



Muskox Research and Monitoring

Yukon muskox are being studied and monitored in several ways. Aerial surveys, composition counts, satellite tracking, samples from captured muskox and community observations all contribute to what we know about these animals.

Population surveys and composition counts have been conducted in the Yukon on a regular basis for a number of years. These studies, conducted by YTG and Parks Canada, provide information on population size, age structure and behaviour, as well as on annual and seasonal range use and movements. Information on birth rates, calf survival and mortality rates can also be obtained. The most recent population count, done in July 2002, recorded 145 muskox



between the Alaska border and Shingle Point. When muskox are captured, blood and tissue samples are taken to get information on age, diseases, parasites and genetic make-up. Body measurements and condition are also recorded.

A satellite tracking program was begun in 1999. There are currently nine muskox fitted with satellite collars. This program is being conducted to learn more about where the muskox like to live at different times of the year and how much they move around. The satellite automatically records the locations of the muskox throughout the year, allowing researchers to locate the muskox more often. The locations of the collared muskox can be viewed at www.taiga.net/wmac/species/muskox/satellitelocations.html

Research on Yukon muskox helps to ensure their proper and effective management. All of this information helps biologist make decisions about managing the muskox and assists in determining a sustainable harvest quota. You can contribute to muskox research by reporting sightings of Yukon muskox to your local HTC or RRC office.

Photo by Ken Madsen

For more information, visit the Wildlife Management Advisory Council (North Slope) web site on muskox of the Yukon and Alaska North Slope at www.taiga.net/wmac/species/muskox