

23 February 2017 Aerial Overflight Summary

In attendance:

Julieanna Orczewka (Hilcorp), Jacob Cunha (ADFG), Josh Brekken (ADFG), Katrina Chambon (ADEC), Craig Ziolkowski (ADEC), Travis (pilot), Colt (pilot)

Approximately 11:00 am the above group met at Ross Aviation, Anchorage, where Travis and crew held a preflight briefing and established a hard deck of 500 feet altitude and minimum safe airspeed of 90 knots for this flight. The safety briefing occurred onboard the aircraft and was provided by Travis and Colt. A brief mechanical delay pushed our departure back to 12:12 pm. Skies were overcast with temperatures for Anchorage and Kenai remaining in the low to mid 20s for the duration of the flight. Ice concentration ranged from 1-2 tenths (Very Open Drift) to 5-6 tenths (Open Drift) and was comprised of various stages of no ice to young ice organized into pancake to cake forms with frequent small floes and occasional medium floes occurring throughout the area. Non-shorefast ice tended to occur within the mid, east, and west ribs identified in Whitney, 2002.

12:12 pm Departed Ross Aviation and transited from Anchorage to Chickaloon Bay (Figure 1). From Chickaloon Bay we flew southward following the eastern shoreline of Cook Inlet to the release area while maintaining a distance of approximately ½ mile from shore.

12:23 Airspeed: 130 knots, Altitude: 630 feet

12:43 Arrived at location of release, circled twice at: altitude of 700 feet, airspeed of 90 knots

12:48 Departed area of release for Kalgin Island

12:57 Arrived at Kalgin Island, circumnavigated Kalgin Island at altitude of 700 feet, traveling at an airspeed of 130 knots (airspeed was maintained for this survey period to avoid approaching icing conditions from the south). Flight spacing was approximately ½ mile offshore with two moose observed on Kalgin Island, departed area at 1:11 pm.

1:24 Arrived at location of release, circled once at: altitude of 500 feet, airspeed of 90 knots after which we transited from the area of release to the west side of Cook inlet, near Tyonek. There we followed the shoreline north to the Little Susitna River delta before returning to Anchorage.

Observations

Both visits to the release area during this survey did not reveal the surface bubbling as observed by previous overflights. This was attributed to the presence of pancake ice interspersed with small and medium floe ice occurring within an open drift concentration (Figure 2). In addition, no wildlife species such as fish, birds, or marine mammals were observed during the survey, however, two moose were observed on Kalgin Island.

Recommendations

Recommend periodic overflights, with trained observers to monitor for potential impacts to wildlife.

23 February 2017 Aerial Overflight Trackline



Figure 2, select photos from aerial overflight.

Location: Upper Cook Inlet
Date Photos Taken: 23 February 2017

Photographer: Ziolkowski, Craig
Activity: Aerial overflight of release area



Area of release, first visit



Area of release, first visit



Area of release, second visit



Vessel transiting south, against incoming tide, observed between release and Tyonek.