NEW GOLD RAINY RIVER MINE
APPENDIX N
WILDLIFE REPORT

RAINY RIVER PROJECT – 2020 WILDLIFE MONITORING ACTIVITIES

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RAINY RIVER PROJECT – 2020 WILDLIFE MONITORING ACTIVITIES

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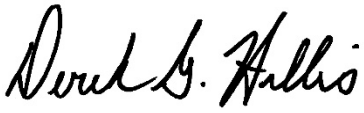

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Rainy River Mine (RRM) is owned by New Gold Inc. (New Gold). Acceptance of the Federal Environmental Assessment (EA) for the mine included mitigation measures and monitoring commitments for a variety of environmental components and species. The majority of these monitoring programs started during the construction phase with many of the monitoring components continuing through operations. This report details the wildlife study results for 2020 which included:

- Bat Monitoring;
- Barn Swallow (*Hirundo rustica*) nesting structure creation and monitoring;
- Bald Eagle (*Haleaeetus leucocephalus*) nest observation; and,
- Requirements of the Endangered Species Act Permit related to Bobolink (*Dolichonya oryzivorous*) and Eastern Whip-poor-will (*Anthrostomus vociferous*) including:
    - Point count surveys.
    - Acoustic monitoring, and,
    - Establishment of Overall Benefit areas.

It is noted that the bat and Species as Risk (SAR) monitoring programs had distinct reporting requirements and were provided under separate, with summaries of each of these programs provided within this report.

Wildlife sighting and mortalities by all New Gold staff are compiled as they occur. These sighting range from common species such as White-tailed deer (Odocoileus virginianus) to uncommon species like Golden Eagle (*Aquila chrysaetos*). In addition to live sightings RRM also tracks wildlife mortalities and attempts to determine if the cause of mortality was natural or result of mine activities. A total of 11 animal mortalities were reported in 2020 with deer deaths related to vehicle collisions being the most frequent.

There were a total of 144 bear sightings in 2020. On two occasions, the behaviour, location and frequency of bear sightings required trap and transfer of those individuals. Since removal form site neither of those transferred bears have been reported again.

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1.0 Introduction

1.1 Project Background

The Rainy River Mine (RRM) is owned by New Gold Inc. (New Gold). The mine is located approximately 65 km northwest of Fort Frances and 420 km northwest of Thunder Bay Ontario off of Highway 600 within the Township of Chapple and the District of Rainy River (**Figure 1.1**). Exploration on the Rainy River project began in 1967. Fifty years later (i.e., 2017) production commenced and New Gold now operates a gold mine that is comprised of both open pit and underground workings. The mine is currently approved through provincial Environmental Compliance Approval (ECA) Number 7004-BC7KQ5 for a maximum mill throughput of 32,400 t/day and a quarterly average of 27,000 t/day. At total build out the site will occupy approximately 6,100 ha comprised of:

- An open pit and underground mine portal;
- Waste rock stockpiles;
- Rock crushing facilities;
- Ore storage facilities;
- A Tailings Management Area (TMA);
- Watercourse diversions and site drainage works,
- A fuel tank farm;
- Explosives manufacturing and storage facilities;
- A 230 kilovolt transmission line; and,
- Associated buildings and infrastructure.

1.2 Objective and Scope

The RRM covers 11 major ecosites and therefore has a diverse composition of local flora and fauna. The Environmental Approval for the mine came with over 1,400 conditions in the form of both mitigation measures during construction and operations and also in the form of monitoring commitments to confirm the assumptions reported in the EA documentation and assessment. These monitoring programs and commitments range in complexity from simple wildlife logs to rigorous Species at Risk (SAR) monitoring conducted to meet requirements of a specific permit. The latter type of monitoring are normally conducted by outside contractors and follow prescriptive protocols and are conducted according to established monitoring timeframes.

