BRITISH COLUMBIA

Standard Operating Procedures

ARC/ORC File: 400-00 BCTS Interim Goshawk Management Strategy
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Interim Goshawk Management Strategy SOP

Policy Reference: Not applicable

Legislative Reference: Not applicable

Purpose of Standard Operating Procedure

This Standard Operating Procedure will provide specific management strategies for goshawk nests.

General Information

There are two subspecies of Northern goshawk in British Columbia. The *Accipiter gentilis atricapillus* (referred to as Northern goshawk) is found on the mainland, including the BCTS Burns Lake operating area, and the *Accipiter gentilis laingi* (referred to as Queen Charlotte goshawk) is found on Vancouver Island and the Queen Charlotte Islands.

The Northern goshawk is about 60 centimeters long and has a wingspan of about 1-meter. The adult is blue-grey in color, with an underside of light grey with dark bars and has a white eyestripe over blood-red eye. The call is a harsh "kak-kak-kak". The Northern goshawk requires forested habitat and nests in mature and old growth coniferous forests. The nest area is the center of breeding activity from mid-February to the end of August. The Northern goshawk feeds on small mammals and other birds.

Procedures

Restrictions between February 15 and August 15
No mechanized activity or blasting within 500 meters of an active goshawk nest. No human activity within 200 meters of an active goshawk nest. No extended hauling (greater than 3 days) within 200 meters of an active goshawk nest. No damage or destruction of active or inactive goshawk nest.

Activities permitted between August 16 and February 14
Road construction may be permitted to within 200 meters of goshawk nests. Harvest related to forest health management may be permitted to within 200 meters of goshawk nests. Harvest not related to forest health management may be permitted to within 500 meters of goshawk nests.

Inclusion of Interim Northern Goshawk Management Strategy
The Interim Northern Goshawk Management Strategy will be incorporated into the Forest Stewardship Plan in 2005. Until the 2005 FDP, the Interim Goshawk Management Strategy will be considered Timber Sale Manager policy, and will be applied to BCTS forest operations. The Site Plan for timber sale licenses (TSLs) will include the management strategy if goshawk nests are within or adjacent to TSLs.

Procedure for Identification and Management of Goshawk Nests within Awarded Timber Sale Licenses, Road Permits or Forest Service Roads

When potential goshawk nests are identified in awarded TSLs or road, BCTS staff will work with the licensee to bring a qualified biologist to the TSL or road to confirm the identification as soon as possible. Upon confirmation, BCTS staff will work with the licensee to mutually mitigate the impact of harvesting on the goshawk. BCTS staff should understand that there is no specific legislation that requires the management of goshawk habitat, and that management is dependent on the licensee. The most likely option available for mitigation is the creation of a reserve buffering the nest area(s) within a TSL or creation of an alternate route for the road. These options may require an SP and possibly an FDP amendment.

Recommendation for Final Management Strategy
Contract biologist to designate Goshawk Habitat Areas for known goshawk nests and provide a short-term (in consideration of bark beetle epidemic) and long-term management strategy (post-beetle epidemic).

Variance from Interim Management Strategy
Variances from the above conditions may be obtained from the Timber Sale Manager for activities such as forest health management and construction of roads with no reasonable alternate route.

Background Information

Species at Risk Act
The *Species at Risk Act* (SARA) is federal legislation that was proclaimed in June 2003. SARA is a strategy for the protection of wildlife species at risk. SARA uses the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC) as the source for assessing and identifying species at risk (i.e. red-, blue- and yellow-listed species). **SARA recognizes the Queen Charlotte goshawk as a threatened species that requires management, but does not recognize the Northern goshawk as requiring management at this time.**

Forest Practices Code of British Columbia
The *Biodiversity Guidebook* and the *Riparian Management Area Guidebook* of the *Forest Practices Code of British Columbia* (FPC) act as coarse filter for habitat requirements for wildlife. The *Identified Wildlife Management Strategy* (IWMS) of the FPC consists of two documents: *Managing Identified Wildlife: Procedures and Measures* and *Species and Plant Community Accounts for Identified Wildlife*. The IWMS acts as a fine filter for addressing habitat requirements for wildlife that require additional management.

Both the Queen Charlotte goshawk (red-listed) and the Northern goshawk (yellow-listed regionally important) are listed in the IWMS. The regionally important designation comes from the BC Conservation Data Centre. The IWMS manages identified wildlife through the establishment of wildlife habitat areas (WHAs) and implementation of general wildlife measures (GWMs), or through other management practices specified in higher level plans. **No WHAs have been established within the Burns Lake operating area, therefore this management strategy cannot be applied to BCTS operations.**

Section 51, previously unidentified resources, of the *FPC of BC Act* does not apply to the management of goshawk nests. Section 51, subsection (1), subsection (d), "any other feature designated in regulations" could be applicable to goshawk nests. The regulation that would be application is section 1, definition of wildlife habitat feature, subsection (c) "any other localized feature identified by a designated environment official", of the *Operational and Site Planning Regulation (OSPR)*. For the Burns Lake operating area, there is no designated environment official and there are no defined wildlife habitat features. The Ministry of Water, Land and Air Protection is working with provincial committees and the Morice & Lakes Innovative Forest Practices Agreement to define wildlife habitat features.

