
**AN ASSESSMENT OF PERCH USE BY BALD EAGLES ALONG THE
HAINES HIGHWAY, FALL AND WINTER, 2014**

INTERIM REPORT

Prepared for

DOWL HKM
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by

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ABR conducted a second year of surveys to assess the abundance and distribution of Bald Eagles during the fall and early winter along the Haines Highway in 2014. As in 2013, 3 primary survey techniques were employed: Road Census (driving), Index Site Counts (ground-based at 4 established stations), and Perch Survey Zone Assessments (ground-based, particularly in the Council Grounds area, MP 19.4–21.5; Ritchie et al. 2014).

Eight surveys were conducted between 14 October and 18 December, similar to the survey period and level of effort conducted in 2014 (9 survey days, 16 October–16 December 2014). This interim report provides a general summary of 2014 results, particularly in regard to Perch Survey Zone Assessments in the Council Grounds area. More detailed summaries will be provided in a final report.

Overall, the number of Bald Eagles using the area in 2014 appeared to be fewer than reported in 2013 (Ritchie et al. 2014). Peak use in 2014 (as determined from Index Site Counts) was 312 eagles on 27 October (range 53–312), compared to peak numbers on 13 November 2013 (516 eagles, range 125–516; Ritchie et al. 2014). The apparent lower use of the area in 2014 also was reflected in fewer Bald Eagles and perch locations recorded in 2014 compared to 2013 in the Council Grounds area (Perch Survey Zones 2–5): 271 Bald Eagles at 209 perch locations in

2014, compared to 553 Bald Eagles at 442 perch locations in 2013 (Ritchie et al. 2014). Most perched Bald Eagles recorded in the road corridor study area (90.6%) were encountered in the Council Grounds, however, similar to observations made in 2013 (Ritchie et al. 2014). Generally, numbers of eagles declined after late November in both years.

In an effort to assess the relative importance of perches and specific locations of perches along the Haines Highway corridor, all locations of perched Bald Eagles within Perch Survey Zones were digitized after the field season (ArcMap v. 10.2 software; Ritchie et al. 2014). Overviews of use (numbers of eagles and density of use) during the study period in 2014 and compared to use in 2013 are provided in Figures 1 and 2a and 2b. Geospatial data detailing Bald Eagle perch locations in 2014 have been transferred to DOWL HKM (Haines_Chilkat_BaldEagleObs_Fall2014.gdb; transferred 30 December 2014).

Reference Cited:

Ritchie, R. J., J. Shook, and S. E. Andersen. 2014. An assessment of perch use and possible impacts of proposed Haines Highway realignments on Bald Eagles during fall and winter, Chilkat River, Alaska. Prep. for DOWL HKM, Anchorage, Ak. Prep. by ABR, Inc., Fairbanks, AK. 29 pp.