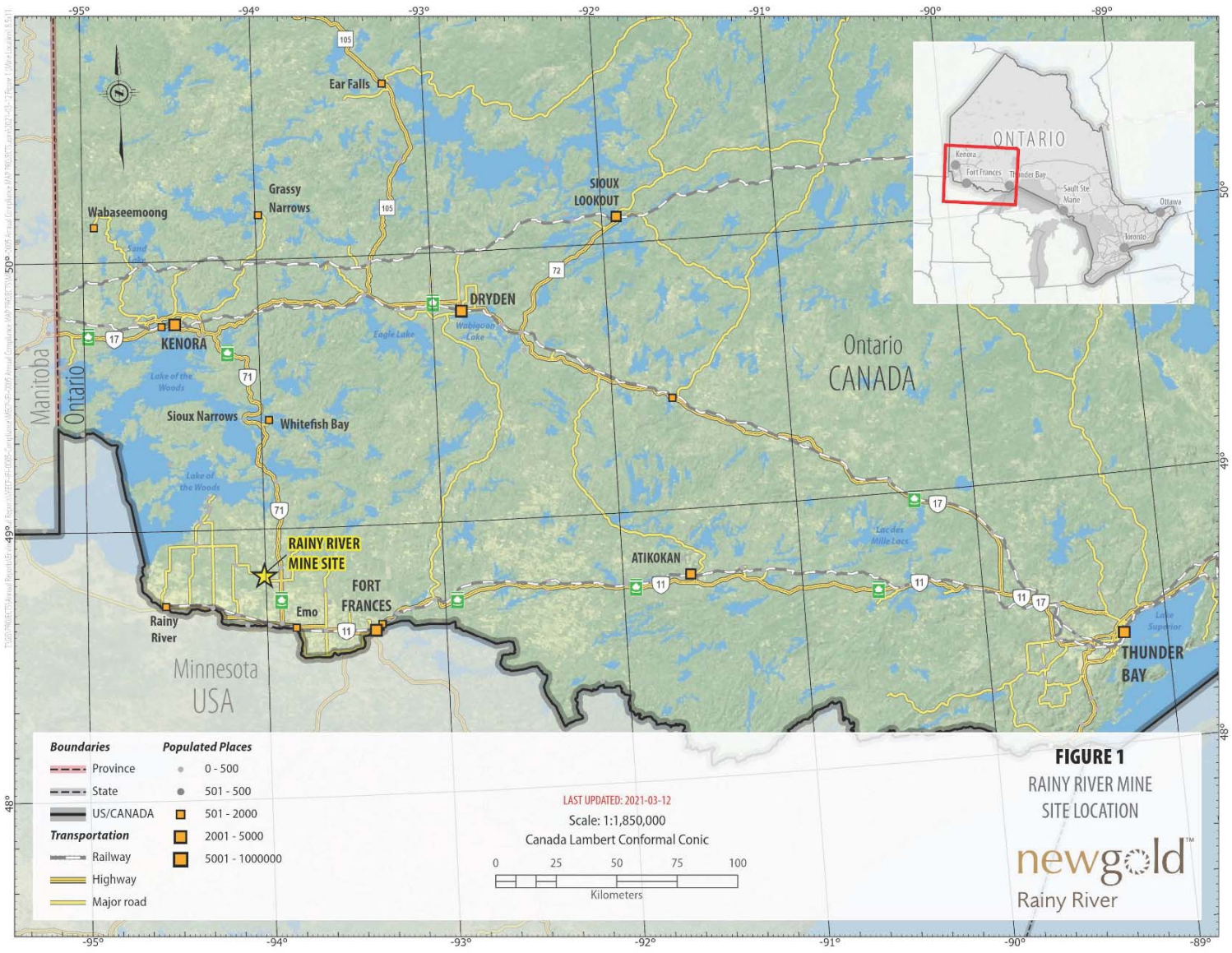

Figure 1.1: Location of the New Gold Rainy River Mine.

2.0 Methodology

2.1 Bat Monitoring

The detailed methods and results for the Bat Monitoring program are provided under separate cover (NBS 2021a) and summarized herein.

Bat acoustic monitoring was conducted between June 2 and July 2 2020 for a time period of 30 nights at five previously established monitoring locations around the mine (**Figure 2.1**). This period covers the maternal brood rearing period for the two species at risk (Little Brown Myotis and Northern Myotis) occurring in the area.

Bat recorders were used to perform the acoustic monitoring with each detector configured to begin recording when ultrasonic signals (>16 kHz) greater than 18 decibels (dB) above the noise floor rolling average were detected. A 2 second recording was saved each time the recorder was triggered. They were programmed to record from about 1 hour before sunset until one hour after sunrise (i.e. 20:09 CDT to 06:15 CDT).

Recorders were tested before and after deployment to ensure proper function using a Wildlife Acoustic ultrasonic calibrator.

Recordings were identified to species using Kaleidoscope analysis software (Wildlife Acoustics) and Myostis sp. sonograms were verified manually using frequency of maximum energy, minimum and maximum frequency, and call duration. Sonograms of "unknown" recordings were scanned manually for additional records of Myotis sp. where identifiable to genus. Differentiating between Little Brown and Northern Myotis can be difficult and these species were grouped for some analyses.

2.2 Species at Risk Monitoring

The requirements of the species at risk monitoring undertaken in 2020 included point counts for Whip-poor-will in the Peripheral Area of the mine, Whip-poor-will sound monitoring, SAR staff awareness training as well as incidental staff sightings of SAR. Although not part of the SAR permit requirements monitoring of local Bald Eagle nests, classified provincially as special concern, and Barn Swallow nesting structures, classified provincially and federally as threatened, were also required and conducted in 2020. The detailed method and results of the full New Gold SAR monitoring is provided under separate cover (NBS 2021b), and summarized herein.

2.2.1 Whip-Poor-will Monitoring

Whip-poor-will surveys were completed on June 1 and July 2 2020 at the 24 survey points near the mine site footprint that were sampled in previous years (Wood 2019a). Survey locations are shown on **Figure 2.2**.

Methods followed the *Whip-poor-will Roadside Survey Participant's Guide* (BSC 2012). Surveys started at least 30 minutes after sunset on calm, clear nights with little or no cloud cover, no

