

Quarterly Report: Monitoring Potential Cadmium Levels in Avian Tissues Associated with the Savannah Harbor Expansion Project – December 2016 (1st Quarter FY17)

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In the first quarter of 2017, we collected the early season samples as part of the winter period of the third year of avian cadmium sampling (as a reminder, our sampling year spans portions of two calendar years). This sampling was impacted by construction activities on the DMCA, which precluded us from sampling within DMCA 14A. Early winter avian sampling occurred during the following periods: 18-20 November and 19 December 2016.

In response to a methodology change, our mist netting efforts during November were focused on sampling both sparrow species (Table 1). The number of sentinel species had been reduced after discussions in late summer between USACE and UGA-SREL allowed us to concentrate on collecting higher numbers of a lower number of species, more similar to the target sample numbers listed in the original project scope of work (described in 3rd Quarter 2016 report). We also lethally-collected 2 Northern Shovelers during the November visit. We returned in December and collected 4 more shovelers and 5 American Avocets. We did not attempt to collect Blue-winged Teal because our federal scientific collecting permit allowing those collections had not arrived.

Table 1. Sentinel Birds Captured and Sampled (blood) on the Savannah Dredge Material Containment Areas (DMCA) in the Early Portion of the 2016 Winter Sampling Period.

Savannah Sparrow	8
Song Sparrow	9
Northern Shoveler	6*
American Avocet	5*
Blue-winged Teal	0**

- Lethal take

** Awaiting federal collection permit

We will return in February/March to complete our winter collections of sparrows and water birds. All 3rd year avian samples have been prepped for metals analyses and will be analyzed in late winter/early spring of 2017, as will the prey base samples.