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Regarding environmental impacts from the wind farm Windanker in the German exclusive economic zone (EEZ)

The Swedish Ornithological Society (SOF) – BirdLife Sweden – has received information from the Swedish Environmental Protection Agency and reviewed the attached documentation regarding the wind farm Windanker. Here we present our conclusive summary. As stated previously, BirdLife Sweden is generally positive to offshore wind farms away from shallow waters, e.g. offshore banks, and concentrations of seabirds.

ABOUT THE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS, SPECIFICALLY ON BIRDS

As could be expected, the project area is of general importance to birds. When it comes to feeding birds, loons and especially auks seem to be attracted in comparably high numbers. This definitely raises some concern, as these are birds that need special protection when it comes to feeding areas. As the number of Common Guillemot (*Uria aalge*) reached levels of 2-3% of the Baltic population, exploitation of the area is highly inappropriate. However, BirdLife Sweden realizes that the expected impact on these and other seabirds are most probably within the range of what German authorities would judge as acceptable.

Although not really aware of how well the migration of the Crane (*Grus Grus*) has been covered within this project, it seems obvious that a considerable part of the cranes migrating between Sweden and Rügen pass through the proposed wind farm area (possibly via Bornholm), especially under certain weather conditions. A significant proportion of the cranes are likely to fly within the rotor-swept area, as their flight altitude decreases after long distances over open water. Again, the expected impact will most likely be



accepted by German authorities. In such case, BirdLife Sweden would highly recommend that the wind turbines are shut down on (the few) days when most cranes migrate across the Baltic Sea.

The abundance of migrating songbirds is labelled as “high” and the impact from the project on these birds is expected to be “moderate”. But still, as far as we understand, no mitigation measures are prescribed. The least BirdLife Sweden would expect, is that some general rules are followed to decrease the number of bird victims colliding with the turbines and other constructions.

Nocturnal migrants are known to be attracted to and collide with illuminated obstacles like light houses, towers and other high buildings. This mainly happens in severe weather conditions, e.g. heavy fog, during periods of intense migration. Short, flashing lights have less attracting effect on birds than permanent lights. As of today, there are functional systems that turn on the lights only when airplanes approach the wind farm. (Lighting systems for boat traffic, which may necessitate continuity, should be placed low above water.) Such systems would effectively minimize the risk of mass collision events. Therefore, BirdLife Sweden strongly suggests the use of such technique. Also, as with the crane migration, temporal shutdown of wind turbines when massive song bird migration occurs is highly recommended. This would be an easy way to effectively decrease the number of birds killed. Massive song bird migration generally happens on foggy nights with low wind speeds, which means that the loss of energy production would be insignificant.

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