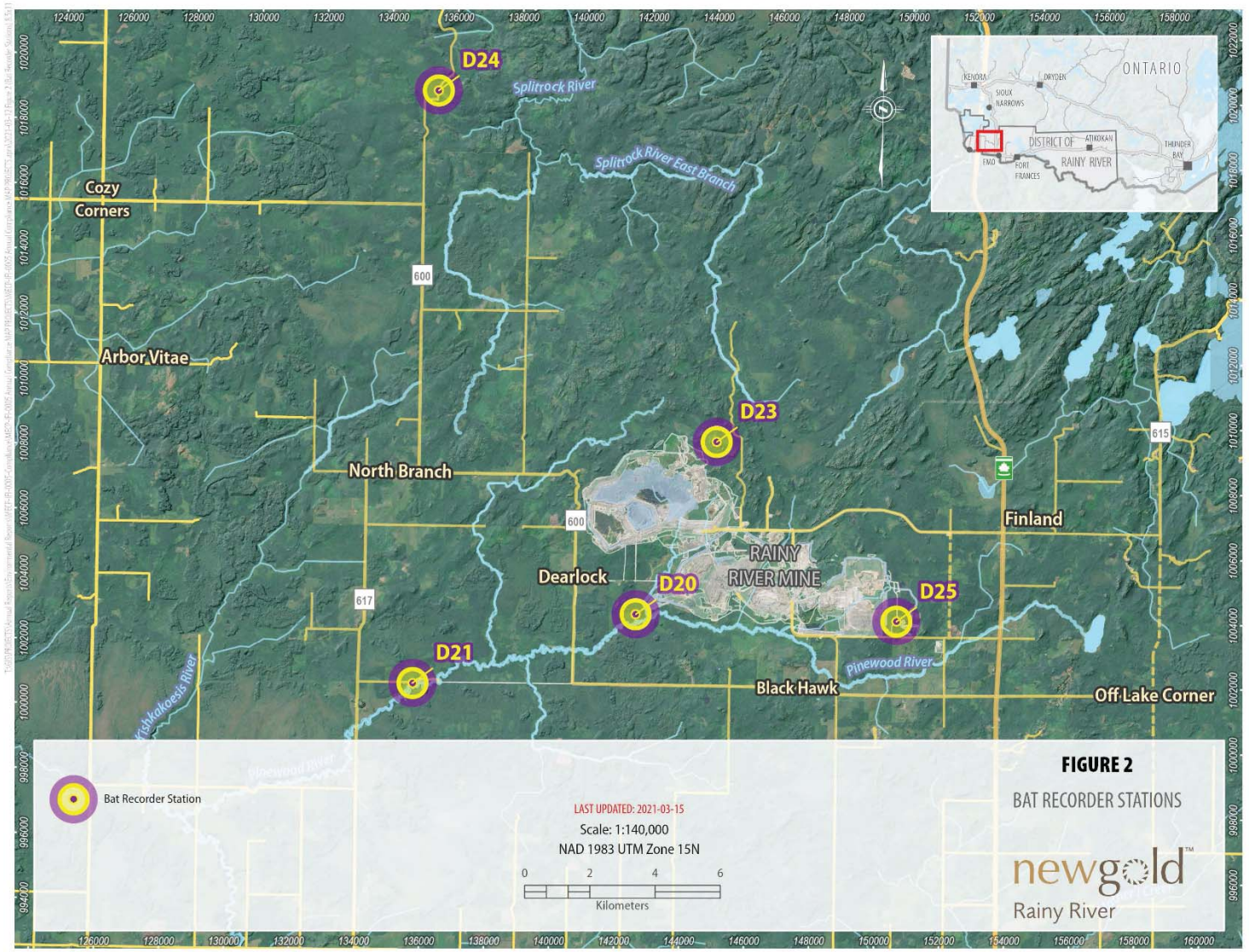

Figure 2.1: Bat Recorder Stations Monitored at New Gold in 2020.

