Operational Monitoring
for the Hoopeston Wind Project
Vermilion County, Illinois

Final

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Prepared for:

Hoopeston Wind, LLC

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WEST

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Western EcoSystems Technology, Inc. estimated bat fatalities during the active bat season (spring, summer, and fall) of 2023 at the Hoopeston Wind Project (Project) located in Vermilion County, Illinois. Methods used to monitor and estimate the number of fatalities were consistent with the Hoopeston Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) and Incidental Take Permit (ITP) TE54252C-0 for Indiana and northern long-eared bats. The study objectives were to estimate Indiana and northern long-eared bat take and determine if adaptive management was triggered.

Annual monitoring in 2023 consisted of weekly searches of roads and pads at all turbines from April 1 to October 15, 2023, per the HCP. Indiana and northern long-eared bat mortality was estimated using the Species Composition Approach and Evidence of Absence (EoA) framework, as described in the HCP. Overall bat fatality estimates for the entire study were calculated using GenEst (a generalized estimator of fatality), and used to estimate the Species Composition Approach estimates, as agreed upon with US Fish and Wildlife Service. Searcher efficiency and area adjustment estimates used to determine the overall bat fatality and EoA estimates were calculated from data collected during intensive monitoring in 2018–2020, as outlined in the HCP. Substantial annual variability in carcass persistence rates occurred during the first three years of intensive monitoring. Therefore, carcass persistence trials were conducted in 2022 and rates calculated from those trials were used again in 2023, per the HCP.

No Indiana or northern long-eared bats, or any other federally or state-listed bat or bird species, were found during the study or incidentally. The EoA framework estimated that one Indiana and one northern long-eared bat, each, were taken during 2023, using the 50% credible bound of the posterior mortality distribution. Take estimates for 2023, using the Species Composition Approach and based on GenEst, were zero for both species.

Within the 3-year adaptive management evaluation period, the estimated fatality rates of Indiana and northern long-eared bat take were below the levels authorized by the ITP, using EoA estimates and/or Species Composition Approach. Similarly, the projected level of take for the remainder of the Project operation is lower than limits authorized in the ITP, assuming similar levels of mortality in future years. Therefore, no adaptive management was triggered to reduce potential take of Indiana or northern long-eared bats.

STUDY PARTICIPANTS

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REPORT REFERENCE

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INTRODUCTION

Western EcoSystems Technology, Inc. (WEST) completed operational post-construction fatality monitoring during the active bat season (spring, summer, and fall) of 2023 at the Hoopeston Wind Project (Project) in Vermilion County, Illinois. The monitoring was completed in accordance with the Hoopeston Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) and Incidental Take Permit (ITP) TE54252C-0 for Indiana (*Myotis sodalis*) and northern long-eared bats (*M. septentrionalis*). This was the sixth year of monitoring under the Project's ITP. The study objectives were to estimate Indiana and northern long-eared bat take using the Species Composition Approach and Evidence of Absence (EoA) framework as outlined in the HCP and determine if adaptive management was triggered.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Project is in the Central Corn Belt Plains Ecoregion, which encompasses a large portion of central Illinois (Woods et al. 2007). This ecoregion is composed primarily of vast glaciated plains. Tall-grass prairie originally comprised much of the region, and scattered groves of trees and marshes occurred on level uplands. Today, the main land use within the Project is cultivated crops, consisting primarily of corn (*Zea mays*), soybeans (*Glycine max*), and winter wheat (*Triticum* spp.). In addition, there are scattered residences and small areas of hay/pasture, grasslands, and shelterbelts (National Land Cover Database 2019; Figure 1). Fatality monitoring was completed at 100% of the turbines, as shown in Figure 1 and as described in the Methods section.

The Project is composed of 49 2.0-megawatt (MW) wind turbines capable of generating up to 98 MW (Figure 1). All turbines are V 100 Vestas turbines with a 100-meter (m; 328-foot [ft]) hub height and 49-m (161-ft) blade length.

METHODS

Standardized carcass searches were completed in the spring, summer, and fall in accordance with the monitoring methods described for annual monitoring in the HCP (Hoopeston Wind, LLC. 2017). Searcher efficiency and area adjustment estimates were determined using data collected from 2018–2020, when the Project completed intensive monitoring as outlined in the HCP. Carcass persistence was determined using data from carcass persistence trials conducted in 2022.