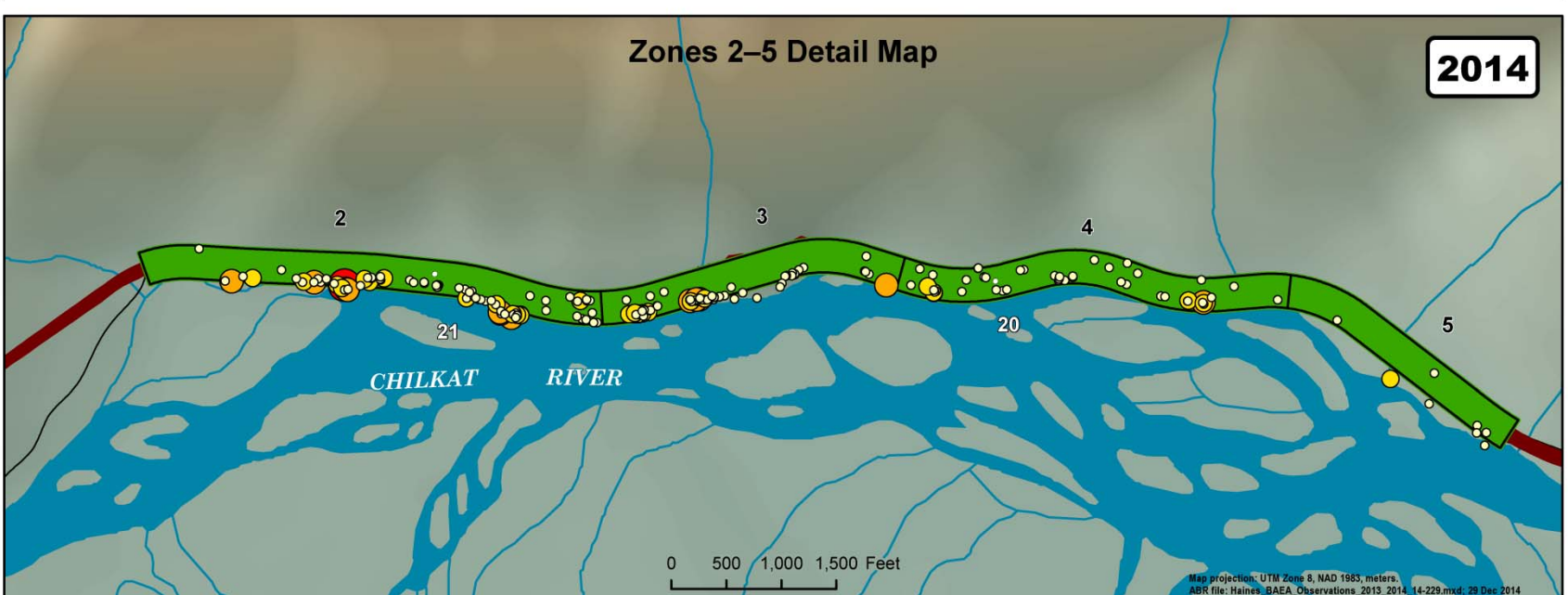
