

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Department of Works, Services and Transportation (WST) is proposing to construct a two-lane, all-season gravel surface highway from Happy Valley-Goose Bay to Cartwright Junction that will link the existing TLH highway sections to the east (Phase II) and west (Phase I). As part of the environmental assessment for the project, detailed study (a component study) was required on raptors in the vicinity of the proposed route for the highway.

A component study on raptors for the TLH - Phase III project was prepared and submitted, along with the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)/Comprehensive Study and other related documents to the Department of Environment in January 2003. On April 24, 2003, the Minister of Environment issued a statement that the Raptor Component Study, which presented survey data for the preferred route for the TLH - Phase III, was accepted as satisfactory. However, WST was advised that any alternative route determined to be viable upon review of the alternative methods for carrying out the project (as outlined in the EIS/Comprehensive Study) must have a raptor component study completed for that alternative route.

The only alternative route that was determined to be a viable alternative to the preferred route for the TLH - Phase III was the alternative route (referred to as the outfitter route) that had been identified by the Newfoundland and Labrador Outfitters Association. The outfitter route encompasses the western and eastern portions of the preferred route, but the central portion of this route extends further to the south. It is the central portion of the outfitter route (or A13 as it is identified in the EIS/Comprehensive Study) that is the focus of the recent field survey. This addendum to the Raptor Component Study provides details on the field survey carried out along the outfitter (A13 section) route and the results of that survey.

The objective of this study was to conduct original research to identify raptor nests along the outfitter (A13 section) route. The results of this component study will be used to predict the local and regional effects of the proposed routing on raptors and to determine appropriate mitigative measures.

Similar to the study conducted on the preferred route, the current study area consisted of a 2-km wide corridor centered on the route alternative. Original survey data were collected during a specific survey designed for raptors or incidental observations made during waterfowl surveys conducted within the same area. The raptor survey followed a predetermined route outlined on 1:50,000 topographic map sheets, that covered approximately 500 m on each side of the highway right-of-way. The survey route varied (was widened) in some locations of greater potential habitat, such as river valleys and lake/pond networks, within the 2-km-wide survey corridor.



The specific aerial survey for raptors was conducted on June 20, 2003. The 206L Bell helicopter was maintained at a height of 50 to 100 m above ground. Flights were conducted at a speed of approximately 100 km/h and particular attention was placed on higher points of land within the coverage area and on trees adjacent to smaller tributary streams. All observations were recorded on 1:50,000 topographic maps and locations confirmed using the aircraft global positioning system (GPS).

A total of 13 osprey nests were identified within the 2-km study area. No bald eagle nests or cliff nests were observed during the survey. Eight of the thirteen osprey nests were active; five were empty and, of these, three were considered old and in disrepair. Several nests were concentrated in complexes of wetlands and waterbodies associated with the western portion of the outfitter (A13 section) route as it turned north back toward the Eagle River area.

Eight osprey nests fall within 800 m of the centre line of the outfitter (A13 section) route. Of these eight, two are within 200 m of the centre line of the outfitter (A13 section) route. No nests are located within 50 m of the centre line of the outfitter (A13 section) route.

