

4 August 2021

Secretary
NSW Department of Planning, Industry and
Environment
4 Parramatta Square,
12 Darcy Street
Parramatta NSW 2150



Dear Secretary

Re: Boco Rock Wind Farm Bird and Bat Monitoring Program Year 7, 2021 (our ref: 21-039) – Changes to nominated expert

After six years of monitoring (now currently within year 7) at Boco Rock Wind Farm (BRWF) we are reviewing project roles for the Bird and Bat Monitoring Program (BBMP). As part of this review, we request a change of personnel assigned to the role of nominated Expert. Jacqui Coughlan is the current nominated Expert and has undertaken this role since the project's inception. The role is subcontracted to Jacqui, yet to streamline management and reporting timelines we wish to transfer the role to an NGH senior biodiversity consultant, Deb Frazer, keeping the workflow solely under NGH supervision. Deb Frazer has been involved in the BBMP from the design phase and program approval. Deb has overseen the BBMP as project manager offering senior project advice for field surveys, reporting and program review for the entire duration of the monitoring program to date.

Page 7 of the BRWF BBMP v1.3, details the roles of the Expert and Ecologist and it states:

The role of the expert is to oversee the implementation of the BBMP in accordance with the CoAs. This includes the following responsibilities:

- Ensure surveys are conducted to best practice standards.
- Provide advice to the Ecologist and Operator as required.
- Assess the ecological significance of monitoring outcomes based on quarterly reports, or in the intervening period as required.
- Assess the effectiveness of management actions.
- Ensure reports are adequate (i.e. meet the requirements of the CoA).

The role of the Ecologist is to implement the BBMP in accordance with this plan. This includes:

- Ensure surveys are undertaken as required.
- Keep the Operator informed about the results of monitoring outcomes.
- Track results each month and identify any triggers for action.
- Provide advice and recommendations to the Operator, based on the ecological significance of monitoring outcomes.
- Carry out specific management actions required to reduce bird and microbat impacts, if engaged by the Operator.
- Adapt the plan as required to meet the objectives of the plan.
- Engage with Office of Environment and Heritage (now Biodiversity Conservation Department) as required, and as directed by the Operator.



BEGA

Suite 11, 89-91 Auckland Street (PO Box 470) Bega NSW 2550

T. (02) 6492 8333 E. ngh@nghconsulting.com.au W. www.nghconsulting.com.au

BEGA • BRISBANE • CANBERRA • GOLD COAST • NEWCASTLE • SYDNEY • WAGGA WAGGA

ABN 31 124 444 622 ACN 124 444 622

The Conditions of Approval (CoA) state *"the program shall be prepared and implemented by a suitably qualified expert, approved by the Director-General"*.

As part of the project management role, Deb has been specifically involved in executing all of the above listed responsibilities and demonstrated she is capable to undertake the role of nominated expert. Deb has an intimate knowledge of the project after six years of involvement and is well equipped to undertake the role of Expert.

For further review of Deb's experience to fill the role of Expert her Curriculum Vitae (CV) is provided overleaf.

Upon approval from the Director-General, NGH would like to make this change immediately.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Brooke Marshall', with a period at the end.

Brooke Marshall
Manager – NSW SE & ACT
Principle – Renewable Energy Assessments
0437 700 915

Survey Effort

The survey was undertaken in accordance with the Bird and Bat Monitoring Plan (BBMP) v1.3 and the following survey effort was completed:

- 10 x 20 minute bird utilisation surveys consisting of:
 - 3 woodland impact sites, 4 grassland impact sites and 3 grassland control sites (Table 1).
- Mortality searches at all stage 1 turbines consisting of:
 - **Extended zone:** Searches undertaken in the extended zone of 20 turbines.
 - **High detectability zone:** Searches were undertaken at all 67 turbines twice in the survey week.
- Anabat surveys undertaken (4 surveys for 4 nights = 16 surveys)
- Opportunistic observations were recorded during the field week.

Table 1 Bird survey sites in May 2021.