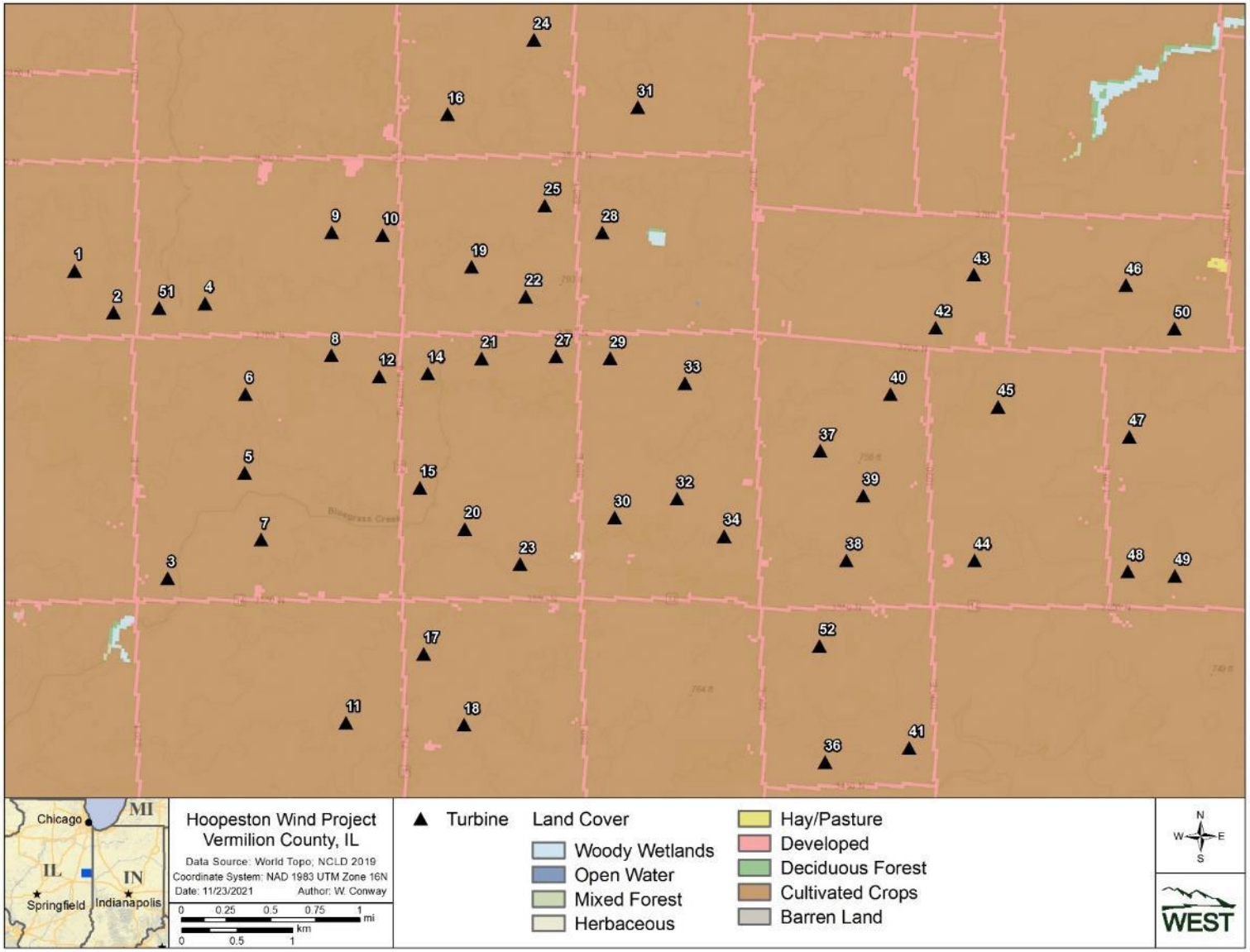

Figure 1. Land cover and turbine layout at the Hoopeston Wind Project in Vermilion County, Illinois.

Field Methods

Standardized Carcass Searches

In all seasons, technicians searched the gravel roads and pads at all 49 turbines weekly by starting 95 m (312 ft) from the turbine, walking towards and around the turbine, and then back towards their vehicle. Technicians walked at a rate of approximately 45–60 m (148–197 ft) per minute and scanned the ground out to 2.5 m (8.2 ft) on either side of the transect. All carcass searches were conducted by WEST technicians trained to follow the Project's carcass search protocols, including proper handling and reporting of carcasses.

The condition of each carcass found was recorded using the following categories:

- Live/Injured—a live or injured bat or bird
- Intact—a carcass that was completely intact, was not badly decomposed, and showed no sign of being fed upon by a predator or scavenger
- Scavenged—an entire carcass, which showed signs of being fed upon by a predator or scavenger, or a portion(s) of a carcass in one location (e.g., wings, skeletal remains, portion of a carcass), or a carcass that was heavily infested by insects
- Feather Spot (for bird carcasses only)—10 or more feathers (not including down) at one location indicating predation or scavenging

The following information was recorded for each carcass found during standardized surveys:

- Date and time
- Initial species identification
- Sex and age (if identifiable)
- Geographic coordinate
- Distance and bearing to turbine
- Substrate/ground cover
- Carcass condition (intact, scavenged, injured)
- Estimated time since death (number of days)

Technicians collected all bat carcasses in accordance with WEST's Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) Scientific Permits (2023), WEST's IDNR Endangered and Threatened Species Permits (17362), WEST's US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) Native Endangered and Threatened Species Recovery Permit (ES234121), and the Project's ITP (TE54252C-0). All bats were identified in the field and all identifications were confirmed by a permitted bat biologist (ESPER0039249). Bird carcasses were recorded but left in place, and all bird carcasses were verified via photographs by WEST biologists experienced with bird identification.

Statistical Analysis

Quality Assurance and Quality Control

Quality assurance and quality control (QA/QC) measures were implemented at all stages of the study, including in the field, during data entry and analysis, and report writing. Following field surveys, technicians were responsible for inspecting data forms for completeness and accuracy. Potentially erroneous data were identified using a series of database queries. Irregular codes or data suspected as questionable were discussed with the technician and/or Project Manager. Errors, omissions, or problems identified in later stages of analysis were traced back to the raw data forms, and appropriate changes were made in all affected steps.

Data Compilation and Storage

A Microsoft SQL server database was developed to store, organize, and retrieve survey data. Data were entered into the electronic database using a pre-defined format to facilitate subsequent QA/QC and data analysis. All electronic data files were retained for reference.

Fatality Estimates

Overall bat fatality estimates were calculated using GenEst (a generalized estimator of fatality; Dalthorp et al. 2018, Simonis et al. 2018). Fatality estimates were based on:

- Observed number of carcasses found within standardized search plots during the monitoring period.
- Searcher efficiency rates, expressed as the probability that a carcass was found by searchers during searcher efficiency trials.
- Persistence rates, expressed as the estimated average probability a carcass was expected to persist in the search area and be available for detection by the searchers during carcass searches.
- Area adjustment estimates, expressed as the carcass-density weighted proportion of area searched; this adjustment accounts for carcasses that fell outside of the search areas.

Each carcass included in the analysis was adjusted for searcher efficiency, carcass persistence, a detection reduction factor (also referred to as "*k*;" see below), and a search area adjustment to obtain an overall fatality estimate.

Confidence intervals (CIs) surrounding estimates for each season were calculated using a parametric bootstrap for GenEst (Dalthorp et al. 2018), by season and overall. Bootstrapping is a computer simulation technique that is useful for calculating variances and CIs for complicated test statistics; 1,000 bootstrap samples were used. The lower 5th and upper 95th percentiles of the 1,000 bootstrap estimates were estimates of the lower limit and upper limit of 90% CIs.

