

presence/absence of the species and likelihood of impacts based on relative density within the project area will be further evaluated in consultation with the agencies.

4.5 Waterfowl and Winter Raptor Surveys

Due to the coastal nature of the project area, potential impacts to waterfowl and raptors that frequent the area during migration and winter season was raised as a concern. Four species of waterfowl, three species of waterbirds and eight species of raptors were recorded on the St. Lawrence Windpower project area during the waterfowl and winter raptor surveys. The vast majority of the waterfowl use of the site was of Canada goose. Generally, geese were observed in large flocks foraging in agricultural fields and flying over the St. Lawrence Windpower project area. Canada goose has had recorded fatalities at other monitored wind projects primarily in the western U.S.; however, they are not a common fatality. In general, waterfowl fatalities at wind projects are rare (see Erickson et al 2001, 2002, Koford et al. 2005). While the proposed St. Lawrence Windpower project would increase risk of collision-related mortality to Canada goose, impacts are not expected to be significant due to the large numbers of this species in the region and the low occurrence of collision fatalities at wind projects.

The most common raptor species recorded during the winter driving and fixed point surveys were red-tailed and rough-legged hawk. Although the proposed St. Lawrence Windpower project would increase collision risk for wintering red-tailed and rough-legged hawks over existing condition, impacts are not expected to be significant. These raptor species have a relatively low exposure index based on the survey results (Table 2), and raptor mortality has been relatively low at other eastern wind projects that have been monitored (see Kerns and Kerlinger 2004, Nicholson 2002, 2003, Koford et al. 2005, Arnett et al. 2005). There is no information to suggest that winter raptor mortality would be greater at the St. Lawrence Windpower project than other wind projects studied.

5.0 References

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