



Pre-Permitting Environmental / Socio-Economic Data Report Series

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# Report Series N- Terrestrial Wildlife and Habitats

## Report N-13 Appendices 2004-2007

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*Preliminary data. Do not cite or quote.*

The Pebble Partnership is providing environmental and socio-economic baseline data collected to inform the development of the Pebble Project to state and federal agencies, project stakeholders and the general public prior to project permitting as part of its commitment to full and open disclosure.

A comprehensive Environmental Baseline Document (EBD) will subsequently be prepared and appended to future project permit applications. The EBD will also be made publicly available when complete.

Collected for the Pebble Partnership by:



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## **AIRCRAFT GUIDELINES TO AVOID WILDLIFE DISTURBANCE**

Helicopter and fixed-wing airplane support are essential for engineering work and environmental studies at the Pebble mine site and along the road/port corridor. Disturbance by aircraft and associated activities can negatively affect wildlife, however. The federal Airborne Hunting Act (16 USC § 742j-1) and accompanying regulations (50 CFR Part 19) prohibit harassment of wildlife. Harassment is defined as activities that “disturb, worry, molest, rally, concentrate, harry, chase, drive, herd, or torment” animals. Potential penalties include fines, revocation of licenses, and forfeiture of aircraft. Therefore, safe and practical guidelines are needed to reduce potential impacts on wildlife while accommodating essential aircraft support. The following guidelines provide a general code of conduct and specific recommendations for pilots and their passengers. All aircraft need to adhere to these guidelines, recognizing that some exceptions will be necessary during approved wildlife surveys.

### **GENERAL GUIDELINES**

- Do not harass or pursue wildlife.
- Fly at 150 m (500 ft) above ground level or higher whenever possible.
- When wildlife are observed (especially bears, caribou, moose, wolves, raptor nests, flocks of waterfowl, seabirds, marine mammals), avoid flying directly overhead and maximize your lateral distance as quickly as possible, remaining at least 0.8 km (0.5 mi) away if possible.
- Avoid landing within 0.8 km (0.5 mi) of wildlife locations or key habitats [shown on the attached map]. This avoidance may require working at another site or coming back later.

These aircraft guidelines do not supersede established protocols developed to protect human life and safety.

### **BIRDS OF PREY (RAPTORS)**

Cliff-nesting raptors include Golden Eagles, Gyrfalcons, and Peregrine Falcons. Tree-nesting raptors include Bald Eagles, Osprey, and Northern Goshawks.

- Precautions should be exercised from 15 March-31 August (near cliffs) and 15 April-31 August (near tree nests) if raptor nests are occupied.
- Avoid low-level (<150 m or <500 ft above nest height) and/or close flights (0.8 km or 0.5 mi) near nest sites. Occasional flights may be necessary in this zone, but routine flights should be as far away as are practical. The goal here is to avoid repeated disturbance during nesting.
- Approach nests and potential habitat along a visible path. Do not approach cliff nests from behind, which increases the chances for alarm responses.
- Do not land on the brink or top of cliffs or river bluffs. If landings must occur, land and take off 0.8 km (0.5 mi) or more away and restrict the amount of time spent at these sites.

- Leave nesting areas when disturbance is obvious. If raptors are disturbed, quickly move away from the site.

## **SEABIRD COLONIES AND MARINE MAMMAL HAULOUTS**

Numerous seabirds nest in colonies and marine mammals use haulouts in areas near the port site alternatives. Follow these guidelines when in the area of the port sites:

- Restrictions are in effect from 1 May to 20 August for seabird colonies and throughout the year for marine mammal haulouts.
- Avoid low-level (<450 m or <1500 ft above colonies) and/or close flights (within 0.8 km or 0.5 mi lateral distance) near colonies and haulout areas. Occasional flights may be necessary in this zone, but routine flights should be as far away as practical.
- Do not land near (within 0.8 km or 0.5 mi of) colonies or haulouts. The amount of time spent near colonies and haulouts should be limited.
- If disturbance is obvious, leave quickly. If numerous birds are in the air or vocalizing, or seals/sea lions are entering the water, you are too close and are harassing the animals — leave immediately, flying directly away from the colony or haulout.

## **LAND MAMMALS**

Caribou, moose, and furbearers are active year-round, whereas bears are active seasonally between April and November. The most sensitive time for disturbance of caribou and moose is the calving period in May. Take special care to avoid disturbing large groups of caribou (most likely in July) and bears congregated along salmon streams (July-September). It will not be possible to avoid all disturbances of mammals, but do all you can to minimize it.

- Follow the guidelines above (altitude 150 m or 500 ft agl altitude, 0.8 km or 0.5 mi lateral distance) when animals are spotted. Do not make low passes to “get a better look.”
- Avoid flying directly over female animals with dependent young (caribou and moose cows with calves and bear sows with cubs) and avoid active bear and wolf dens at any time.
- Avoid flying directly over caribou groups or bears along streams at any time.
- Cross the path of moving animals at right angles behind them whenever possible, rather than directly approaching or following them.

**Preliminary Data Only  
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