<u>Carcasses Excluded from Fatality Estimation</u>

All carcasses found within the mapped road and pad search area boundaries were included in the fatality rate estimation if they had an estimated time of death within the season when the

search area was monitored (i.e., carcasses found outside of search areas or estimated to have died before the beginning of the season were omitted from the analysis).

Estimation of Searcher Efficiency

Searcher efficiency estimated the probability of a carcass being detected by a searcher given the carcass was available to be found. Estimates of searcher efficiency were based on data collected from 2018–2020 on roads and pads (Iskali and Pham 2019, Rodriguez et al. 2020, 2021). From 2018–2020, 133 bat carcasses were placed for human technicians on roads and pads. A logistic regression model (Dalthorp et al. 2018) was fit to the 2018–2020 data and used to obtain an average estimate of searcher efficiency (Rodriguez et al. 2022).

Detection Reduction Factor

The change in searcher efficiency between successive searches was defined by a parameter called the detection reduction factor (k) that ranged from zero to one. When k is estimated or assumed to be zero, it implies that a carcass missed on the first search would never be found on subsequent searches. A k of one implies searcher efficiency remained constant no matter how many times a carcass was missed. The detection reduction factor was a required parameter for GenEst and a value of $k = 0.8$ was used, in accordance with the HCP.

Estimation of Carcass Persistence Rates

Estimates of carcass persistence were used to adjust carcass counts for removal bias. The average probability a carcass persisted through the search interval (i.e., the time between scheduled searches) was estimated using an interval-censored survival regression using one of four distributions: exponential, log-logistic, lognormal, or Weibull (Kalbfleisch and Prentice 2002, Dalthorp et al. 2018). The most parsimonious model within two AICc, or corrected Akaike Information Criterion, units of the model with the lowest AICc value was selected as the best model (Rodriguez et al. 2023).

Area Adjustment

The search area adjustment accounted for carcasses falling outside of search areas. The proportion of carcasses estimated to have fallen within search areas was calculated as the mean of the area adjustment values on 95-m roads and pads from 2018–2020 (Iskali and Pham 2019; Rodriguez et al. 2020, 2021). The result was an estimate of the proportion of bat carcasses expected to land within search areas.

Indiana Bat and Northern Long-eared Bat Take and Detection Probability Estimates

Fall was the only season with potential risk to the species covered under the HCP; therefore, Indiana and northern long-eared bat fatality estimates were based on fall data using the Species Composition Approach and EoA framework, as outlined in the Project's HCP. ITP compliance was assessed using three metrics for each of the covered species: the annual take rate estimate using the Species Composition Approach, the EoA short-term trigger, and the EoA projected mortality estimate. The Species Composition annual take rate and the EoA short-term trigger were based on the three most recent monitoring years. The EoA projected mortality estimate was

constructed by taking the EoA estimate of mortality over the ITP term and adding in projected mortality for the remainder of the Project term. The predicted future mortality was based on the fatality rate from the three most recent monitoring years.

Species Composition Approach

Indiana and northern long-eared bat fatalities were estimated for the fall using the Species Composition Approach. The Species Composition Approach assumes that Indiana and northern long-eared bat fatalities can be estimated as a proportion of the total number of bat fatalities at the Project. The HCP specified baseline values for fatalities of Indiana and northern long-eared bats as 0.29% and 0.24%, respectively (Hoopeston Wind, LLC, 2017). However, the Project proposed updated species composition rates of 0.03% for Indiana bats and 0.06% for northern long-eared bats based on updated, publicly available post-construction monitoring data collected after the spread of white-nose syndrome (Rodriguez and Studyvin 2020). The USFWS approved the use of these updated rates on November 6, 2020 (A. Schorg, USFWS, pers comm.). Therefore, species composition rates were estimated using the updated species composition rates of 0.03% for Indiana bats and 0.06% for northern long-eared bats. An average take estimate for both Indiana and northern long-eared bats was calculated across 2021–2023, using the GenEst estimates reported in 2021, 2022 (Rodriguez et al. 2021, 2022), and 2023.

Evidence of Absence

The EoA framework (Dalthorp et al. 2014, 2017) uses a Bayesian model to estimate the actual number of fatalities, the estimated mortality rate (λ), and the cumulative 30-year projected mortality based on λ. The inputs to the model are the number of carcasses found and the *g* distribution, or the site-wide probability that a carcass was available to be found and detected. The estimate for *g* was based on:

- The monitoring search schedule, expressed as number of searches and the time interval between the searches.
- Searcher efficiency, expressed as the proportion of available carcasses found by searchers (see *Estimation of Searcher Efficiency* section).
- Carcass persistence rates, expressed as the estimated average probability a carcass was expected to remain in the study area (see *Estimation of Carcass Persistence Rates* section).
- Search area adjustment, based on the estimated carcass-density distribution weighted by the proportion of area searched (see *Area Adjustment* section).
- Detection reduction factor (*k*), expressed as the fraction to which searcher efficiency was reduced with each successive search (see *Detection Reduction Factor* section). The detection reduction factor was assumed to equal 0.8, as outlined in the HCP.

The site-wide probability of detection (*g)* in each year was estimated using the Single Class Module from the EoA software (Dalthorp 2019). Estimates in 2023 included only the fall and a

single plot type or single stratum (road and pad areas). Therefore, the Multiple Class Module in EoA was not necessary to combine across strata.

EoA projections of mortality into the future rely on the ITP-to-date estimated total take plus the annual take rate, estimated using the three most recent monitoring years' data. Therefore, two probabilities of detection for EoA were required: the rolling average probability of detection over the past three years of monitoring and the cumulative average probability of detection over the past six years.

