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Representative Information

Are you making this submission on behalf of someone else and/or an organisation?

No

Your Details

Name

Jack Winterbottom

Address

[REDACTED]

Email

[REDACTED]

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[REDACTED]

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How would you like to make your submission?

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Your Submission

Southerly 10 Star of the South Offshore Wind Farm
Draft Environmental Impact Statement

Comments

Jack Winterbottom

Qualifications

Bachelor of Veterinary Science (University of Melbourne 1977)

Master of Veterinary Studies (University of Melbourne 2001)

Interest

Long term bird enthusiast

Potential Bias

Member of the Star of the South (SotS) Community Advisory Group (CAG) representing BirdLife Australia since inception of CAG in 2019.

I confine my comments to the aspects of the SotS project related to birds as that is my primary interest. It was evident from the outset that there was no baseline data relating to bird species in the footprint of the project. This had made it impossible to determine the right questions to ask SotS. It has been a very long wait since February 2020 and finally the baseline data is here. In viewing the EIS Summary Report, the Technical report E, the Biosis Collision Risk Management report and EIS Chapter 12 documents, I believe that SotS has asked appropriate questions in terms of what species are present in the offshore wind farm area (OWFA) footprint and the general area, their behaviour that would be important in their interaction with wind farm turbines and the potential mortality outcomes to be expected.

The Turbine Collision Risk Modelling for Birds by Biosis is an eye-opener. It shows the sophistication applied to this field of research. Although the base model, the Aberdeen Offshore Wind Farm, is located in the North Sea, gannets, terns and gulls are present in both OWFAs. The negligible effect of the OWF on these taxa in the North Sea augers well for results here in Bass Strait.

The Short-tailed Shearwater (StS) is considered most vulnerable by those opposed to windfarms per se. In the modelling, the StS had the second highest number of birds per risk per annum, but there was no effect on the Victorian and Australian populations. SotS OWFA is not going to be a 'killing fields' as predicted by some. Many more birds of this species will die each year from late fledging and 'wrecks' on migration.

The EIS Summary Report shows the great care and transparency that SotS have gone to with Chapter 12 Offshore Ornithology and Bats, a subject that I know very well. To me, this indicates that the same care and transparency will have been applied to all the other subjects of which I know little or nothing. My experience as a CAG member has given me great confidence of the honesty and integrity of Southerly Ten Star of the South.

To my mind, the single most important change that substantially affects bird annual mortality is the air gap. SotS is to be commended in raising the airgap by 10 metres and showing the effect on annual mortality that this has. It is also pleasing to see that the rotor swept area is essentially the same for both sizes of proposed turbines.

Post-construction monitoring is vital to showing that the science underpinning the project is correct. I suggest this be added to the report recommendations.

I believe that, in the light of the global move from our historic carbon-based economy to a renewable energy economy, the benefits of the project far outweigh the impacts on bird species.

The success of the commencement of the project will rely on the science presented, which is very well done, being able to trump arguments based on emotional and spurious grounds. I wish SotS all the best with their endeavours.

Submission Declaration

✓ This submission does not contain any material that could be regarded as defamatory or offensive to any person

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