BRITISH COLUMBIA

May 29th, 2016

Dear Forest Licencees and Contractors:

Over the past year, the Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations (FLNRO) and a number of forest licencees have been supporting work to assess the occupancy and status of interior Northern Goshawk breeding areas in the Kalum, Cranberry, Nass South, Kispiox, Bulkley, Morice and Lakes Timber Supply Areas (TSAs). Despite being at the peak of the prey (hare) availability cycle, in 2015 only 2 of 72 known nest sites (or 3%) were occupied, and evidence suggests that many areas have not been used for many years. Across these TSAs, 26% of known nest sites had been harvested, harvesting had occurred within 200 metres of 51% of known nest sites (the recommended avoidance buffer), and 83% of known breeding areas were less than 100 hectares in size (the recommended minimum patch size for breeding areas).

Northern Goshawk is an umbrella indicator species for a range of ecosystem values at a landscape scale. Interior Northern Goshawk is identified by Environment Canada at a national level as a species of conservation concern and stewardship focus. In light of the dramatic decline in nest site occupancy, FLNRO wants to work with licencees, First Nations and stakeholders in the coming year to develop management options to ensure the conservation and sustainable management of Interior Northern Goshawk, and the ecosystem values for which they are an indicator.

While longer-term management strategies are being developed, as part of these collaborative stewardship efforts FLNRO expects all forest licencees and contractors to:

- report any new breeding areas to FLNRO (Anne.Hetherington@gov.bc.ca);
- ensure that all field crews are aware of the concern, and can identify a Northern Goshawk and its nest area (a large stick nest, below the canopy in an interior forest location);
- review available information on nest sites and breeding areas prior to conducting any site planning activities;
- incorporate protocols for breeding area identification into harvest and site planning; and
- take steps to avoid, minimize or otherwise mitigate adverse impacts to breeding areas.

Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations

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Enclosed with this letter are copies of *Occupancy and Status of Northern Goshawk Breeding Areas in the Coast Mountains (Kalum), Nadina and Skeena Stikine Resource Districts*, which summarizes the outcomes of recent breed area assessments, and *A scientific basis for managing northern goshawk breeding areas in the Interior of British Columbia: best management practices* which identifies the habitat needs for the species and recommended practices for avoiding, minimizing or mitigating adverse impacts to breeding areas.

You can expect further information and engagement in the coming months as FLNRO's Skeena Region Interior Northern Goshawk Management Strategy process gets underway. Frank Doyle of Wildlife Dynamics Consulting, who led the recent assessment of breeding areas, will be supporting this process. In the interim, if you have any questions, please contact Jocelyn Campbell, Skeena Region Ecosystems Section Head, at Jocelyn.Campbell@gov.bc.ca or (250) 847-7655.

Thank you for your continued involvement in collaborative stewardship in the Skeena Region.

Sincerely,

Eamon O'Donoghue
Regional Executive Director

Encl: *Occupancy and Status of Northern Goshawk Breeding Areas in the Coast Mountains (Kalum), Nadina and Skeena Stikine Resource Districts*
A scientific basis for managing northern goshawk breeding areas in the Interior of British Columbia: best management practices

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