

EKA WI. 2115.18 Active Pit Monitoring

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Brief Description:	Monitoring Active Pits to Identify and Prevent Nesting Activity

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Task Description

Monitor active pits and the surrounding location to document, track and deter all bird activity including nesting activity, resting or hunting. Every effort must be made to identify and deter any bird investigating active pits. This region should be made as unwelcoming to ravens and all raptor species as possible. This is done through the use of propane cannons, audio devices, physical barriers to high quality habitats and pyrotechnic devices (flares) and non-pyrotechnic devices (bangers & screamers).

HSE Information / Safety Risks:

- Working in Active Mining Area
 - Working at Heights (on or near the Pit high wall)
 - Wildlife encounters
 - Heavy equipment and other traffic
 - Blasting
 - Operating Deterrent Devices
 - Aggressive birds
 - Poor Communication
 - Fatigue management
 - Hearing or Vision damage
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Additional Resources Required:

- Binoculars
- Spotting scope and tripod
- SLR camera with zoom lens
- GPS
- Data-sheets, clipboard and pencil
- Birds identification field guide
- PPE
- Audio playback sound system
- Propane cannon (remote controlled and timed)
- Bear bangers and screamers
- Laser gun
- Infrared camera
- Ropes with flagging tape
- Snow fencing
- Radio

Work Preparation:

1. Know the cliff nesting bird species that you may encounter during a survey. Historically, birds found nesting on the pit walls are the: rough-legged hawk (RLHA; *Buteo lagopus*), peregrine falcon (PEFA; *Falco peregrinus tundrius*), gyrfalcon (GYRF; *Falco rusticolus*), and common raven (CORA; *Corvus corax*). Other species that may be encountered are the: golden eagle (GOEA; *Aquila chrysaetos*), bald eagle (BAEA; *Haliaeetus leucocephalus*), merlin (MERL; *Falco columbarius*) and American kestrel (AMKE; *Falco sparverius*).
2. Be aware of the conservation status of the cliff nesting bird species.
 - The Peregrine falcon is listed as “Special Concern” by COSEWIC (Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada) and SARA (Species at Risk Act – Government of Canada). The ENR (Environment and Natural Resources – GNWT) general status rank is “Sensitive”.
 - The gyrfalcon, rough-legged hawk, common raven, merlin, bald and golden eagles, and the American kestrel are “Not at Risk” according to COSEWIC.

Task Description:

1. Be familiar with the locations of the pits and other mining infrastructure that may host nesting birds and the standard protocol on how to access these locations.
2. Travel to the survey locations specified. Stop at vantage points around the top of the pits. Get out of vehicle making sure to keep at least 2m from the edge of the pit and never cross over berms.
3. Look for bird activity, which encompasses looking for nests on the pit walls. The best way to locate a nest is to look for white wash on the walls or follow a flying bird to their nesting location. Use of a spotting scope is recommended when a potential nest is found. For identification purposes, use a scope when a bird is spotted perched on a pit wall.
4. Record all potential nests and any suspected nesting activity. Potential nesting activity includes a bird that stays around the pit or a nest site. Nesting activity includes defensive behavior, carrying food or sticks, prospecting for sites, and a nesting bird on a nest or a ledge.
5. Take photos of potential nesting sites and any birds. Ensure that there are landmarks in the photograph so that cross-shifts can easily locate where the photograph was taken from.
6. Upon return to the office upload nest location photos onto Sharepoint after marking the nest location on the photograph using ‘Paint’ or other similar program. Enter data into the Pit Wall Survey spread sheet on SharePoint and QA/QC entered data. File data sheet in WEMP binder.
7. Report all nesting activity to Environment Advisor – Wildlife and the Environment Team Leader.

General Remarks:

- In natural habitats peregrine falcons, gyrfalcons, rough-legged hawks, and common ravens nest on ledges and precipitous cliff faces. Open pit walls at EKATI resemble steep sided ledges and offer attractive nesting locations. Cliff nesting birds have also been observed nesting on ledge-like structures such as cairns, towers, mining dredges and bridges. Attracting cliff nesting birds to pit walls is a concern, particularly for birds that have conservation status.
- If a nest with eggs is established, all deterrent use on those birds must immediately stop.
- A General Wildlife Permit is acquired annually prior to the start of this program.

Approval signatures record

REVIEWER ROLE	NAME	SIGNATURE	DATE
Wildlife Advisor	Laura Corey		20/6/2017
Environment Superintendent	Harry O'Keefe		20/6/2017