

CANADIAN WILDLIFE SERVICE  
P. O. BOX 1590  
SACKVILLE, N. B.  
EOA 3CQ

DATA FILE

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B254  
1985

Waterfowl Survey of the West Amherst Area  
Spring 1985

Peter Barkhouse  
Canadian Wildlife Service  
Sackville, New Brunswick  
August 1985

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## Introduction and Methods

The area west of Amherst, Nova Scotia shown outlined in Figure 1 traditionally provides spring migration habitat for Canada Geese and other waterfowl. It comprises the 600 ha John Lusby Section of Chignecto NWA, portions of LaPlanche River and Cumberland Basin, sodland (Maritime Sod Co.) and upland fields (pasture, hayland and grain). Ground surveys were conducted during March 7 to April 26, 1985 to document the abundance and distribution of waterfowl, particularly Canada Geese, within the area.

Survey procedures were the same as those employed during spring 1984. The survey area was systematically viewed using a pair of 7X binoculars and a 20X telescope from observation sites shown in Figure 1. Depending on the amount of habitat available to waterfowl, surveys required from one to three hours to complete. Observations and other information including survey times, weather and habitat conditions were recorded on a field survey sheet (copy attached). A total of 22 surveys, usually at 2-3 day intervals were conducted in 1985.

## Results and Discussion

The numbers of Canada Geese observed in the survey area west of Amherst during March 7 to April 26, 1985 are presented in Table 1. Canada Geese were first recorded on

March 11 when 21 were seen in the Cumberland Basin. The number steadily increased during the following 10 day period reaching a high of 1432 on March 22. It appears that those birds left the area during the next few days and on March 29 geese were not observed in the survey area.

Canada Geese were again observed on April 1 with 316 present. The number dropped slowly during the next 10 days with 157 present on April 10. More birds were present during the following few days with 618 on April 12 and 532 on April 15; but on April 17 the number was again less than 200. On April 26, the day of the last survey, 210 birds were observed.

The accumulated total number of geese observed on the Sodland over the survey period was 7999; 86.2 percent of the survey area total. Geese were not observed on the saltmarsh and saltmarsh impoundments until April 10 and following that they were present there in small numbers. The saltmarsh and saltmarsh impoundment accumulated totals accounted for 6.6 and 5.6 percent of the survey area total respectively. Geese were observed in the Cumberland Basin on two occasions and in the upland on one occasion.

Survey results for 1984 are presented in Table 2 and a comparison with Table 1 shows that larger numbers of Canada Geese were present in 1985. There were substantially more present in March 1985 than in March 1984 but April numbers for the two years were similar.

A comparison of distribution of geese within the survey area between the two years shows that birds frequented



the sodland much more extensively and consistently in 1985. That appears to relate to the higher March 1985 numbers and the almost exclusive use of sodland during that time. Occurrence during April of both years was more evenly distributed between sodland and saltmarsh. The saltmarsh impoundments were used more in 1985 than in 1984.

Use of the west Amherst Area by Canada Geese in 1985 was more favourable than in 1984, but numbers were still considerably below those reported during 1969 to 1974 (mean peak number for six years was 3060, Barrow and Barkhouse, 1984). Regular spring waterfowl surveys of the west Amherst area should be continued for the next few years at least.

#### Acknowledgement

1985 surveys were conducted by David Crocker, Project Manager of Canada Works Project - People and Wildlife, Amherst, Nova Scotia

Literature Cited

Barrow, W. and P. Barkhouse. 1985. Waterfowl Survey of the  
West Amherst Area, Spring 1984. CWS Internal Report,  
Sackville, New Brunswick.



