



Wildlife Watch

WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT ADVISORY COUNCIL (NORTH SLOPE)
COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER

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Porcupine Caribou Studies

Caribou researchers were not able to conduct a composition count on the Porcupine Herd this summer because the herd did not aggregate due to the cool, wet weather. Usually, hot weather brings out insects, forcing the herd to form large groups and seek windy places or snow patches to escape the bugs. It was possible to replace a malfunctioning satellite collar and collect a collar from Gus-Gus, a caribou that who died in early June. The team then collared two new caribou. The locations of the collared caribou can be tracked by computer at www.taiga.net/satellite.

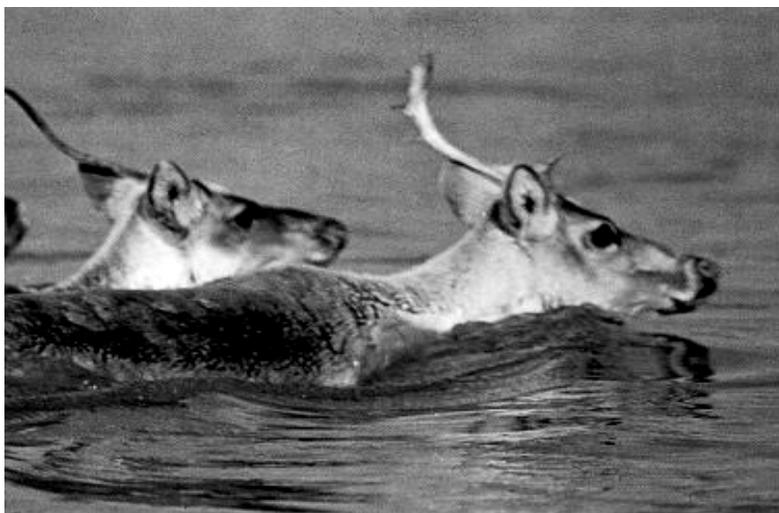


Photo courtesy Government of Northwest Territories

Grizzly Bear Study Wraps Up

The field component of a long-term grizzly bear study in the Richardson Mountains was completed this spring. The study began in 1993, when fifteen female grizzly bears were radio collared. Radio collared bears were located each spring to find out if they had young with them, and if so how many. This allowed researchers to estimate how many new cubs are born each year, cub survival rates, and how many years the cubs stay with their mother. The study also provided information on how long the bears live and reproduce. On June 6, 2000, Dennis Arey and Marsha Branigan flew a telemetry survey to locate the radio-collared bears. In mid-June David Edwards, Billy Archie, and Marsha Branigan located and darted eight collared bears from a helicopter. Once the bears were immobilized, the collars were removed. The information from this study will be used to estimate sustainable harvest rates for bears in the Richardson Mountains. Once the results are analyzed, a draft report will be distributed for comment, a presentation will be prepared and posters made for display.

Upcoming Study – Porcupine Caribou Body Condition Monitoring

WMAC(NS) and the Porcupine Caribou Management board are supporting a new study to monitor adult cow caribou. This study will keep track of how fat the cows are in the fall and try to determine how likely they are to give birth to a calf the next spring. Body weight is important because cows have to be a minimum weight in order to become pregnant in the fall. And they must have a certain amount of fat in order to carry the calf over the winter. Hunters will be asked to record specific measurements and collect samples from caribou that they harvest over the winter. The hunters will be paid for the samples and data they collect, which will then be analysed by YTG. This year the study hopes to involve the communities of Ft. McPherson and Aklavik.

Coming Events:

Joint Muskox Management Meeting

December 8, in Anchorage, Alaska

WMAC(NS) Quarterly Meeting

December 10-12, in Aklavik

Inuvialuit Game Council Meeting

December 13 -16, in Inuvik

Muskox Studies

In early July, YTG and Parks Canada staff performed a telemetry flight and survey of muskox. The surveyors counted 121 muskox, including a group of 3 bulls on Herschel Island. When this number is added to the 17 animals in the Richardson Mountains and 8 on the Porcupine River, the total Yukon count stands at 146 muskox. As in past years, there were no muskox reported or seen on the Mackenzie Delta. A composition count showed a healthy number of young animals in the herd. There are still six muskox being monitored with satellite collars. All five of the satellite-collared cows had calves. The researchers also conducted detailed observations of the various groups of muskox in order to learn more about muskox activities. This information can be used as a tool for comparison in studying muskox and caribou interactions.



North Slope Raptor Survey

A survey of raptors on the north slope of the Yukon took place from July 11-13. The survey was done by Jerome Gordon from Aklavik, Dave Mossop of Yukon College and Gabe Boros of Parks Canada. The researchers used a helicopter to survey river corridors along the coast and Herschel Island. The survey was part of the Canadian Wildlife Service's Peregrine Falcon survey, which takes place every five years. The researchers also surveyed gyrfalcon, golden eagles and other raptors.

Herschel Island Vegetation Studies

Vegetation studies continued this summer on Herschel Island in an effort to understand and monitor changes in plant life on the island. Sampling work done this summer indicates that there has been quite an increase in grass (*Arctagrostis*) and lupines. There are also indications of a decrease in frost churning. In a cooperative effort between YTG, Agriculture Canada and Carleton University, a deep-core probe was installed to monitor permafrost temperature. Rangers on the island also continued to monitor the International Tundra Experiment (ITEX) sites, which are designed to study the effects of global climate change on tundra ecosystems.

WMAC (NS) Gets A New Member

Doug Larsen has joined the Council as the member for the Yukon Government. Doug is the Chief of Wildlife Management for the Yukon Territorial Government. He has worked for YTG since 1978, starting out as a moose biologist. Prior to this work, Doug spent time in the arctic working for the University of Alberta and for the Canadian Wildlife Service. He has helped with studies on muskox and ringed seals, and spent some time on Herschel Island in the mid-1970s studying polar bears. Doug spent a week on Herschel Island this summer and also visited Shingle Point. He replaces former council member Brian Pelchat. WMAC(NS) would like to thank Brian for his hard work and wish him the best.

Wildlife Management Advisory Council (North Slope)

- **Inuvialuit Game Council:** Danny C. Gordon; Herbert Felix; Alternates: Billy Archie, and Carol Arey
- **Government of Yukon:** Doug Larsen, Renewable Resources; Alternate: Dorothy Cooley, Renewable Resources
- **Government of Canada:** Joan Eamer, Canadian Wildlife Service; Alternate: Alan Fehr, Parks Canada
- **Chairperson:** Lindsay Staples
- **Secretariat:** Aileen Horler

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