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UNITED STATES
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20542

FEB 29 1980

Docket Nos. 50-272, 50-311
~~50-553, 50-554~~
50-354, 50-355

MEMORANDUM FOR: Ronald L. Ballard, Chief
Environmental Projects Branch 1, DSE

FROM: George Lear, Chief
Environmental Specialists Branch, DSE

SUBJECT: BIOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT OF SHORTRNOSE STURGEON
IN THE DELAWARE RIVER

PLANT NAMES: Salem Nuclear Generating Station, Units 1 and 2
Hope Creek Nuclear Generating Station, Units 1 and 2

DOCKET NOS.: 50-272, 50-311, 50-553, 50-554 50-354, 50-355

RESPONSIBLE BRANCHES: EP-1, ESB

PROJECT MANAGER: R. Cleveland

TAC NO.: 5369

On October 31, 1979, NRC requested formal consultation of the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) on shortnose sturgeon at Salem 1 and 2 and Hope Creek 1 and 2. NMFS, on December 7, 1979, rendered a Threshold Examination and Biological Opinion for Salem 1, concluding that continued operation of the plant "is neither likely to jeopardize the continued existence of the shortnose sturgeon nor to destroy or adversely modify habitat that may be critical to it". In this same letter, NMFS indicated that insufficient information existed to make a determination for Salem 2 and Hope Creek 1 and 2.

The NRC staff has prepared a biological assessment of the impact due to construction and operation of Salem 2 and Hope Creek 1 and 2 on the shortnose sturgeon (Enclosure 1). This assessment contains the additional information needed by NMFS to formulate a biological opinion.

Because the NRC is serving as lead agency in coordination of joint consultation between the two agencies and NMFS, you will need the concurrence of EPA Region II before this assessment can be sent to NMFS. We have transmitted a copy of the assessment to EPA, and have been informed that a formal letter of concurrence will be sent to NRC by March 7, 1980. Because EPA's participation in joint consultation is limited to a review of the assessment, we expect only minimal comments.

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After reviewing all materials available to us and formulating our assessment, we have the following recommendations:

1. Based on the low potential for impact at the Hope Creek and Salem Stations, no additional river sampling by the licensee is warranted. Mortalities associated with an extensive river sampling program may result in greater mortality to the shortnose sturgeon than station construction and operation.
2. The licensee should develop an onsite surveillance program to visually inspect all dumpsters containing screen wash and trash bar debris prior to offsite removal for the presence of shortnose sturgeon. Specimens should be retained by station personnel and turned over to scientific staff to verify identification, take appropriate weights and measurements, assess condition, and affect proper disposition of the specimens. These inspections should be included in the plant operating procedures and a record kept in a logbook. Results of this program should be summarized and included in the annual environmental operating report. This program will (a) document future occurrences of shortnose sturgeon taken at the intakes, (b) allow a reevaluation of impact, if warranted, and (c) serve to keep appropriate agencies informed.
3. The licensee should maintain knowledge and expertise on shortnose sturgeon in the Delaware River. The licensee should maintain records of documented and semidocumented captures, and other studies conducted on the Delaware which report incidental takings of this species.

This review was conducted by M. Masnik and J. Wilson.

Original Signed by Jerry R. Kline

JR
George Lear, Chief
Environmental Specialists Branch
Division of Site Safety and
Environmental Analysis

Enclosure:
As stated

cc: M. Ernst
W. Regan
R. Cleveland
R. Samworth
M. Masnik
J. Wilson

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