Rolling Average Probability of Detection

The HCP specifies that the fatality rates of Indiana and northern long-eared bats are tested based on a rolling average detection probability, including the most recent three years of monitoring events. At present, that monitoring window includes 2021–2023. Detection probabilities from 2021–2023 were combined into the rolling average detection probability using the per-study *g* estimates and the relative weights (ρ) for each study (Dalthorp et al. 2017). This detection probability was used to estimate the rolling average take rate based on the monitoring data available from 2021–2023. Beginning in year four of the permit (2021 study) and beyond, the EoA annual take rate trigger was evaluated as a hypothesis test. The hypothesis test evaluates whether the annual take rate exceeded the expected take rate (two bats per year) at 90% confidence (i.e., Pr (λ>2) >0.9), which equates to a 1-sided hypothesis test at α = 0.1. EoA generates a posterior distribution for the annual take rate estimate, which was used to test the hypothesis. The full posterior distribution was also used in the EoA mortality projection tool, by drawing samples from the distribution to propagate uncertainty, via the Monte Carlo simulation (see *Projected Mortality for the Remainder of the Project Incidental Take Permit* section).

Cumulative Probability of Detection

The HCP does not require estimates of cumulative mortality to date (*M**). However, the EoA mortality projection tool used the posterior distribution of *M* as the starting point for simulations. Therefore, detection probabilities from 2018–2023 were combined into the cumulative (to date) detection probability, using the per-year *g* estimates and the relative weights (ρ) for each year (Dalthorp et al. 2017). This detection probability was used in the EoA mortality projection tool.

Projected Mortality

The Multiple Years Module was used to calculate the annual take rate (λ), the cumulative mortality (*M**), and projected mortality. The Multiple Years Module requires the Beta distribution parameters for detection probability, in each year, and weights (ρ), which were all assumed to be one from 2018–2022 because there were no changes in facility operations (such as cut-in speed) that would have resulted in different weights. In 2023, Turbine 30 was operational only part of the spring (April 3 to April 19, 2023), and Turbine 38 was not operational during any portion of the study period, resulting in a lower weight for 2023. The rolling average probability of detection was used to estimate the annual take rate. The cumulative probability of detection was used to estimate the cumulative mortality to date.

The EoA Multiple Years Module used a Monte Carlo simulation approach to Project future cumulative mortality. Current estimated take was simulated as 10,000 samples from the estimated posterior distribution for cumulative take, to date (*M** from EoA). Future take was simulated using 10,000 samples from the posterior distribution of the annual take rate that was estimated using the previous three years (2021–2023). Each of the 10,000 annual take rate samples were applied for the remaining 24 years of the permit term, and mortality in each year was sampled from a Poisson distribution with the annual take rate specified as the rate parameter. Simulated mortality in each year was summed over the 24 years, resulting in 10,000 realizations of projected mortality from year 2024 to the end of the permit term. The vector of current take estimate samples and the vector of projected mortality samples were summed element-wise to generate a 10,000-sample distribution of cumulative mortality at the end of the permit term. The median of this distribution was used to evaluate an adaptive management trigger. The EoA mortality projection tool provided projections of actual mortality (i.e., how many fatalities are expected to occur at the Project in each year) and projections of estimated take (i.e., how many fatalities would be estimated by EoA in each year, given a pre-defined detection probability and the projection of actual mortality). Projections of estimated take require inputting detection probabilities for future years and are not relevant for ITP compliance. Therefore, only the projections of actual mortality were used.

RESULTS

Standardized Carcass Searches

From April 1 to October 15, 2023, 1,275 searches of roads and pads were completed at operational turbines. Due to turbine maintenance, site conditions, and weather constraints, 53 searches at operational turbines (4.2%) were missed.

No Indiana or northern long-eared bat carcasses, or carcasses of other federally or state-listed as threatened or endangered bat or bird species, were identified during the study. Details of all carcasses found during the study are presented in Appendix A.

Overall Fatalities

During scheduled carcass searches, 43 bat carcasses, belonging to four known species were found. Eastern red bat (*Lasiurus borealis*; n = 19; 44.2%) was the most common species fatality, followed by hoary bat (*L. cinereus*; n = 10; 23.3%) and silver-haired bat (*Lasionycteris noctivagans*; n = 10; 23.3%), big brown bat (*Eptesicus fuscus*; n = 3; 7.0%), and eastern red bat or Seminole bat (Unknown *Lasiurus* species; n = 1; 2.3%). In addition, four bird carcasses of three known species were found during the study (Table 1).

Carcasses for Analysis

During the study period, 40 bat carcasses were found within the search area. Three bat carcasses were found outside of the study area and were excluded from fatality estimates (Table 1).

Table 1. Total number of carcasses and percent (%) composition of carcasses discovered at the Hoopeston Wind Project, Vermilion County, Illinois, from April 1 to October 15, 2023.

	Included in GenEst Fatality Estimate		Outside Search Area[1]		Outside Study Period[1]		Total	
Species	**Total**	**%**	**Total**	**%**	**Total**	**%**	**Total**	**%**
big brown bat	3	7.5	0	0	0	0	3	7.0
eastern red bat	18	45.0	1	33.3	0	0	19	44.2
Unknown *Lasiurus* spp.	1	2.5	0	0	0	0	1	2.3
hoary bat	10	25.0	0	0	0	0	10	23.3
silver-haired bat	8	20.0	2	66.7	0	0	10	23.3
Overall Bats[2]	**40**	**100**	**3**	**100**	**0**	**0**	**43**	**100**
house sparrow	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	25.0
mourning dove	0	0	1	100	0	0	1	25.0
Philadelphia vireo	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	25.0
unidentified small bird	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	25.0
Overall Birds[2,3]	**0**	**0**	**1**	**100**	**1**	**100**	**4**	**100**

1. Carcasses were not included in the analysis.

2. Sums may not equal total values shown due to rounding.

3. Birds were not included in the fatality estimates.

GenEst = a generalized estimator of fatality.

Timing and Distribution of Bat Fatalities

The majority of bat carcasses were found between the end of July and the end of September (Figure 2; Appendix A). The composition of bat fatalities varied by season, with only silver-haired and hoary bats found in the spring. Two additional species were found in both the summer and fall (eastern red and big brown bat; Table 2).