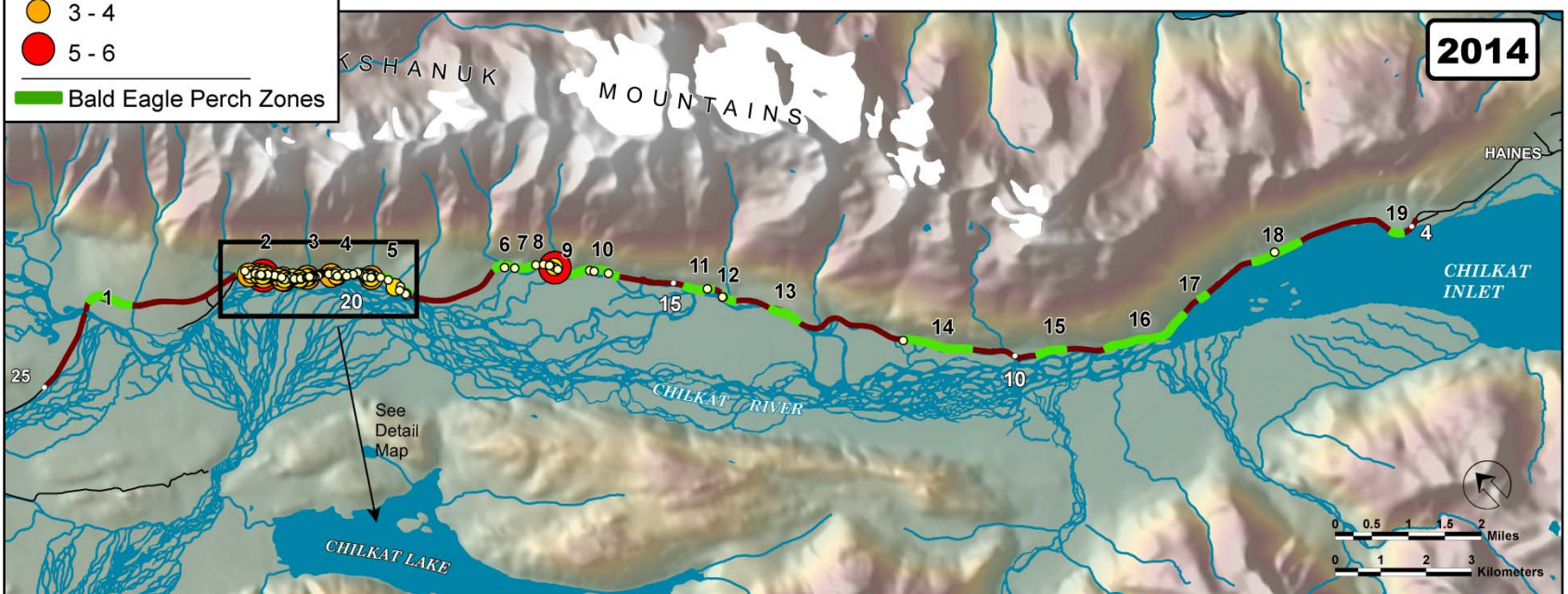
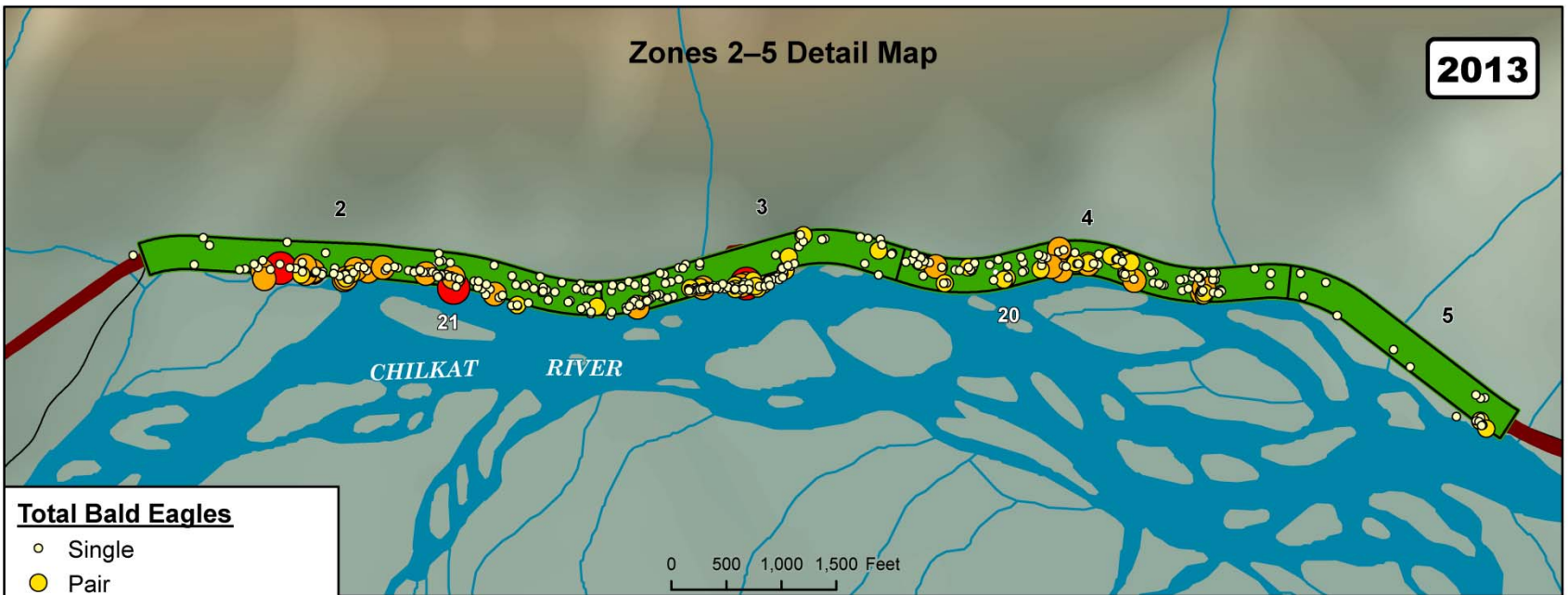
