

Identifier	Topic	Reference to EIS/EA Report	Summary of Previous Comment	Proponent's Response to Previous Comment	Follow-up comment/ Request for Information	New Proponent Response	Subsequent Comment
			<i>Date: August 2015</i> <a href="#">MNRF 11B</a>	<i>Date: October 2016</i>	<i>Date: April 2017</i>	<i>Date: June 2017</i>	
MNRF 11B-2	Terrestrial Habitat – Valued Ecosystem Components (VEC)		<p>MNRF feels that only measuring habitat presence and suitability in some cases, rather than actual habitat use by species and habitat presence/suitability in combination, is inappropriate and inconsistent with how other VECs are being measured. Specifically, the baseline studies as outlined in table 2.2 of the Terrestrial Ecology TSD, while valued, do not clearly link the VEC selected to the indicator.</p> <p>MNRF also continues to feel that some of the representative species selected as a VECs are inappropriate and a pathway of effect is not being adequately considered. For example, snapping turtles are not a good species to represent reptiles and amphibians for the reason that they are fairly generalist in habitat use.</p> <p>MNRF requests the proponent provide documentation on how the VEC's were selected (i.e. through baseline studies, feedback from regulators as they state). As well as provide a description/explanation on how the VEC's can act as a surrogate for other valued species, considering MNRF's comments.</p>	<p>Valued Ecosystem Components (VECs) are considered to be receptors for project effects. Given the large number of species that could potentially interact with the Project, it is neither possible, nor necessary to attempt to measure effects on all possible receptors. Most VECs represent a broader group of species or a particular habitat type important for a variety of wildlife (i.e., provide ecological and assessment redundancy). Consequently, understanding the potential effects of the Project on the selected criteria provides inferences about effects on other wildlife species or guilds with similar life history traits and habitat requirements.</p> <p>Each VEC is represented in the assessment by measurement indicators. Measurement indicators are features that may be changed by the Project (i.e., survival and reproduction, habitat availability, and habitat distribution) and may affect the maintenance of self-sustaining and ecologically effective populations for the VEC. Effects on VECs are considered through a two-step screening process, first for potential interactions and secondly for measurable change, allowing the assessment to focus on where effects are likely to occur. Each measurement indicator requires specific measures that can be quantified and assessed. Additional information on how VECs were selected and how they can be used as surrogate species is provided below.</p> <p>Bald eagle was observed in the RSA during baseline surveys (Section 2.2.3.2.1 in the Terrestrial Ecology TSD). Bald eagle is listed as a species of special concern under the ESA (2007). Breeding habitat for this species is limited in Ontario and eagles can be sensitive to noise disturbance and human activity during nesting. Bald eagle may also be affected by changes to water quantity and quality, as this species is piscivorous. As a top avian predator this species can be a keystone species and will accumulate contaminants. Bald eagle can act as a surrogate for other top-predator piscivorous birds (e.g., osprey).</p> <p>Common nighthawk was observed in the RSA during baseline surveys (Section 2.2.3.2.1 in Terrestrial Ecology TSD). Nighthawk is listed as a species of special concern under the ESA (2007). Common nighthawk represents a guild of species that forage on insects while flying through the air and require edge habitat and forest openings. Common nighthawk can be used as a surrogate for other species that use similar habitats and are aerial insectivores, including eastern whip-poor-will.</p> <p>Canada warbler was observed in the RSA during baseline field surveys (Section 2.2.3.2.1 in Terrestrial Ecology TSD). Canada warbler is listed a threatened species under the SARA (2002) and a species of special concern under the ESA (2007). Canada warbler can be used as a surrogate for other species that use coniferous, deciduous, moist mixed forest, and regenerating habitats, such as magnolia warbler.</p> <p>American marten can be used as an indicator for species that require mature and old growth forests. Additionally, American marten can be used as a surrogate for black bear and lynx as these species are expected to be similarly affected by potential increases in harvest pressure on furbearer populations, for example. No American marten were observed in the RSA during field surveys.</p> <p>Muskrat uses wetland habitats and may be sensitive to the physical loss or alteration of wetland vegetation, loss or alterations of flows and drainage, and changes in water levels. Snapping turtle also uses wetland habitats and as a long lived, top predator species will accumulate contaminants. This species</p>	No further MNRF comment.	Acknowledged	N/A

Version 3 Hammond Reef Gold Project EIS/EA – Addendum (Part B)  
Responses to Provincial Information Requests

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				<p>is therefore sensitive to the physical loss or alteration of wetland vegetation, loss or alterations of flows and drainage, changes in water levels, and changes to surface water and groundwater quality (including changes from air emissions and deposition and accidental spills). Other VECs that were assessed for effects from changes to wetland habitat loss, changes to flows and water levels, and changes to water quality are Wetlands (Section 3.3 in the Terrestrial Ecology TSD) and the Aquatic Environment (Section 3.0 in the Aquatic Environment TSD). Snapping turtle, muskrat, wetlands, and aquatic environment VECs are considered to be surrogates for all reptiles and amphibians.</p> <p>Moose were observed in the RSA during field surveys.</p> <p>Moose were observed in the RSA during field surveys. Moose are an important subsistence and cultural species and an important prey species for large carnivores. Recent surveys suggest moose populations are decreasing in parts of Ontario. The moose VEC can act as a surrogate species for other ungulates such as white-tailed deer as both of these species are hunted and use similar habitats.</p> <p>The VEC of upland birds is considered to be a surrogate for all upland breeding birds (i.e., passerine species), including species at risk.</p>			