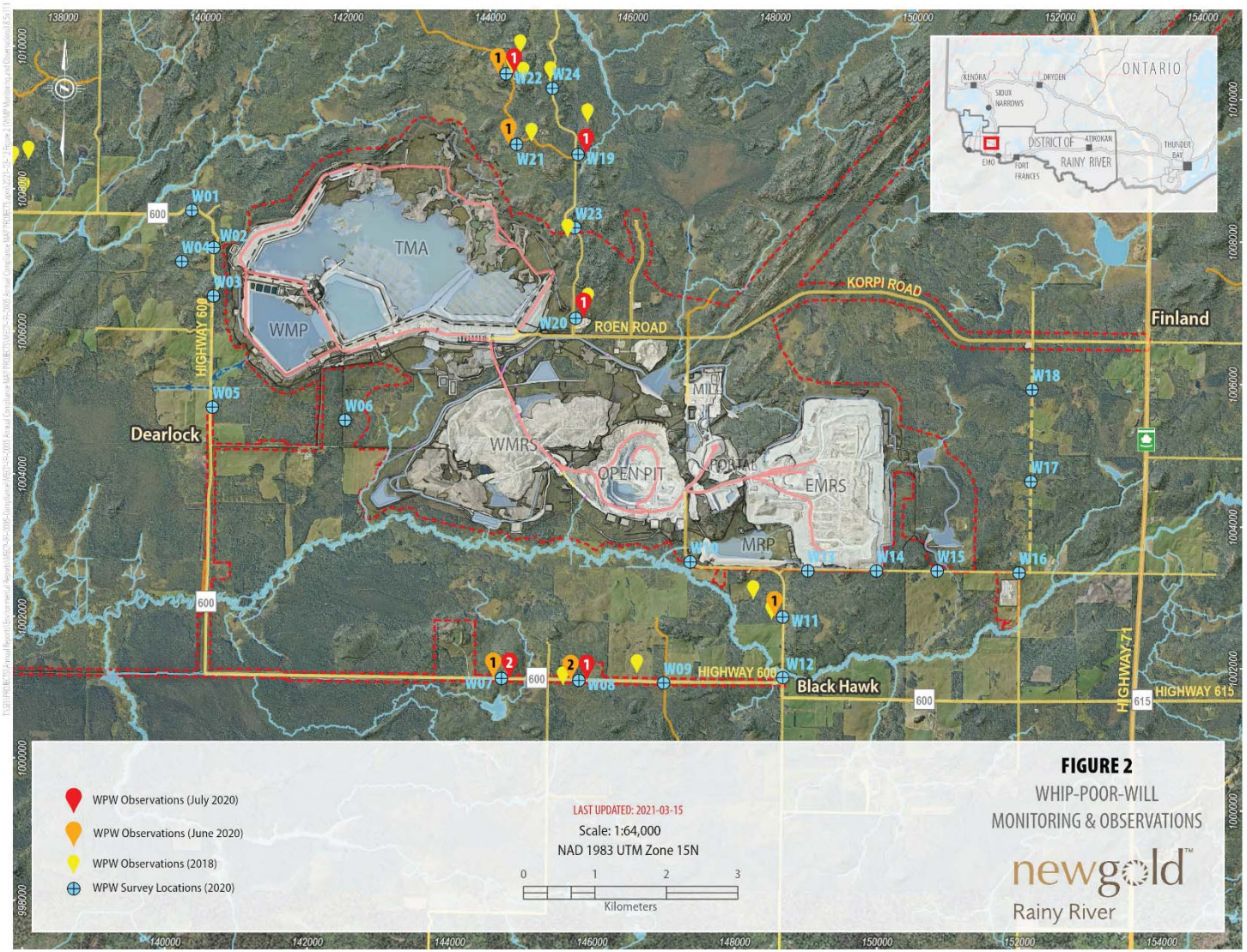

Figure 2.2: Whip-poor-will Monitoring Sites and Observations at New Gold in 2020.

precipitation and winds of no greater than 3 on the Beaufort Scale. Surveys lasted six minutes at each station. Distance and direction to calling Whip-poor-wills were estimated.

2.2.2 Whip-Poor-will Sound Monitoring

Condition 4.2 (b) and 6.2 (c) of the ESA permit requires an acoustic audit accompany the Whip-poor-will monitoring studies. The audit is conducted to determine whether activity at the mine site results in sound levels exceeding 50 dB(A) (on a 1-hour basis).

Acoustic monitoring was conducted at one location north and one location south of the mine site as shown in Figure 1 of the Acoustic Audit Report (IEC 2020). Sound levels were measured on a 15-minute basis throughout the program using Larson Davis 831C sound level meters. The meters were factory calibrated in February 2019 and were field calibrated at the start and end of each recording timeframe. Meters were set with an "event trigger" of 50 dB(A) to facilitate interpretation of any exceedances. Sound results, in particular any exceedances of the 50 dB(A) threshold were cross-referenced with the meteorological data collected at the site to remove exceedances not resultant from mine activity.

2.2.3 Bald Eagle Nest Monitoring

Two previously documented Bald Eagle nests on Highway 600 near Blackhawk and on Jones Road (**Figure 2.3**) were monitored for activity.

2.2.4 Barn Swallow Monitoring

Monitoring of Barn Swallow nest structures (**Figure 2.3**) was conducted on up to six different occasions in 2020. Structures were examined for the presence of nests, Barn Swallow activity in the area, and evidence of predators at the structures.

2.2.5 SAR Awareness Training

All staff employed by New Gold or their contractors are required to undergo SAR awareness training prior to commencing work on site. A log of trained staff is provided in Appendix 6 of the SAR report (NBS 2021b).

2.2.6 SAR Sightings

Sighting of SAR in and around the New Gold site are provided in Appendix 5 of the SAR report (NBS 2021b).

2.3 Wildlife Sightings

New Gold maintains a wildlife sightings database that includes SAR (See Section 2.2.6) and non-SAR species observations within the study area. These incidental observations by New Gold staff and contractors include the behaviour, location, number of individuals and whether the individuals were dead or alive, when possible.

2.4 Mortality Log

As mentioned, the wildlife sightings log maintained by New Gold's environmental department includes if the animal was alive or dead. When mortalities are reported, the environmental department investigates the location and determines the cause, whether it be natural or mine related, with respect to mortality. Instances of mortality determined to be mine related are reported to the proper agency, (i.e., migratory birds to ECCC as incidental take), if required.

2.5 Other

Since 2017, two (2) New Gold environmental staff have been MNRF trained in bear trap and transport procedures. As part of the yearly trap and transfer activities a log is required to be provided to the MNRF (New Gold, 2021). A summary of these activities are provide herein.

Black Bear are a regular occurrence at the mine site. Sometimes encounters with bears are a safety concern for either humans or the bears. In some instances a decision is made to engage in trap and transfer of these individuals. All reports of bear sightings in work areas require attention from the Environmental Department. If encountered in work areas they are hazed out of the area using non-lethal means (i.e., noise bangers) in an attempt to prevent habituation. Instances of hazing also include removal of any attractants that may increase bear activity in a given area or result in human safety concerns.

