



United States Department of the Interior

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
Washington, D.C. 20240



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APR 15 2005

Memorandum

To: Regional Directors, Regions 1-7
Assistant Director, National Wildlife Refuge System
Assistant Director, Fisheries and Habitat Conservation
Assistant Director, Endangered Species
Assistant Director, Migratory Birds
Chief, Office of Law Enforcement

From: Director 

Subject: Endorsement of Joint Service-Avian Power Line Interaction Committee Template for Voluntary Avian Protection Plans with the Electric Utility Industry

In the 1970's, eagles, hawks, and owls were electrocuted in significant numbers at power distribution lines in the United States, while collisions by whooping cranes and other avifauna added to the challenges facing the electric utility industry at that time. To begin addressing these problems, an ad hoc committee was created in 1983 by several investor-owned electric utilities (IOUs), the Service, and others. That relationship was formalized in 1989 with the creation of the Avian Power Line Interaction Committee (APLIC), tasked to address strike and electrocution issues at electric utility lines. The Service continues to be an active partner with this industry through our membership in APLIC.

In the 1990s, Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) generally represented the kinds of agreements reached between the Service and specific IOUs, electric cooperatives, or Federal electric utilities (e.g., Western Area Power Administration and Bonneville Power Administration) in efforts to address bird mortality. In 2003, the Service and the industry agreed to begin developing an additional option, one that would allow the industry voluntarily and without the need for formal Service concurrence to address avian electrocutions and strikes. This has resulted in the development of the template for an avian protection plan (APP), agreed to by the industry APLIC representatives, endorsed by the Service and released for use by the industry today. We encourage you to discuss this voluntary option with the electric utilities with whom you work. Consistent with the intent that the APP offers a voluntary and industry-specific alternative to MOUs, the Service will not sign APPs.

This APP template and the APPs that are developed from it are intended to be voluntary, consistent with other voluntary guidance already in place with the electric utility industry (e.g., *Mitigating Bird Collisions with Power Lines: the State of the Art in 1994*; and *Suggested Practices for Raptor Protection on Power Lines: the State of the Art in 1996*) and with other industries.

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The Service will post this information on our website as will APLIC on theirs. The APP template is intended to provide recommended voluntary approaches for addressing strike and electrocution avoidance. The template can be tailored to each utility's industry-specific and site specific wildlife needs, while in the process furthering avian conservation and improving reliability and customer service. Because it will be published electronically, the APP template can easily and expeditiously be updated as new information and resources become available.

The goal of the APP is to provide a structured way for a company to reduce avian mortality resulting from strikes and electrocutions. Using the template as a model, each individual APP may include but not necessarily be limited to items such as corporate policy, training (*e.g.*, APLIC and the Service currently sponsor "short courses" addressing avian electrocution, collision, and nest issues conducted annually throughout the U.S.), permit compliance, construction design standards, nest management, avian reporting, risk assessment, mortality reduction, avian enhancement, quality control, public awareness, appropriate metrics for measuring progress, and key contacts. Of particular note is APLIC's willingness to include the software for a voluntary bird mortality tracking system which is currently available free upon request from APLIC.

Please ensure that all field and Washington Office personnel involved with the electric utility industry receive copies of this memorandum. We will notify you of the website availability of this memorandum and these guidelines once they are online. Questions regarding this issue should be addressed to the two Service representatives to APLIC, Kevin Garlick, Special Agent, Office of Law Enforcement, at (703) 358-1949; or Al Manville, Wildlife Biologist, Division of Migratory Bird Management, at (703) 358-1963.

Attachment