 1. Monthly observations by year for Beach Bird Surveys; 2015 – 2019.

References

- HARRIS, R.J., TSENG, F.S., POKRAS, M.A., SUEDEMEYER, B.A., BOGART, J.S.H., PRESCOTT, R.L. & NEWMAN, S.H. 2006. BEACHED BIRD SURVEYS IN MASSACHUSETTS: THE SEABIRD ECOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT NETWORK (SEANET). MARINE ORNITHOLOGY 34: 115–122. http://www.marineornithology.org/PDF/34_2/34_2_115-122.pdf.
- SEABIRD ECOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT NETWORK. 2010. SEANET PROTOCOL A GUIDE FOR SEANET VOLUNTEERS VERSION 3.1. SEANET.2010. HTTP://WWW.TUFTS.EDU/VET/SEANET/RESOURCES/SEANET_PROTOCOL.PDF.



ATTACHMENT 1

FIELD DATA SHEETS