Site	ID	Waypoint
Control	61	677650 5956747
	53r	683745 5948290
	175	680991 5951307
Grassland	89	685146 5947105
	93	687083 5949438
	77	688716 5949958
	44	685616 5943956
Woodland	51r	684850 5939479
	105	685603 5939302
	2r	685441 5940147

Weather and Landscape Features

Weather

Temperatures during the May survey week were cool with light winds on most days apart from the first day (Table 2). Significant rain fell during the week, with nearly 40mm on 12 May, and around 1mm on the 11th and 13th. Rain is likely to have affected the visibility of birds during bird utilisation surveys.

Table 2 Average weather conditions recorded onsite during the bird utilisation surveys, May 2021.

Date	Average temp during survey (°C)	Average Wind (km/hr)	Conditions
10/5/21	(11.4)	9.8	Cold, cloudy, windy
11/5/21	9.1	Nil	Cool, cloudy, calm
12/5/21	7.9	7.9	Cool, clear, light breeze
13/5/21	7.1	2.5	Cool, overcast, drizzling rain, light wind

Measured at observer height (between 1.5 and 2 metres above ground) during morning BUS, with the exception of 1st survey which was measured in the afternoon during mortality survey (indicated by occurring in brackets)

Waterbodies

The waterbodies were still dry when checked during May surveys, but field staff report they are “starting to fill” with the rain received during the survey week. A total of 87 mm of rainfall has already fallen during the first 18 days of May, which is significantly more than triple the long-term May average of 27 mm. There were no birds observed at any of the wetlands this month.

Results

Bird Surveys

Nineteen bird species were observed during the May 2021 survey event. No new species were recorded. The species list is provided in Attachment A.

Species of concern – Raptors, Waterbirds and Threatened Species

No threatened species or waterbirds were observed in May. One raptor, Australian Hobby *Falco longipennis* was recorded opportunistically at the gate to Turbine 26 (Table 3).

Table 3 Raptor and waterbird species recorded during the May survey.

Common name	No.	Location	Observation type	Month
Australian Hobby	1	Gate to Turbine 26	Seen at 1 m above ground	May

Mortality Surveys

No carcasses were found during mortality surveys. Ground visibility remains limited in the extended zones due to the presence of thick exotic vegetation (i.e. thistles).

Anabat Surveys

Anabat surveys were undertaken this month at the usual locations. The files will be sent away for analysis and reported in the next quarterly report (after June).

Trigger Events

No trigger events occurred this month.

Management Issues

NGH field staff continued to undertake the extended searches despite the same conditions of weed abundance. Conditions and recommendations for management remains the same as reported within the previous monthly reports this year.

Attachment A

Bird Species List (May Surveys)

Common name	Species name	NSW listing
Australasian Pipit	<i>Anthus novaeseelandiae</i>	
Australian Hobby	<i>Falco longipennis</i>	
Australian Magpie	<i>Cracticus tibicen</i>	
Australian Raven	<i>Corvus coronoides</i>	
Common Starling	<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>	
Crimson Rosella	<i>Platycercus elegans</i>	
Eastern Spinebill	<i>Acanthorhynchus tenuirostris</i>	
Eurasian Skylark	<i>Alauda arvensis</i>	
Galah	<i>Eolophus roseicapilla</i>	
Laughing Kookaburra	<i>Dacelo novaeguineae</i>	
Little Raven	<i>Corvus mellori</i>	
Pied Currawong	<i>Strepera graculina</i>	
Red Wattlebird	<i>Anthochaera carunculata</i>	
Spotted Pardalote	<i>Pardalotus punctatus</i>	
Striated Pardalote	<i>Pardalotus striatus</i>	
Stubble Quail	<i>Coturnix pectoralis</i>	
White-eared Honeyeater	<i>Lichenostomus leucotis</i>	
White-winged Chough	<i>Corcorax melanorhamphos</i>	
Yellow-faced Honeyeater	<i>Lichenostomus chrysops</i>	