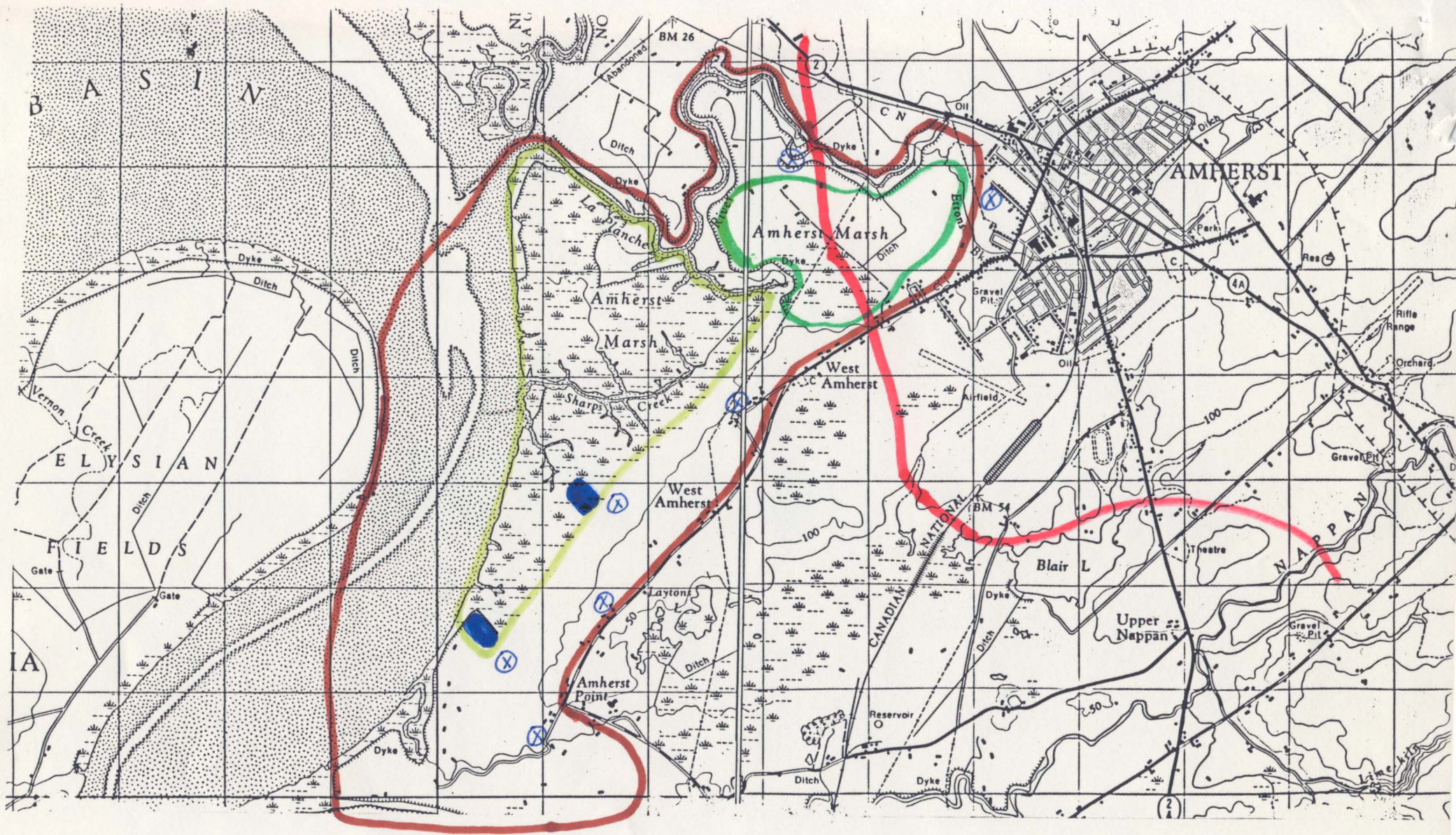


Figure 1. Map of West Amherst Survey Area showing locations of major habitats and principal observation sites.

Legend:

Survey Area



Sodland



John Lusby Saltmarsh



Observation Sites



Saltmarsh Impoundments



Trans-Canada Highway





Table 1. Numbers of Canada Geese observed in West Amherst Area<sup>1</sup> during 1985 ground surveys

Date	Sodland	Saltmarsh	Impoundment	Cumberland Basin	Upland	Total
<u>March</u>						
7	-	-	-	-	-	-
11	-	-	-	21	-	21
13	337	-	-	-	9	346
15	568	-	-	-	-	568
18	864	-	-	-	-	864
20	1116	-	-	-	-	1116
22	1432	-	-	-	-	1432
26	1294	-	-	-	-	1294
27	738	-	-	-	-	738
29	-	-	-	-	-	-
<u>April</u>						
1	316	-	-	-	-	316
3	213	-	-	-	-	213
5	74	-	-	116	-	190
8	174	-	-	-	-	174
10	-	16	141	-	-	157
12	213	213	192	-	-	618
15	459	63	10	-	-	532
17	17	146	-	-	-	163
19	-	58	58	-	-	116
22	-	19	60	-	-	79
24	73	53	11	-	-	137
26	111	46	53	-	-	210
Total	7999	614	525	137	9	9284
Percent	86.2	6.6	5.6	1.5	0.1	

<sup>1</sup>See Figure 1 for extent of coverage

Table 2. Numbers of Canada Geese observed in the west Amherst Area,<sup>1</sup>  
during ground surveys conducted in 1984.

Date	Sodland	LaPlanche River	Saltmarsh	Impoundments	Cumberland Basin	Upland	Total
<u>March</u>							
1,5,7 and 9	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
15	40	-	-	-	-	-	40
16	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
21	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
23	15	-	344	-	-	-	359
26	-	-	-	-	190	-	190
28	140	100	-	-	199	-	439
<u>April</u>							
2	-	-	165	-	-	-	165
4	-	-	360	-	-	-	360
6	38	-	105	-	-	-	143
11	326	-	-	-	-	60	386
13	210	-	-	-	-	-	210
16	-	-	124	-	-	365	489
19	342	-	42	-	-	35	419
24	60	-	759	8	170	-	997
27	-	-	787	-	-	-	789
Total	1171	100	2686	8	559	460	4987
Percent	23.48	2.00	53.86	0.16	11.21	9.22	

<sup>1</sup>Accompanying figure shows extent of coverage



Spring Canada Goose Survey - West Amherst

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_ OBSERVER: \_\_\_\_\_

TIME: Start \_\_\_\_\_; Finish \_\_\_\_\_

WEATHER: Temp. \_\_\_\_\_°C; Wind \_\_\_\_\_ mph; Sky \_\_\_\_\_% clear

HABITAT CONDITIONS: Sodland \_\_\_\_\_

Saltmarsh \_\_\_\_\_

Upland \_\_\_\_\_

VISIBILITY: \_\_\_\_\_

Location	Canada Geese	Other Waterfowl (Specify)
Sodland		
Saltmarsh (NWA)		
Impoundment (NWA)		
Cumberland Basin		
Upland		
Other		
Other		
Total		

COMMENTS:

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OBSERVER: \_\_\_\_\_  
TIME: Start \_\_\_\_\_ Finish \_\_\_\_\_  
WEATHER: Temp. \_\_\_\_\_ °C Wind \_\_\_\_\_ mph Sky \_\_\_\_\_  
HABITAT CONDITIONS: Sodbond \_\_\_\_\_  
Salsmarsh \_\_\_\_\_  
Upland \_\_\_\_\_  
VISIBILITY: \_\_\_\_\_

Location	Canada Goose	Other Waterfowl (Specify)
Sodbond		
Salsmarsh (WMA)		
Impoundment (WMA)		
Upland Basin		
Upland		
Other		
Other		
Total		

COMMENTS: