



United States Department of the Interior

U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

Ecological Services
Ventura Fish and Wildlife Office
2493 Portola Road, Suite B
Ventura, California 93003



IN REPLY REFER TO:
2023-0121678

March 28, 2024

Ara Azhderian, General Manager
Monterey County Water Resources Agency
1441 Schilling Place, North Building
Salinas, California 93901

Subject: Incidental Take Permit PER8656461 for the Salinas River Lagoon and Sandbar Management Project in Monterey County, California

Dear Ara Azhderian:

We have reviewed the incidental take permit application and final habitat conservation plan (HCP) submitted for activities associated with periodic facilitated sandbar breaching to manage water levels in the Salinas River Lagoon to minimize flooding impacts to agricultural lands and residences in Monterey County, California. The Monterey County Water Resources Agency (MCWRA) requested a permit term of 5 years to authorize take of the tidewater goby (*Eucyclogobius newberryi*) and Pacific Coast distinct population segment of the western snowy plover (*Charadrius nivosus nivosus*) that is likely to result from activities described in the HCP. The HCP includes conservation measures that MCWRA commits to fund and implement to compensate for the unavoidable take of the tidewater goby and western snowy plover. The HCP also includes conservation measures to minimize negative impacts to the Monterey spineflower (*Chorizanthe pungens var. pungens*).

Based on our evaluation of MCWRA's application and the HCP, we determine that all permit issuance criteria established pursuant to Fish and Wildlife Regulation 50 CFR 17.22 are met. Under the authority of section 10(a)(1)(B) of the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended, MCWRA is authorized to take the tidewater goby and western snowy plover located only within the permit area in the form specified and in conjunction with those activities identified in the HCP. Enclosed please find permit PER8656461, we encourage you to review its terms and conditions.

We thank you for your cooperation and patience during this process. Should you have any questions regarding your permit or the contents of this letter, please contact Mark Ogonowski of my staff by electronic mail at mark_ogonowski@fws.gov.

Sincerely,

Stephen P. Henry
Field Supervisor

Enclosure: Federal Fish and Wildlife Permit PER8656461