

Joshua Fitzgerald
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Dear Josh

Flyers Creek Wind Farm – BBAMP Annual Report 2024-2025

Thank you for your e-mail dated 28 May 2025 to the Conservation Programs, Heritage and Regulation Group (CPHR) of the NSW Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (NSW DCCEEW) regarding the 2024/2025 Bird and Bat Adaptive Management Plan (BBAMP) Annual Report for Flyers Creek Wind Farm (FCWF). I appreciate the opportunity to provide input.

It is noted that a total of 31 bat carcasses and 55 bird carcasses or feather spots were identified during the May 2024 to April 2025 monitoring period. This does not include the 26 turbine searches that were completed during the commissioning stage of the project. Across the five-month commissioning period a total of 11 carcasses were recorded. The carcasses comprised of 2 birds and 9 microbats.

We commend Habitat Innovation and Management for the level of analysis in this annual report. This provides important insights into environmental conditions that may influence blade strike or carcass detection as well as providing a basis for determining the success of future mitigation actions.

CPHR is satisfied that the Annual Report fulfills the requirements of the BBAMP and make the following comments and recommendations.

Carcass searches

Nineteen turbines, representing 50% of the total 38 turbines at the FCWF, were selected for monthly carcass searches. Neither the annual report nor the BBAMP specifically state how these turbines were selected.

Figure 1 of the annual report depicts the turbines that were monitored monthly. CPHR notes that no turbines across the more heavily timbered central section of the wind farm (turbines 10 to 12 and 28 to 32) are included in the monitoring program. Conversely, all the northern-most turbines (turbines 1 to 8) are included. CPHR are concerned that the omitted turbines may be of a higher risk to birds and bats than turbines further from vegetated areas.

Five bat carcasses were recorded in a single carcass search during the commissioning stage at turbine 28 in December 2023. This suggests that these turbines may indeed be of a higher risk. CPHR recommend that at least two of these turbines be included in the monitoring program to determine the risk rating of these turbines and whether mitigation measures may be warranted.

While we appreciate that this will increase the effort required for the monitoring program, we suggest that the turbines be in addition to the 19 turbines currently being surveyed.

Recommendation

- Add at least 2 turbines from the more heavily timbered central section of the wind farm (turbines 10 to 12 and 28 to 32) to the monitoring program.

Microbats

CPHR are concerned about the significant number of white-striped freetail bats mortalities during the first full year of operation and therefore recommend the inclusion of the additional turbines situated in timbered areas of the wind farm in the monitoring program.

Given the reported results, we fully support the recommendation for a trial of a 4.5 ms-1 dusk to dawn curtailment during the months of October and March at the identified higher risk turbines to reduce the rate of blade strike on microbats.

Recommendation

- Implement the trial of a 4.5 ms-1 dusk to dawn curtailment during October and March for turbines at higher risk of microbat blade strike.

Raptors

We note that wedge-tailed eagles were frequently recorded during monitoring with 67 individual sightings over the 12 months and a nest being located within the wind farm. Although only two wedge-tailed eagle carcasses have been recorded to date, juvenile eagles are particularly prone to blade strike.

Recommendations

- Conduct periodic checks of the wedge-tailed eagle nest to determine the fledging date of chicks.
- Monitor these juveniles to determine their fate.

If you have any questions about this advice, please do not hesitate to contact David Geering, Senior Conservation Planning Officer, via david.geering@environment.nsw.gov.au or (02) 6885 0335.

Yours sincerely,



Liz Mazzer
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Conservation Programs, Heritage and Regulation Group

4 June 2025