Table 2. Species composition by season for bat carcasses found at the Hoopeston Wind Project, Vermilion County, Illinois, from April 1 to October 15, 2023.

	Spring		Summer		Fall	
Species	**# of Carcasses**	**%**	**# of Carcasses**	**%**	**# of Carcasses**	**%**
big brown bat	0	0	3	37.5	0	0
eastern red bat	0	0	1	12.5	18	56.3
Unknown *Lasiurus* spp.	0	0	0	0	1	3.1
hoary bat	1	33.3	2	25.0	7	21.9
silver-haired bat	2	66.7	2	25.0	6	18.6
Total[1]	**3**	**100**	**8**	**100**	**32**	**100**

1. Sums may not equal total values shown due to rounding.

Bat carcasses were found at 24 of the 48 operational study turbines. Four bat fatalities were recorded at Turbine 33; three bat fatalities were recorded at turbines 9, 17, 28, 34, and 50; two bat carcasses were recorded at turbines 14, 15, and 20; and one bat carcass was found at the remaining 15 turbines. Bat carcasses were recorded at turbines across the Project and there were no apparent spatial patterns to the distribution of carcasses.

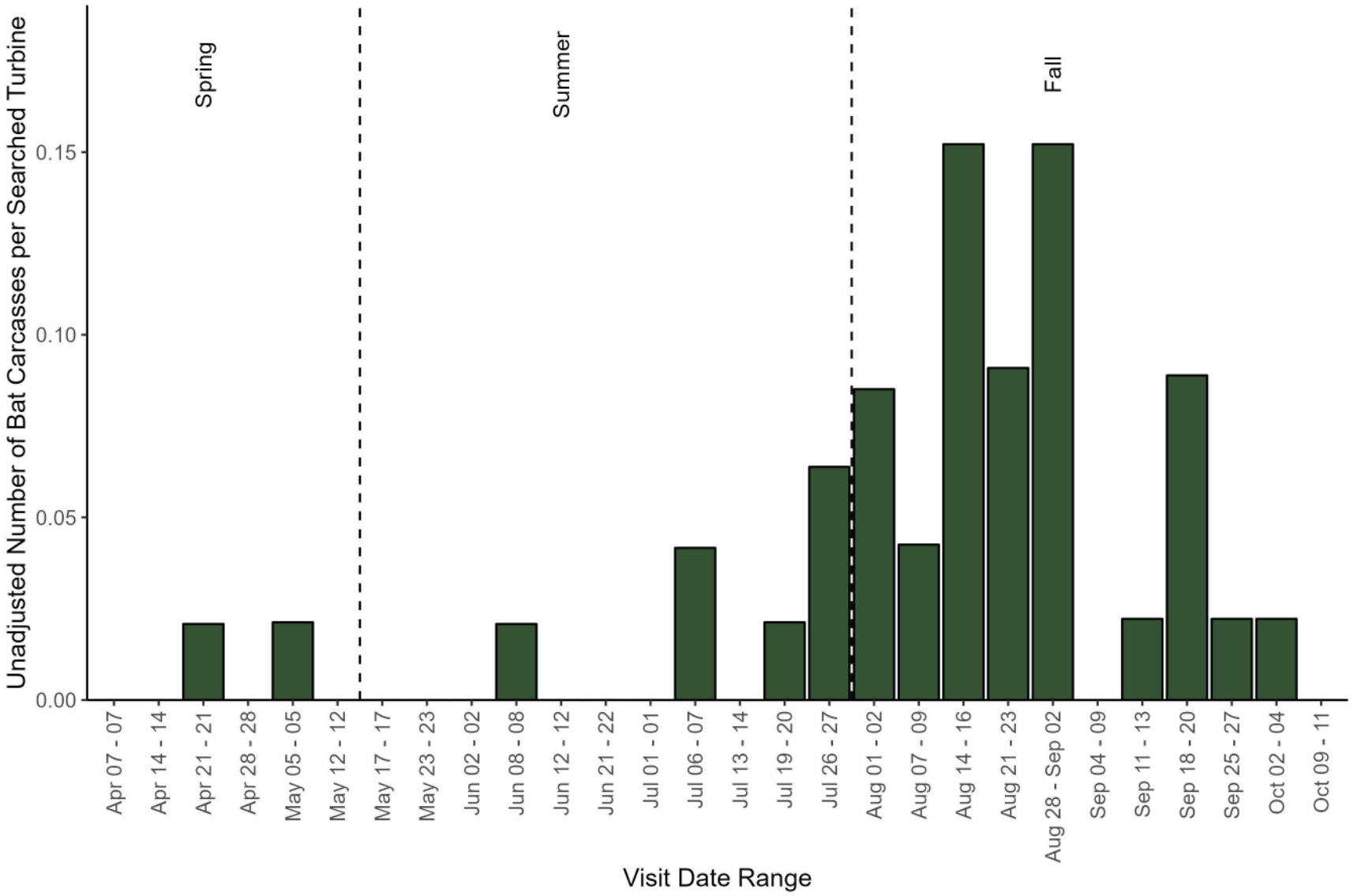

Figure 2. Timing of bat carcasses for carcasses included in the GenEst (a generalized estimator of fatality) estimates at the Hoopeston Wind Project, Vermilion County, Illinois, from April 1 to October 15, 2023.

Searcher Efficiency Trials

The estimated searcher efficiency rate from road and pad searches, which was used in determining fatality and take estimates, was 0.95 (90% CI: 0.90–0.97; Rodriguez et al. 2022; Appendix B1; Appendix C).

Carcass Persistence Trials

The best-fit model for carcass persistence, which was used in determining fatality and take estimates, had an exponential distribution (Appendix B2). The estimated median bat carcass persistence time was 5.87 days (Appendix B3). The average probability that a bat carcass persisted through a 7-day search interval was 0.673 (90% CI: 0.56–0.78; Rodriguez et al. 2023).

Area Adjustment Using Project-specific Data

There were no turbines with routinely unsearchable areas. The mean area adjustment from 2018–2020 was estimated in 2021, and indicated that approximately 6% of bats fell within the search area of the roads and pads (Rodriguez et al. 2022).

