

**LaSalle Environmental Audit
Response to Request for Additional Information**

Index #: 028 **RAI #:** Spec-01 **Category:** Federally Protected Species and Habitats

Statement of Question:

Provide any information on potential or suitable habitat for Indiana bat or northern longear bat that may occur on the site, particularly summer roosting habitat. Also, because FWS recently expressed concern regarding “tree-clearing” activities that might affect the Federally-listed northern long-eared bat in relation to the Exelon’s Braidwood license renewal application in Will County (letter from L. Nelson, FWS to D Wrona, NRC; May 8, 2015; ML15131A004) and because that species can also occur in LaSalle County, provide a statement identifying any “tree-clearing” activities that may occur at the LaSalle site as a consequence of the proposed license renewal.

Response:

Indiana bats (*Myotis sodalis*) winter (hibernate) in caves and abandoned mines and use a variety of habitats in summer, from pasturelands to forests. Summer roosts are typically in mature forests where dead trees, hollow trees, snags and live trees with peeling bark may be found. They feed on flying insects near rivers and lakes and in uplands. Northern long-eared bats over-winter (hibernate) in large caves and mines and are often found in forested areas in summer, where they forage along ridges and hillsides, and, less often, over forest clearings and forest roads. In summer, long-eared bats roost singly or in small colonies under bark and in cavities of both dead and living trees. Long-eared bats are also known to roost in buildings, barns, sheds, cabins, and bat houses (artificial roosts).

There is little, if any, suitable habitat for the Indiana and northern long-eared bats on the approximately 3,000-acre LaSalle County Station main site (which includes a cooling pond occupying around 2,000 acres). There are no caves, mines, forests, or woodlands, just the cooling pond and scattered trees. The LaSalle wildlife team has taken measures to provide summer roosting opportunities for bats, where none would otherwise exist, by erecting a few roost boxes near the cooling pond and monitoring them for bat use (none as of 2013). These efforts are described in the 2013 LaSalle County Station Wildlife Management Plan.

There appears to be some potential summer roosting habitat (hardwood trees) for bats on the approximately 800 acre makeup/blowdown pipeline corridor, but no specific areas that would attract bats are known. Exelon Generation has not surveyed this pipeline corridor for such bat usage or taken action to evaluate its potential as bat habitat.

No “tree-clearing” activities at the LSCS site will occur as a consequence of the proposed license renewal.

List of Attachments:

None.