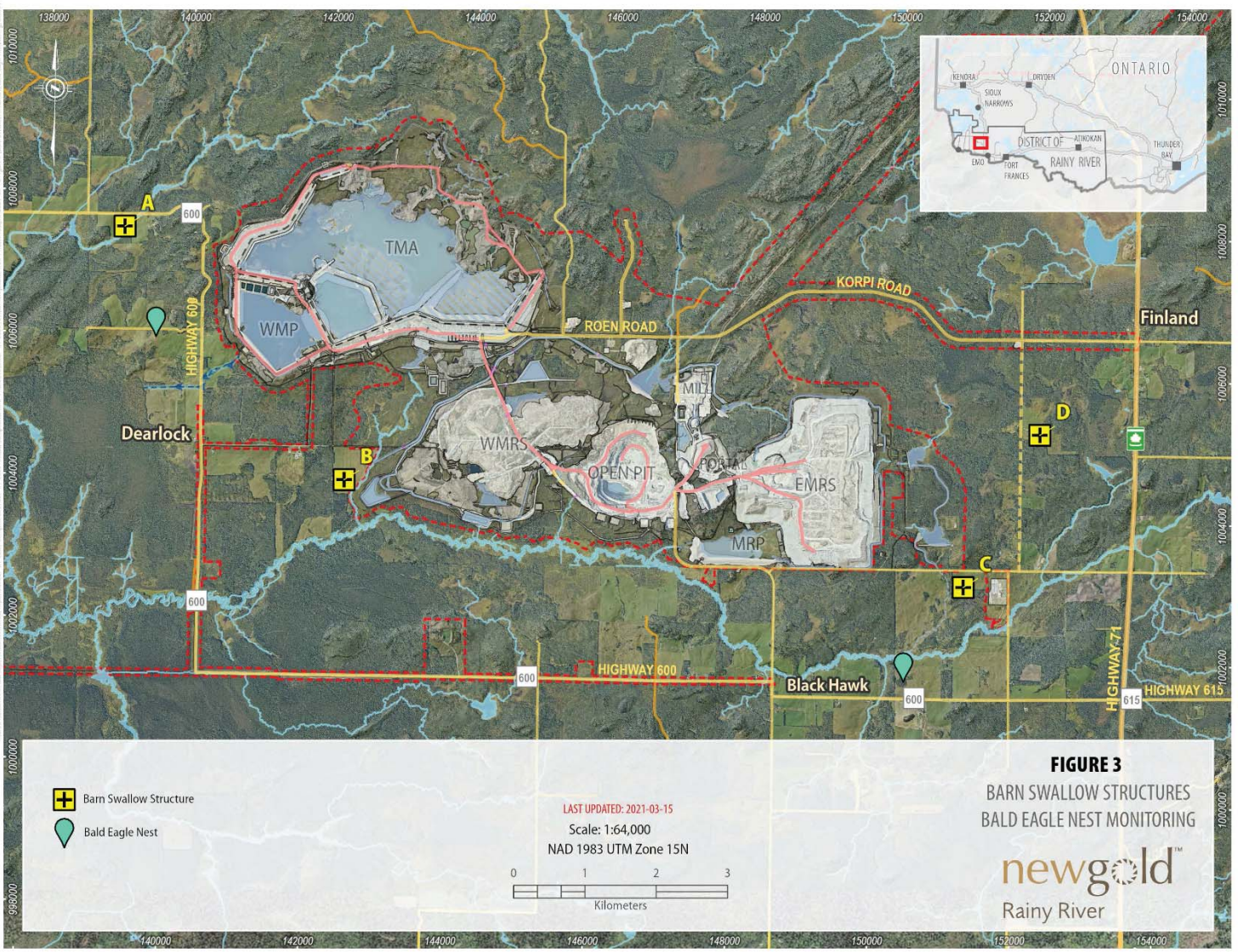

Figure 2.3: Bald Eagle nest and Barn Swallow Structures Monitoring at New Gold in 2020.

3.0 Results

3.1 Bat Monitoring

A total of 7,973 bat passes were recorded at the five recorders between June 2 and July 1 2020. This included 53 passes of *Myotis* (Little Brown Myotis, Northern Myotis, and unidentified Myotis combined). All six bat species previously detected in 2012 to 2018 were recorded in 2020 (**Table 3.1**). The total number of bat passes (all species combined) in 2020 generally increased through the sampling period with a peak of 658 passes on July 1 (**Figure 3.1**).

Table 3.1. Bat species confirmed present by year at New Gold project (2012 to 2018 data from Wood 2019).

Species	2012	2013	2015	2017	2018	2020
Big Brown Bat (*Eptesicus fuscus*)	-	X	X	X	X	X
Silver-haired Bat (*Lasionycteris noctivagans*)	X	X	X	X	X	X
Eastern Red Bat (*Lasiurus borealis*)	X	-	X	X	X	X
Hoary Bat (*Lasiurus cinereus*)	X	X	X	X	X	X
Little Brown Myotis *(Myotis lucifugus)*	X	X	X	X	X	X
Northern Myotis (*Myotis septentrionalis*)	X	X	X	-	-	X