Adjusted Overall Bat Fatality Estimates

Bat fatality estimates were calculated for the year, per the HCP. Fatality estimates were highest in the fall, and the overall estimate for the study was 10.39 bats per MW (90% CI: 7.73–14.11; Table 3). Inputs used to calculate fatality estimates are presented in Appendix C.

Table 3. Seasonal and overall bat fatality rates per turbine and megawatt (MW) using GenEst for studies conducted at the Hoopeston Wind Project, Vermilion County, Illinois, from April 1 to October 15, 2023.

Season	Bat Fatality Estimate per Turbine	90% CI	Bat Fatality Estimate per MW	90% CI
Spring	0.97	n/a*	0.48	n/a*
Summer	3.90	1.76–6.83	1.95	0.88–3.41
Fall	15.85	11.25–21.82	7.93	5.63–10.91
Overall	**20.79**	**15.46–28.21**	**10.39**	**7.73–14.11**

* Confidence interval (CI) not calculated because the observed carcass count is less than five.

GenEst = a generalized estimator of fatality.

Indiana Bat and Northern Long-eared Bat Take Estimates

Species Composition Approach

Take estimates for Indiana and northern long-eared bats were based on fall fatality estimates (Table 4) and the species composition percentages approved by USFWS. Bat fatality rates included fractions of bats; however, a fraction of a bat cannot be taken in a given year. Therefore, the rates calculated in Table 4 were rounded to whole integers to calculate take estimates. No Indiana or northern long-eared bats were estimated to be taken in 2023, based on the updated species composition percentages (Table 4). The 3-year average of Species Composition take estimates determined that less than one Indiana bat and northern long-eared bat were taken per

year (Table 5). The 3-year average take rates for each species are less than two; therefore, the Species Composition Approach did not trigger adaptive management as per the HCP.

Table 4. Indiana bat and northern long-eared bat fatality estimates using the Species Composition Approach for studies conducted at the Hoopeston Wind Project, Vermilion County, Illinois, from August 1 to October 15, 2023.

Bat Species	Bats per Megawatt (Fall)	Estimated Total Bats	Species Composition	Bats per Year	Take Estimate
Indiana bat	7.93	776.70	0.0003	0.23	0
northern long-eared bat	7.93	776.70	0.0006	0.47	0

Table 5. The 3-year average of Indiana bat and northern long-eared bat fatality estimates using the Species Composition Approach for studies conducted at the Hoopeston Wind Project, Vermilion County, Illinois, from 2021–2023.

Year	Estimator	Indiana Bats Per Year	Northern Long-eared Bats Per Year
2021[1]	GenEst	0.26	0.52
2022[1]	GenEst	0.09	0.17
2023[1]	GenEst	0.23	0.47
Overall Average		**0.19**	**0.39**

1. Species composition estimates from 2021–2023 were 0.03% for Indiana bat and 0.06% for northern long-eared bat, which were approved by the US Fish and Wildlife Service in October 2020. The estimates were updated with more recent data from post-construction monitoring studies at Hoopeston and other Midwest facilities after the spread of white-nose syndrome.

GenEst = a generalized estimator of fatality.

Probability of Detection

The overall probability of detecting a single bat carcass (*g*), such as an Indiana or northern long-eared bat, during fall 2023 was 0.04 (95% CI: 0.033–0.050; Table 6). The rolling average *g* was 0.04 (95% CI: 0.040–0.048). The cumulative *g* (or average *g* to date) over the past six years of monitoring was 0.16 (95% CI 0.133–0.180; Table 6). Variables used to estimate *g* are presented in Appendix D.

Table 6. Annual, rolling average, and cumulative probabilities of detection (*g*), Ba, Bb, and ρ for the Hoopeston Wind Project, Vermilion County, Illinois, from 2018–2023.

Year	Ba[1]	Bb[1]	ρ[2]	*g*	95% Confidence Interval
2018	181.13	1,208.60	1	0.13	0.113–0.149
2019	10.06	29.23	1	0.26	0.134–0.401
2020	645.15	924.52	1	0.41	0.387–0.435
2021	1,374.31	26,468.23	1	0.05	0.047–0.052
2022	77.27	1,797.66	1	0.04	0.033–0.051
2023	89.46	2,071.25	0.961	0.04	0.033–0.050
Rolling Average (Last 3 Years)	**409.12**	**8,883.72**	**NA**	**0.04**	**0.040–0.048**
Cumulative (Average to date)	**145.10**	**787.21**	**NA**	**0.16**	**0.133–0.180**

1. Ba and Bb are the parameters for the beta distribution used to characterize the probability of detection. The *g* value is the mean of that distribution.

2. ρ is the weight in the weighted average that was used to combine the probability of detection distributions across years**.**

Cumulative Mortality to Date

The EoA cumulative mortality estimates, with 50% credibility (which is equivalent to the median value), estimated that no more than one Indiana bat and one northern long-eared bat fatalities occurred during the 2018–2023 study period (Table 7).

Table 7. Cumulative median take estimates to date using Evidence of Absence and Project-specific area correction for studies conducted at the Hoopeston Wind Project, Vermilion County, Illinois, from 2018–2023.

Estimate Type	Carcass Count	Bat Fatality Estimate	Permitted Take
EoA - Indiana bat (50% credible bound)	0	1	60
EoA - northern long-eared bat (50% credible bound)	0	1	60

EoA= Evidence of Absence.

Annual Take Rate

Using the Multiple Years Module in the EoA software, the estimated fatality rates (λ) for Indiana and northern long-eared bats were calculated based on the *g* values from the fall seasons of 2021–2023 (Table 6). The estimated annual fatality rates for Indiana and northern long-eared bats were 0.25 bats per year for each species (Table 8), which is below the expected annual take rate of two Indiana and northern long-eared bats each per year, reported in the HCP. The short-term trigger assesses the probability that the estimated take rate exceeds the expected take rate, Pr (λ>τ). At a 90% CI (α = 0.1), Pr (λ>τ) must be greater than or equal to 0.90 for the short-term trigger to fire. The Pr (λ>τ) was below 0.90 and, therefore, the short term-trigger was not met for either species, and adaptive management was not triggered (Table 8).

