

LAKE MANITOBA AND LAKE ST. MARTIN OUTLET CHANNELS PROJECT
RESPONSE TO IAAC TECHNICAL INFORMATION REQUESTS

Question IAAC-54

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Abbreviations and Acronyms

EIS	environmental impact statement
LMOC	Lake Manitoba outlet channel
LSMOC	Lake St. Martin outlet channel
SAR	species at risk

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EIS Guideline Reference: 7.4 Mitigation Measures

EIS Reference: 8.3.6.2 Change in Habitat

Context and Rationale

The EIS Guidelines require the proponent to describe mitigation measures in relation to species and/or critical habitat listed under SARA that are consistent with any applicable recovery strategy and action plans. Where mitigation measures for which there is little experience or for which there is some question as to their effectiveness are proposed, the potential risks and effects to the environment should those measures not be effective should be described.

The EIS proposes compensation offsetting for habitat loss for several migratory bird SAR (Red-headed Woodpecker, and Eastern Whip-poor-will) as well as compensation offsetting for effects to wetland functions. The proponent has not described that Yellow Rail will be included in wetland compensation offsetting plans.

Clarity on species-specific mitigation is required to understand the potential effects of the Project on bird SAR.

Information Requests

- a) Outline mitigation measures for the avoidance of Project effects to key or important habitat features for SAR.
- b) Provide the proposed offset or compensation plans for Eastern Whip-poor-will and Red-headed Woodpecker.
- c) Discuss how Yellow Rail and Yellow Rail habitat requirements will be incorporated into the wetland function and compensation offsets.

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- a) Mitigation measures for the avoidance of Project effects on the environment include channel routing, which is described in Volume 1, Section 2.4.2.1 and 2.4.2.2. The Lake St. Martin Outlet Channel (LSMOC) route proposed for the Project avoids much of the Buffalo Lake Bog. The proposed Lake Manitoba Outlet Channel (LMOC) route, or Channel D, initially traversed the wetland complex containing several large wetlands and lakes (e.g., Reed, Clear and Goodison Lakes) which, from an engineering perspective, was a logical option to follow naturally existing drainage patterns. However, upon further evaluation and consideration of the environmental impacts of the proposed alignment (e.g., ecological importance of wetland complexes, habitat for species at risk [SAR] [e.g., least bittern, horned grebe, yellow rail], this section of Channel D was routed further west to reduce the potential interaction with these wetland complexes (KGS Group 2017). Mitigation measures for the avoidance

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of Project effects to key or important habitat features (e.g., nests, dens, snags, waterbodies; Volume 3, Section 8.3.6.2), for SAR, including timing windows and application of provincial setbacks and buffers, are described in Volume 3, Sections 8.3.6.2 and 8.3.6.3. See also IAAC-49, Table 49-1 for a list of setbacks that will be applied for SAR and other wildlife as required.

- b) The proposed offset plans for eastern whip-poor-will and red-headed woodpecker will be developed collaboratively with regulators, stakeholders, and Indigenous communities affected by the Project. See response to IAAC-46 for more information on the offset plans.
- c) The Wetland Compensation Plan will consider relevant habitat requirements for wetland-dependent wildlife including yellow rail. See IAAC-53 for more information on the Wetland Compensation Plan.

References

KGS Group. 2017. Investigations and preliminary engineering for LMB outlet channels options C and D summary report. Prepared for Manitoba Infrastructure, May 2017, Winnipeg, MB.