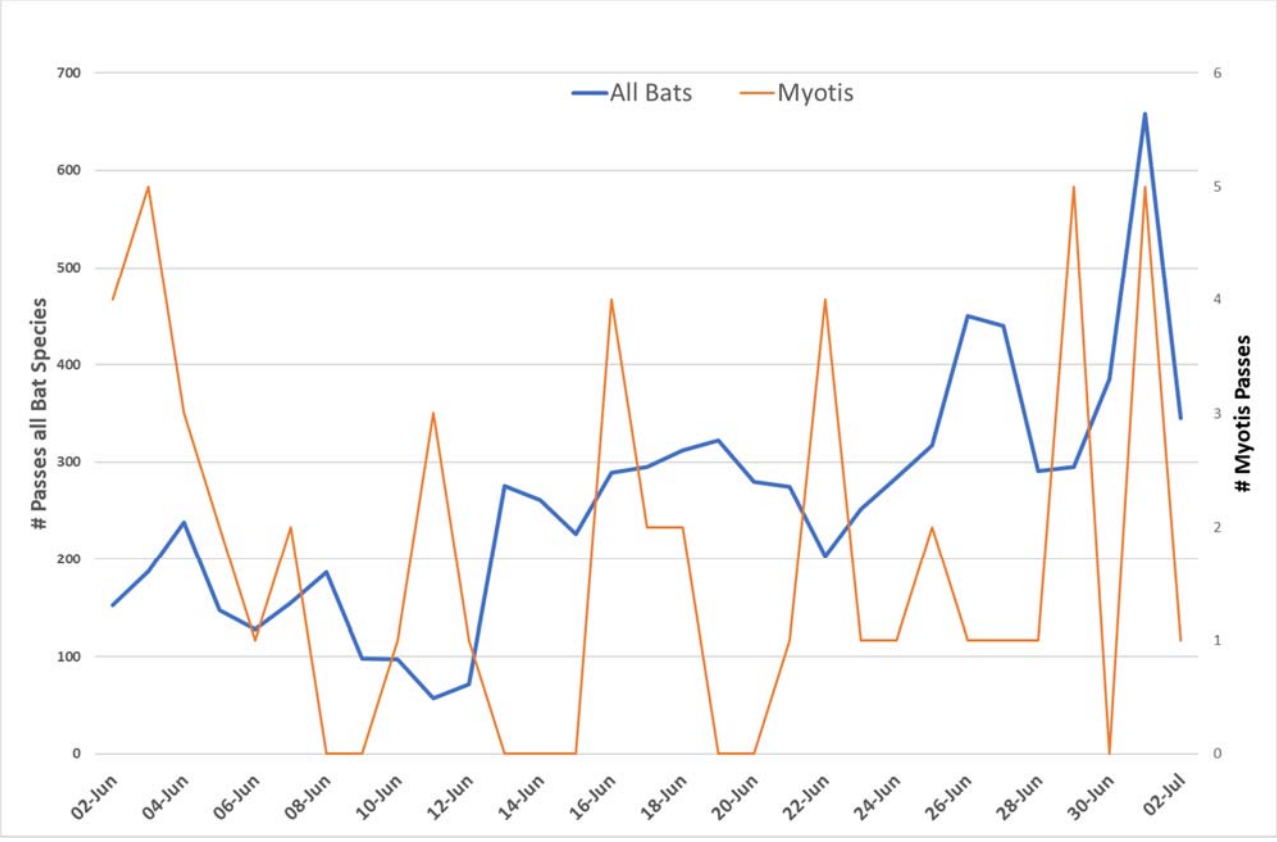

Figure 3.1: Bat passes by date all recording, June 2 to July 1 2020.

Myotis species were detected at all survey stations in 2020 but were too infrequent to show any evident differences between stations. Far fewer *Myotis* bats were detected in 2020 than previous years. The total number of *Myotis* passes declined from 52.2 /night in 2015 to 21.3/night in 2017, with a further decline to 0.35/night in 2020 (**Figure 3.2**, **Table 3.2**). Other bat species did not show the same decline (**Figure 3.2**, **Table 3.2**). The decline in *Myotis* at the New Gold site was almost certainly caused by White Nose Syndrome rather than mine-related impacts. White Nose Syndrome (caused by the fungus *Pseudogymnoascus destructans*) was first detected in upstate New York in 2006 and has since killed millions of bats throughout eastern North America (White-Nose Syndrome Response Team 2021). Little Brown Myotis and Northern Myotis are the two species most impacted by White Nose Syndrome (White-Nose Syndrome Response Team 2021). The disease was first detected in northwestern Ontario in 2013-2014 and confirmed in the Lake of the Woods area in 2016-2017 (White-Nose Syndrome Response Team 2021). Although northwestern Ontario monitoring data are unavailable, *Myotis* numbers dropped by about 90% between 2016 and 2020 on six survey routes in northern Minnesota during the same period (Catton 2020).

Table 3.2. Species at Risk Bat passes recorded by year (2015 to 2017 data from Wood 2019. 2018 data are excluded due to incomplete data caused by recorder failure).

Year	Detector	Little Brown Myotis		Northern Myotis		Unidentified Myotis sp.		All Myotis sp.	
		Total Passes	Passes/ night	Total Passes	Passes/ night	Total Passes	Passes/ night	Total Passes	Passes/ night
2015	D20	418	14.41	4	0.14	629	21.69	1051	36.24
	D21	3880	149.23	0	0	1272	48.92	5152	198.15
	D23	90	3.6	11	0.44	224	8.96	325	13.00
	D24	510	16.45	5	0.16	249	8.03	764	24.65
	D25	23	0.77	2	0.07	39	1.3	64	2.13
	Total	**4921**	**34.9**	**22**	**0.16**	**2413**	**17.11**	**7356**	**52.17**
2016	D20	7	0.47	0	0	111	7.4	118	7.87
	D21	330	27.5	0	0	243	20.25	573	47.75
	D23	10	0.67	2	0.136	19	1.27	31	2.07
	D24	23	1.77	0	0	69	5.31	92	7.08
	D25	10	0.71	0	0	17	1.21	27	1.93
	Total	**380**	**5.51**	**2**	**0.03**	**459**	**6.65**	**841**	**12.19**
2017	D20	11	0.35	0	0	6	0.19	17	0.55
	D21	2692	134.6	0	0	246	12.3	2938	146.90
	D23	4	0.13	0	0	1	0.03	8	0.27
	D24	0	0	0	0	34	1.17	34	1.17
	D25	2	0.06	0	0	3	0.1	5	0.16
	Total	**2709**	**19.21**	**0**	**0**	**290**	**2.06**	**3002**	**21.29**
2020	D20	3	0.10	0	0	9	0.30	12	0.40
	D21	5	0.17	0	0	1	0.03	6	0.20
	D23	5	0.17	0	0	0	0	5	0.17
	D24	7	0.23	1	0.03	3	0.10	10	0.33
	D25	12	0.40	0	0	7	0.23	19	0.63
	Total	**32**	**0.21**	**1**	**0.007**	**20**	**0.13**	**52**	**0.35**