Table 8. Estimated median fatality rate (λ) of Indiana and northern long-eared bats using Evidence of Absence and the Project-specific area correction based on studies conducted at the Hoopeston Wind Project, Vermilion County, Illinois, from 2020–2022.

Estimate Type	Carcass Count	Estimated Median Fatality Rate (λ)	Expected Take Rate (τ)	Pr(λ > τ)
EoA - Indiana bat (50th credible bound)	0	0.25	2	0.06
EoA - northern long-eared bat (50th credible bound)	0	0.25	2	0.06

EoA= Evidence of Absence.

Projected Mortality for the Remainder of the Project Incidental Take Permit

No Indiana or northern long-eared bat carcasses were found during any year of monitoring at the Project. EoA provides potential estimates of Indiana and northern long-eared bat mortality based on the level of monitoring and probabilities of detecting a carcass if one occurred. The cumulative median 30-year mortality projection at a 50% credible interval for both Indiana and northern long-eared bats was nine Indiana and northern long-eared bat fatalities each (Table 9), which is below the permitted take of 60 individuals of each species described within the Project's HCP. Therefore, the projected mortality did not trigger adaptive management.

Table 9. Cumulative median 30-year projected bat fatalities using Evidence of Absence for studies conducted at the Hoopeston Wind Project, Vermilion County, Illinois.

Estimate Type	Carcass Count	Permitted Take	Cumulative Median Projected Mortalities (30 years; *M*)
EoA - Indiana bat (α = 0.5)	0	60	9
EoA - northern long-eared bat (α = 0.5)	0	60	9

EoA= Evidence of Absence.

Summary of Incidental Take Permit Compliance

The estimated median Indiana and northern long-eared bat annual take, based on monitoring studies from 2021–2023, were below levels authorized within the ITP, using EoA estimates or the Species Composition Approach and projected mortality over the 30-year life of the Project (Tables 5 and 9). The projected level of take for the remainder of the Project operation is lower than limits authorized by the HCP and ITP. Therefore, no adaptive management is required in 2023 (Table 10).

Table 10. Summary of Incidental Take Permit compliance based on projected and estimated Indiana bat and northern long-eared bat fatalities using Species Composition Approach and Evidence of Absence at the Hoopeston Wind Project, Vermilion County, Illinois.

Compliance Metric	Adaptive Management Trigger	Indiana Bat Take Estimate[1]	Northern Long-eared Bat Take Estimate[1]	Adaptive Management Required?
3-year average of Species Composition fatality rate	between 2–4 (or >4)	0.19	0.39	No
OR				
Estimated median 3-year fatality rate (λ)	Pr (λ>2) >0.9	0.25	0.25	No
AND				
Projected mortality for the remainder of the Project	>60 individuals	9.00	9.00	No
Overall				**No**

[1.] Summary from Tables 5, 8, and 9.

DISCUSSION

The study objectives were to estimate Indiana and northern long-eared bat take, using the Species Composition Approach and EoA framework as outlined in the HCP, and determine if adaptive management was triggered. No federally or state-listed bats or birds were found during six years of monitoring at the Project. The estimated level of Indiana and northern long-eared bat take was below the levels permitted within the Project ITP and described within the HCP.

The purpose of adaptive management is to ensure the Project will not exceed the level of take allowed by the ITP. No Indiana or northern long-eared bat carcasses were found during six years of ITP-monitoring at the Project. The average fatality rates for Indiana and northern long-eared bats are estimated as less than two bats each using both the Species Composition Approach and EoA. The projection of future mortalities indicates that cumulative take is not expected to be exceeded; therefore, no adaptive management was triggered.

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Appendix A. Complete List of Carcasses Found at the Hoopeston Wind Project, Vermilion County, Illinois, during 2023.

Appendix A. Carcasses found at the Hoopeston Wind Project, Vermillion County, Illinois, from April 1 to October 15, 2023.

Date Found	Species	Distance from Turbine (m)	Turbine ID	Search Area Type	Physical Condition
Bats					
04/21/2023	silver-haired bat	77	29	road and pad	intact
04/28/2023	silver-haired bat[1]	37	10	road and pad	scavenged
05/05/2023	hoary bat	53	28	road and pad	scavenged
05/23/2023	silver-haired bat[1]	110	36	road and pad	scavenged
06/08/2023	big brown bat	49	4	road and pad	dismembered
07/06/2023	eastern red bat	31	1	road and pad	scavenged
07/07/2023	big brown bat	13	50	road and pad	scavenged
07/20/2023	silver-haired bat	10	25	road and pad	scavenged
07/26/2023	big brown bat	61	20	road and pad	scavenged
07/26/2023	hoary bat	6	23	road and pad	scavenged
07/27/2023	hoary bat	15	34	road and pad	scavenged
08/01/2023	eastern red bat	21	17	road and pad	scavenged
08/01/2023	eastern red bat	4	17	road and pad	scavenged
08/02/2023	eastern red bat	41	27	road and pad	scavenged
08/02/2023	hoary bat	0	34	road and pad	scavenged
08/09/2023	eastern red bat	7	33	road and pad	scavenged
08/09/2023	hoary bat	1	33	road and pad	scavenged
08/14/2023	eastern red bat	44	10	road and pad	intact
08/14/2023	eastern red bat	29	15	road and pad	intact
08/14/2023	eastern red bat	23	17	road and pad	scavenged
08/14/2023	eastern red bat	85	28	road and pad	injured
08/14/2023	hoary bat	13	11	road and pad	scavenged
08/14/2023	hoary bat	6	20	road and pad	scavenged
08/16/2023	eastern red bat[1]	8	32	road and pad	scavenged
08/16/2023	eastern red bat	29	33	road and pad	scavenged
08/21/2023	eastern red bat	3	9	road and pad	scavenged
08/21/2023	silver-haired bat	23	14	road and pad	intact
08/23/2023	eastern red bat	27	33	road and pad	intact
08/23/2023	eastern red bat	7	9	road and pad	scavenged
08/23/2023	hoary bat	60	50	road and pad	scavenged
08/28/2023	eastern red bat	14	31	road and pad	scavenged
08/28/2023	eastern red bat	31	9	road and pad	scavenged
08/28/2023	silver-haired bat	43	15	road and pad	intact
09/02/2023	hoary bat	38	50	road and pad	intact
09/02/2023	silver-haired bat	17	34	road and pad	intact
09/02/2023	silver-haired bat	36	46	road and pad	scavenged
09/13/2023	eastern red bat	0	47	road and pad	intact
09/18/2023	Unknown *Lasiurus* species	15	16	road and pad	scavenged
09/20/2023	eastern red bat	86	21	road and pad	intact
09/20/2023	eastern red bat	18	41	road and pad	intact
09/20/2023	silver-haired bat	51	49	road and pad	intact
09/25/2023	silver-haired bat	59	14	road and pad	scavenged
10/02/2023	hoary bat	24	28	road and pad	intact
Birds					
04/28/2023	mourning dove[1]	69	8	road and pad	feather spot
05/12/2023	unidentified small bird	3	51	road and pad	dismembered
05/17/2023	Philadelphia vireo	40	20	road and pad	intact
08/21/2023	house sparrow	7	7	road and pad	scavenged