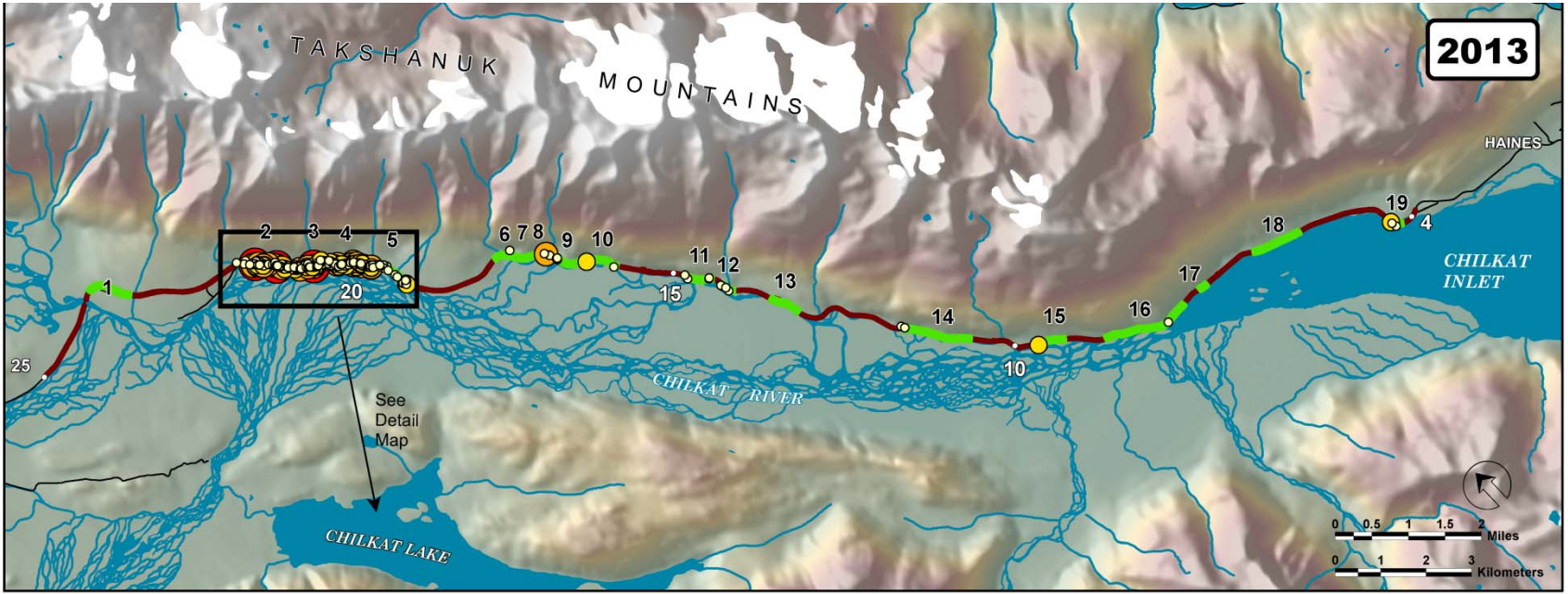