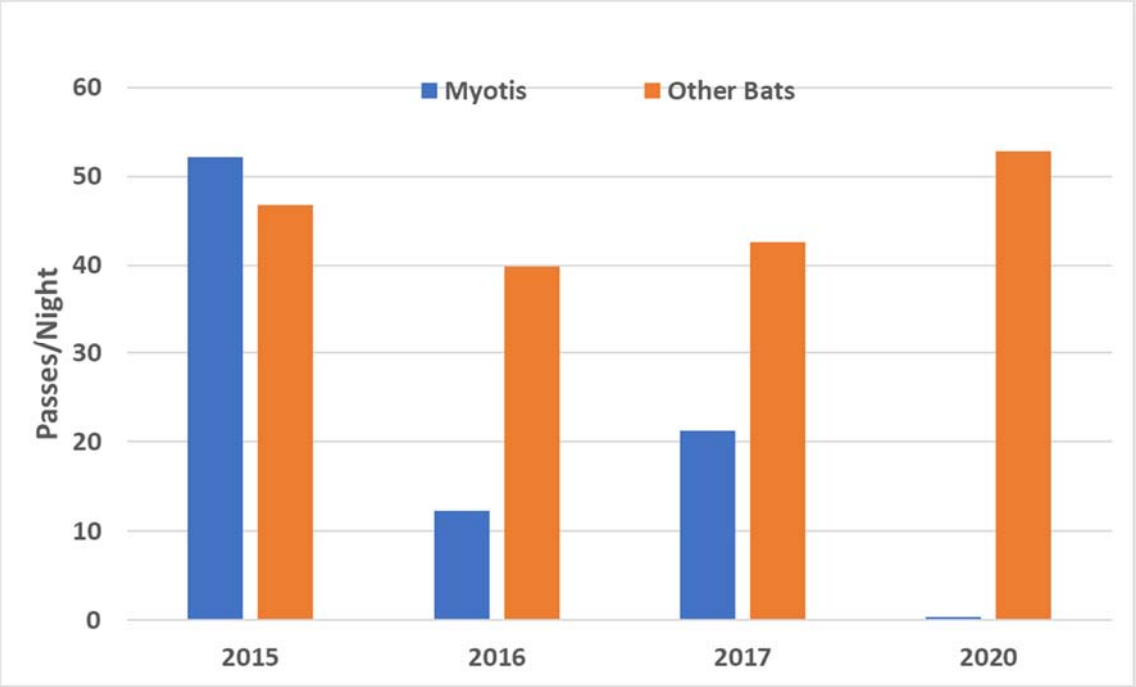

Figure 3.2. Total passes of Species at Risk bats (*Myotis* species) and other bats 2015 to 2020. Notes: All monitoring locations pooled and 2018 data are excluded.

In conclusion, *Myotis* were detected at all monitoring stations in 2020 but numbers have declined substantially since 2015 at all five stations. Other bat species (non *Myotis*) did not show the same decline. The decline in *Myotis* is consistent with declines across eastern North America caused by White Nose Syndrome rather than localized mine related impacts.

3.2 Species at Risk Monitoring

3.2.1 Whip-Poor-will Monitoring

Seven Whip-poor-will were recorded during each survey in 2020 with individuals being detected at a total of eight stations although only three stations (W07, W08, W22) had birds on both surveys (**Figure 2.2**).

Whip-poor-wills were detected in similar numbers in 2018 and 2020. In both years, activity was clustered south of the mine at stations W7 to W11 and north at stations W19 to W24 (**Figure 2.2**). No Whip-poor-wills were detected at stations to the east and west of the mine footprint in either year. Whip-poor-will numbers did decline before 2018. A total of 19, 14, and 9 Whip-poor-wills were recorded in 2015, 2016, and 2017 respectively at the same survey stations (Wood 2019b). These results suggest that Whip-poor-wills declined close to the mine until the site reached its full footprint around 2018 when the numbers apparently stabilized. Continued monitoring will help clarify this trend. Alternatively, Whip-poor-wills declined by 3.36% annually in Ontario between 2002 and 2012, probably due to reduced availability of insect prey and agricultural practices in the winter range in Mexico and Central America as well as the North

American breeding range (Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks 2019). The decline at the RRM site may reflect this range-wide decline rather than mine related effects

3.2.2 Whip-Poor-will Sound Monitoring

A total of five of the 334 hours of measured acoustic data were in excess of the 50 dB(A) threshold at each monitoring location following removal of exceedances that resulted from meteorological events. A review of these five remaining hours indicated that those exceedances were not the result of New Gold operations but rather were the result of bird calls in the immediate vicinity of the sound recording microphones. Therefore, none of the exceedances of the 50 dB(A) on a 1-hour basis were the result of the RRM operations and the mine remained in compliance and no further sound mitigation is needed at this time.

3.2.3 Bald Eagle Nests

The Bald Eagle nest at Blackhawk had two chicks on June 2 2020 (**Figure 3.3**). The chicks were fully feathered out and flapping wings. By the July 2 2020 inspection the nest was empty. Successful fledging of young from this nest indicates that these Bald Eagles are tolerant of the levels of noise and activities associated with the mine site.

The nest on Jones Road had no sign of adults or young on June 2 or July 3 2020. This nest was in good repair and could be reused in the future.

Figure 3.3. Active Bald Eagle nest at Blackhawk on June 2 2020 (photo by Brian Ratcliff).

3.2.4 Barn Swallow Nesting Structures

No nesting activity was observed at any of the nest structures. The failure of Barn Swallow to use the nest structures to date may reflect the high availability of preferred nest sites on barns, houses, and other structures in the area. Buildings are often used colonially (COSEWIC 2011) and nest site availability is therefore unlikely to limit the local population size.