[1.] Carcass was found outside the search area

ID = identification; m =meters.

Appendix B. Searcher Efficiency and Carcass Persistence Modeling Estimates and Results for the Hoopeston Wind Project, Vermilion County, Illinois.

Appendix B1. Searcher efficiency models for bats from the Hoopeston Wind Project, Vermilion County, Illinois, from spring, summer, and fall (April 1 to October 15) post-construction monitoring efforts, from 2018–2020 (n = 129).

Covariates	*k* Value	AICc	Delta AICc
Season	*k* fixed at 0.8	55.90	0
No Covariates	*k* fixed at 0.8	56.44	0.54*

* Selected model.

AICc = corrected Akaike Information Criterion; *k* = detection reduction factor.

Appendix B2. Carcass persistence models with covariates and distributions for bats at the Hoopeston Wind Project, Vermilion County, Illinois, from August 1 to October 15, 2022 (n = 15).

Location Covariates	Scale Covariates	Distribution	AICc	Delta AICc
No Covariates	No Covariates	lognormal	70.55	0
No Covariates	No Covariates	loglogistic	70.74	0.19
No Covariates	–	exponential	70.85	0.30*
No Covariates	No Covariates	Weibull	72.63	2.08

* Selected model.

AICc = corrected Akaike Information Criterion.

Appendix B3. Carcass persistence top models with covariates, distributions, and model parameters for the Hoopeston Wind Project, Vermilion County, Illinois, from August 1 to October 15, 2022.

Size Class	Distribution	Estimated Median Removal Times (days)	Parameter 1	Parameter 2
Bat	exponential[1]	5.87	rate = 0.1181	–

1. The distribution follows base R parameterization.

Appendix C. Inputs Used to Calculate Bat Fatality Rates at the Hoopeston Wind Project, Vermilion County, Illinois, Using GenEst (a Generalized Estimator of Fatality).

Appendix C. Estimated bat fatality rates and adjustment factors, with 90% confidence intervals at the Hoopeston Wind Project, Vermillion County, Illinois, from April 1 to October 15, 2023.

	Spring		Summer		Fall	
	Estimate	**90% CI**	**Estimate**	**90% CI**	**Estimate**	**90% CI**
Search Area Adjustment	0.06	–	0.06	–	0.06	–
Searcher Efficiency	0.95	0.90–0.97	0.95	0.90–0.97	0.95	0.90–0.97
Average Probability of a Carcass Persisting Through the Search Interval	0.67	0.55–0.77	0.67	0.55–0.77	0.67	0.55–0.77
Probability of Available and Detected	0.65	0.54–0.75	0.65	0.54–0.75	0.65	0.54–0.75
Estimated Fatality Rates (Fatalities/Turbine/Season(s))	0.97	n/a*	3.90	1.76–6.83	15.85	11.25–21.82
Estimated Fatality Rates (Fatalities/Megawatt/Season(s))	0.48	n/a*	1.95	0.88–3.41	7.93	5.63–10.91

* Confidence interval (CI) not calculated because the observed carcass count is less than five.

Appendix D. Inputs and Results for the Single Class Module in Evidence of Absence for the Hoopeston Wind Project, Vermilion County, Illinois.

Appendix D1. Inputs needed to run Evidence of Absence: Single Class Module for the Hoopeston Wind Project, Vermilion County, Illinois, from August 1 to October 15, 2023.

Season	Search Area Type	Search Interval (I)	# of Searches[1]	Spatial Coverage (a)	Temporal Coverage (v)	Searcher Efficiency[2]		Carcass Persistence[2]			
						Carcasses Available	Carcasses Found	Shape (α)	Scale (β)	Scale Lower Limit (β)	Scale Upper Limit (β)
Fall	95-m roads and pads	7	12	0.064	1	129	122	Null	8.466	4.998	14.354

k = 0.8; m = meter.

1. Includes one additional search beyond what was conducted in the field to account for the Evidence of Absence graphical user interface assumption that a clearing search is included in the number of searches.

2. An exponential distribution was used for carcass persistence distribution on the roads and pads.

Appendix D2. Results from the Evidence of Absence: Single Class Module for the Hoopeston Wind Project, Vermilion County, Illinois, from August 1 to October 15, 2023.

Year	*g*	95% Confidence Interval	Ba[1]	Bb[1]
2023	0.041	0.033–0.050	89.458	2,071.249

g = the probability of detection.

1. Ba is the shape 1 parameter for the Beta distribution. Bb is the shape 2 parameter for the Beta distribution.