Figure 1. Distribution of all Bald Eagle perches recorded within 19 Perch Survey Zones, Haines Highway Bald Eagle Study Area, Chilkat River, Alaska, mid-October through mid-December, 2013 and 2014.

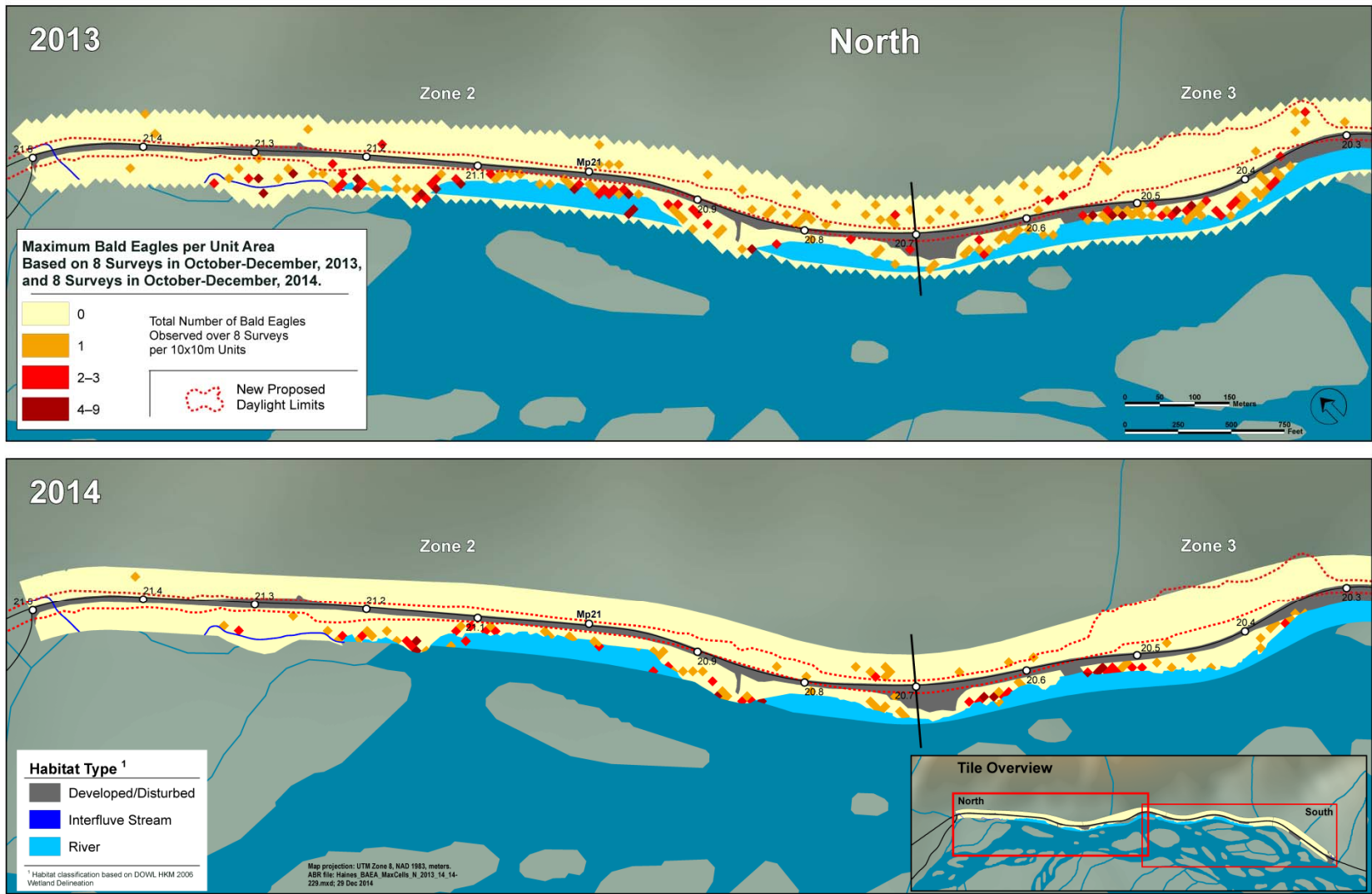


Figure 2a. Maximum use of perch locations by Bald Eagles within 10 m × 10 m cells in the Council Grounds, Perch Survey Zones 2–5 (North), Chilkat River, Alaska, mid-October through mid-December, 2013 and 2014.

