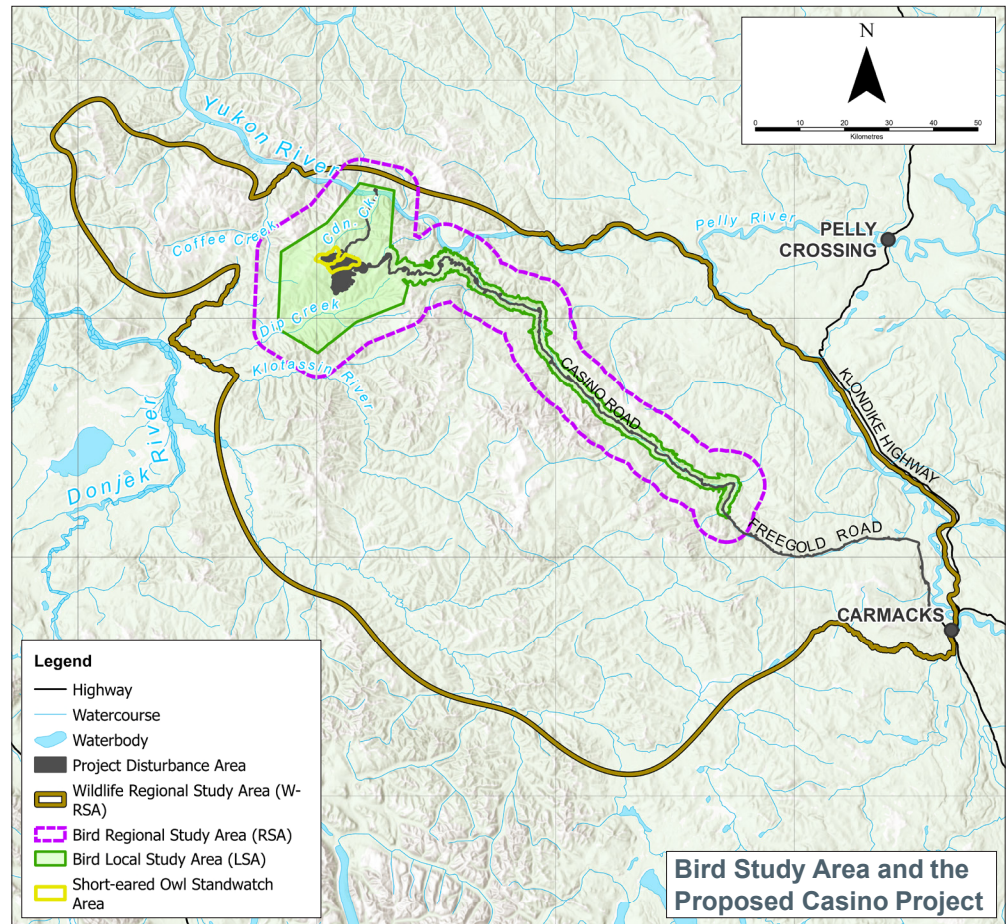


Bird Baseline Studies

Many bird species use habitats found near the proposed Casino Project. Casino hired Environmental Dynamics Inc. (EDI) to research raptors, waterbirds, upland birds, and bird species at risk.

EDI is studying birds in the areas around the proposed Casino Project. This area includes the proposed access road with a 1 km buffer and the watersheds that overlap the mine site. EDI's work aims to help Casino understand how birds use their habitat in and around the proposed Casino Project. It also helps Casino manage, or try and avoid, any potential project effects.

Bird studies in the Project area have been ongoing since 2010. Over this period, EDI gathered information from helicopter surveys, ground surveys, and recording bird songs. Specialized bird studies were conducted for nocturnal (evening and nighttime) birds. These surveys involve biologists counting birds by sight and sound. EDI's work also integrates Traditional Knowledge that has been provided to Casino.



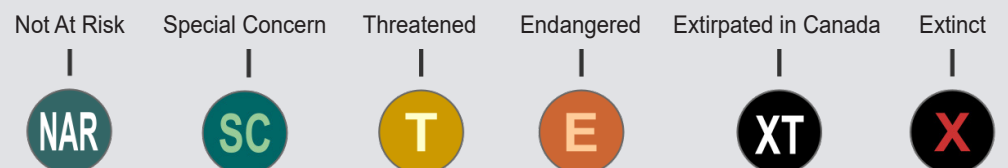
Habitat

Casino is working to understand the type, quantity (how much), and quality of habitats for all bird species. The areas around the proposed Casino Project have diverse ecosystems ranging from rugged mountain peaks and tundra plateaus to heavily forested areas along large streams. Casino wants to know the habitats in and around the proposed Casino Project. Not all birds' preferred habitats are commonly found in the area; some species, such as waterbirds, are rarely found in the area.



Bird Species of Conservation Concern

Based on survey data, 34 bird species of conservation concern are likely to be found in the larger area surrounding the Project area. Six species were seen during bird studies. Some of the birds that were found include the horned grebe (special concern), short-eared owl (special concern), rusty blackbird (special concern), and olive-sided flycatcher (threatened). The Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada assesses and designates the conservation status of wildlife species in Canada. Based on their evaluations, species are classified into the following categories.



Regional Bird Species Overview

Raptors

Raptors are large, strong birds of prey that feed on smaller animals. Twelve raptor species were found in the area, including golden eagle and peregrine falcon. Five active nests were found in the area during the 2022 studies, including three peregrine falcon nests and two golden eagle nests. Nearby cliff nesting raptor nests will be monitored through construction and operation to see that the proposed Casino Project does not disturb breeding and productivity.



Golden Eagle



Dark-eyed Junco

Waterbirds

Waterbirds are species that live on or around the water. For example, ducks, geese, and gulls are waterbirds. Not many waterbirds live near the proposed Casino Project because there are no lakes and not many open-water wetlands. Only seven species of waterbirds were found during the surveys, including mallard, bufflehead, and Canada goose.

Upland Birds

Upland birds live in habitats like meadows, grasslands, and other open areas. They spend most of their time walking and foraging on the ground rather than flying. Ecosystems close to the proposed Casino Project provide habitat for many upland bird species, including grouse, ptarmigan, nighthawks, and songbirds. Fifty-nine species of upland birds were found in the area. Some of the more common ones were the dark-eyed junco, yellow-rumped warbler, American robin, and the white crown sparrow.



Bufflehead

What's Next?

Casino will continue to study birds and bird habitats. This work will include updating and verifying habitat models to better understand where and how birds use the area around the proposed Casino Project. Understanding current conditions is important to know how birds will interact with the proposed Casino Project and how Casino can manage risk to birds and bird habitats.

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