

Basic Learning Points:

Tier 3 – Field Studies to Document Site Wildlife and Habitat and Predict Project Impacts



- 1) During Tier 3, developers gather data necessary to:
 - a. Design a project to avoid or minimize predicted risk
 - b. Evaluate predictions of impact and risk through post-construction comparisons of estimated impacts
 - c. Identify compensatory mitigation measures, if appropriate, to offset significant adverse impacts that cannot be avoided or minimized.

- 2) Tier 3 differs from Tiers 1 and 2 in that the developer attempts to quantify the distribution, relative abundance, behavior, and site use of species of concern.

- 3) When considering Tier 3 studies for bats:
 - a. Consistent methods & metrics provide comparability, but study design will vary from site to site
 - b. Multiple tools may be required
 - c. Methods include acoustics, mist-netting, radar, roost exit counts
 - d. Level of effort should detect common & rare species
 - e. Studies should be of sufficient duration & intensity to accurately characterize presence
 - f. To establish trends & account for temporal variation, studies should occur over multiple years

- 4) When designing Tier 3 studies, keep Tier 4 – Post-construction Studies to Estimate Impacts – in mind. Will your Tier 3 study design allow for comparison between predictions made in Tier 3 to direct and indirect impacts to species of concern quantified in Tier 4?

- 5) Based on a case study retroactively applying the Land-Based Wind Energy Guidelines to an existing facility:
 - a. The tiered approach can help to identify the studies that are really needed
 - b. The tiered approach is better at assessing risks

- 6) Communication is key – the tiered approach is a risk based assessment and may involve novel studies. A standard suite of studies may not be appropriate for the project. It is helpful to keep an open mind regarding studies.