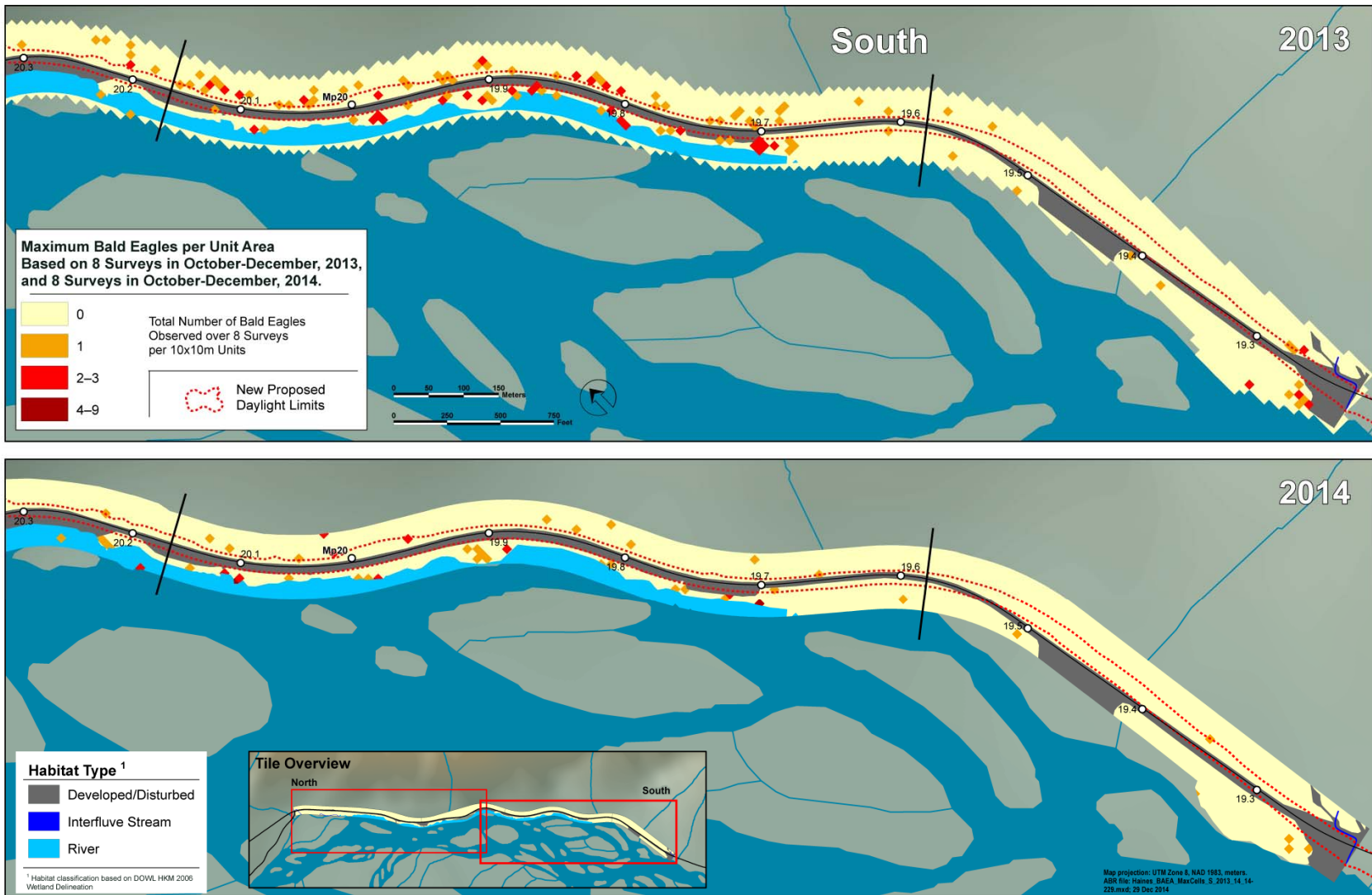


Figure2b. Maximum use of perch locations by Bald Eagles within 10 m × 10 m cells in the Council Grounds, Perch Survey Zones 2–5 (South), Chilkat River, Alaska, mid-October through mid-December, 2013 and 2014.