3.2.5 SAR Wildlife Sightings

The details of all SAR sightings are provided in Appendix 5 of the SAR report (NBS 2021b). A summary of these sightings include:

- American White Pelican (listed provincially as Threatened, not listed federally) on 13 dates between April 23 and August 14.
- Bald Eagle (listed provincially as Special Concern, not listed federally) on 19 dates mostly in winter, spring, and fall.
- Golden Eagle (listed provincially as Endangered, not listed federally) on October 1.
- Common Nighthawk (listed as Special Concern provincially and federally) on June 1 during the Whip-poor-will survey
- Barn Swallows (listed provincially and federally as Threatened) on seven dates between May 20 and August 17
- Bobolink (listed provincially and federally as Threatened) on May 22 and May 27
- Snapping Turtle (listed as Special Concern provincially and federally) on June 12 at the Pumphouse Gravel Pile.

3.3 Wildlife Sightings

In addition to the SAR observations above nearly 40 other species were reported to have been observed on and surrounding the site in 2020. **Table 3.3** below provides a summary of the wildlife reported in 2020. It should be noted that wildlife observations reported in programs such as at New Gold tend to under report the overall number of observations that occur and those instances that are reported tend to be skewed towards either SAR or to larger game animals. Additionally it should be noted that some reports are received by staff not trained in wildlife identification and therefore not all reports are 100 % accurate. For example, a sighting of a wolf could have been a coyote.

There were nearly 700 total wildlife observations reported in 2020. White-tailed deer, American Black Bear and Canada Goose were the three most plentiful species reported with 237, 144 and 77 individuals reported, respectively. Other species such as American Raven, Red-tailed Hawk and Pine Marten were only reported once in 2020 but are assumed to be much more plentiful around the site. Overall, there are a number of wildlife species that continue to be observed in and around the mine site.

Table 3.3: Wildlife Observations at the Rainy River Mine, 2020

Species	Number of Observations	Number of Individuals	Number of Dates
White-tailed Deer	78	237	59
Bear	93	144	58
Geese	4	77	4
Sandhill Crane	13	24	10
Grouse	7	21	7
Ducks	5	16	5
Red Fox	15	16	15
Swan	7	15	6
Wolf	8	13	8
Raven	2	13	2
Turkey Vulture	4	12	4
Great Blue Heron	10	10	10
Northern Harrier Hawk	7	8	6
Great Grey Owl	7	7	6
Other Owls	7	7	7
Greater Yellowlegs	3	7	3
Snowshoe Hare	6	6	6
Garter Snake	5	5	5
Killdeer	4	5	4
Porcupine	4	4	4
River Otter	3	4	3
Cliff Swallow	2	4	2
Coyote	3	3	3
Groundhog	2	2	2
Skunk	2	2	2
Common Bittern	1	2	1
Bobcat	1	1	1
Frog	1	1	1
Pine Marten	1	1	1
Moose	1	1	1
Red Tail Hawk	1	1	1
Weasel	1	1	1
American Goldfinch	1	1	1
European Starling	1	1	1
Loon	2	3	2
Racoon	1	1	1
Red-winged Blackbird	1	1	1
Sandpiper	1	1	1

3.4 Mortality Log

Of the nearly 700 sightings there were 11 mortalities reported in and around the mine site. Of these 11, seven were White-tailed Deer. Other wildlife that were found dead included one European Starling, a female Hooded Merganser, one Garter Snake and one Red Squirrel. The majority of the observations of mortality were the result of vehicle collisions, deer in particular. These collisions are most frequent either on Korpi Road, the main road to the mine, or on the Haul Roads within the mine site. When animals were found dead they were moved to areas to decrease any further danger to scavengers or mine workers. As a result of this practice there were no predatory/scavenging wildlife mortalities in 2020 while feeding on roadkill.

Table 3.4 provides the 2020 observed mortalities including the date, species and locations.

Table 3.4: Wildlife Mortality Log RRM, New Gold 2020

Species	Date	Locations / Description
Deer	09-Jan-20	Haul Rd. 8
Red Squirrel	21-May-20	Korpi Rd.
Female Hooded Merganser	06-Jul-20	Main access road
Snake	14-Aug-20	Crushed by rig mats
European Starling	26-Aug-20	employee parking lot
Deer	01-Oct-20	Gallinger Rd.
Deer	26-Oct-20	Pinewood River Rd. - access to sampling location
Deer	27-Oct-20	Korpi Rd. ditch
Deer	07-Nov-20	Gallinger Rd. Ditch
Deer	08-Nov-20	Haul Rd. 8 around WMRS
Deer	30-Dec-20	Middle of Road

3.5 Other

In 2020 there were 144 sightings of Black Bear reported on the site. Most observations are of bears wandering around the site either crossing roads or foraging on the edge of a road. However, 14 of those observations were bears heading to or in the municipal dump or in a dumpster on site. All instances of bear reports in work areas were evaluated by the RRM environmental department to determine if attractants (i.e., garbage) were present that required removal.

On two (2) occasions (September 29th and October 5th) traps were set and later (September 30th and October 7th) successfully captured two individual problem bears (i.e., no fear of humans and/or reported in the same location). This work was conducted by trained individuals under an Authorization to Trap and Transport Black Bears permitted by the MNRF. In both instances the individuals bears were transported down Tri-Lake Road (New Gold). Since trap and transfer of these bears, neither has been reported on site again.

4.0 References

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