Higher Level Plan

On October 01, 2000 the Order Establishing Resource Management Zones and Resource Management Zone Objectives for the Lakes District (the "Order") came into effect. This is the only higher level plan (HLP) in effect within the district. The Order designated three (3) resource management zones (RMZs): A, B and C. Objectives for each RMZ were designated. The first objective for A & B included the following four provisions: to set seral stage distribution targets for each landscape unit (LU) within the district, to locate old growth management areas (OGMAs) within each LU, to provide for forest interior conditions within each OGMA and to include a range of ecosystem types for each OGMA. The second objective set the standard for seral stage target levels until landscape unit planning was complete. The third objective for zone B required joint approval by district manager and designated environment official for the high use seral stage management zone. The objective for Zone C was to maintain caribou habitat by not permitting commercial timber harvest except for mining and oil/gas exploration. **The higher level plan does not provide specific wildlife management.**

LRMP

The general management intent of the Lakes Land and Resource Management Plan (LRMP) is to provide broad direction for the sustainable use of Crown land and resources. On January 10, 2001, the district manager issued direction, making portions of the LRMP known information. Information is provided below on the information that was made known that will be specifically addressed in this plan. Specific measures are incorporated into the measures to protect forest resources. **The LRMP does not provide specific goshawk habitat management.**

IWMS General Wildlife Management

The following information is taken from *Managing Identified Wildlife: Procedures and Measures* (note that this information is relevant only to operating areas with established WHAs). There should be a 240 hectare WHA that includes nest areas and post-fledgling area (PFA). This area should include 3 12 hectare nest areas, one nest area should be active and two should provide alternate nest areas. The WHA planning objectives are to maintain nesting and foraging

habitat for known nest sites. The GWM management objectives are to maintain blocks of mature and old forest to provide nesting and foraging opportunities.
Following are the measures for nest areas:

- Do not construct roads within nest areas (12 hectares) unless there are no other options (requires district manager (DM) and regional fish and wildlife manager approval).

- Do not harvest or salvage within nest areas, except for treatments aimed at maintaining or improving stand structure for nesting. If maintaining or improving stand structure avoid breeding period (March 15 – September 1).

Following are the measures for post-fledgling areas (PFAs):

- No blasting should occur within the PFA during courtship and nest establishment (March 15 to June 30). Actual times may vary by site and year.
- No road construction or modification should occur within 200 meters of an active nest from March 15 to September 1.
- Plan the harvest sequence to create a mosaic of successional stages interspersed in patches, with at least 20% in closed canopy old growth and 40% in mature forest (or old if mature is unavailable). The remaining 40% should be managed with no more than 20% in young forest.
- Restrict harvest to less important goshawk habitat (i.e. stands with an open canopy and multiple storied stands). Moderately important stands are those with a closed canopy, but moderate amounts of intermediate canopy. The most important stands are those with dense canopy cover and an open understory.
- No prolonged (i.e. >3 days) hauling on existing roads should occur within 200 meters of an active nest between March 15 and September 1 unless a variance is approved by the DM and regional fish and wildlife manager.
- No logging or salvage should occur within a WHA with an active nest from March 15 to September 1 unless a variance is approved.
- No silviculture treatments should be conducted between March 15 and June 30 within 500 meters of an active nest unless a variance is approved.
- Activity restrictions are removed after June 30 for inactive or unsuccessful nests.

2002-2007 Morice SBFEP FDP

The following summary of management strategies and habitat requirements for Northern goshawks are taken from the Morice FDP. Known nest trees will be protected using a 200m buffer around the nest trees with no road building or harvesting activities occurring within this 200m buffer. Harvesting and road building activities will be avoided within 200m of active nests between March 15 and September 1. Silviculture treatment activities will be avoided within 500m of an active nest between March 15 and June 30.

Morice & Lakes IFPA

The following information is taken from the Morice & Lakes IFPA "Northern Goshawks in the Morice and Lakes Forest Districts 5-Year Project Summary" prepared by Todd Mahan and Frank Doyle of Wildfor Consultants Ltd. in March 2003.

Conservation measures are focused on the nest area. The management area around the nest areas is defined as a Goshawk Habitat Area. Nest areas are managed at the operational level, while foraging areas should be managed at the landscape level. It is recommended that at least 75% of identified nest areas should be protected. Where no protection prescription is proposed the area

must meet the basic condition of having at least two potential alternate nest areas available within 1 km of the original area.

The objective is to maintain nesting and post-fledging habitat at known goshawk nest areas to support continued use and reproduction in those areas. Establish GHAs for at least 75% of known goshawk nest areas. Although it is important to protect as many nest areas as possible, flexibility can be afforded in some nest areas where other resource values or operational constraints supersede goshawk values. The GHA should be approximately 24 hectares in size. This area should include and buffer the active and alternative nest(s). Generally there should be no timber development within the GHA. However, if the suitability of the nest area stand is threatened by forest pests or disease, the benefit of control measures, such as bark beetle brood removal, may outweigh the potential negative impacts of such habitat alteration. No mechanized activity within 500 meters of active nest area from February 15 to August 15. No human activity within 200 meters of active nests from February 15 to August 15.

Distribution

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- Signed Original in Business Officers Office – SOP Binder

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