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Survey for Black Duck Concentrations
in Western Labrador - September 1994

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REPORT

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A Survey for Black Duck Concentrations
in Western Labrador - September 1994

prepared by
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Introduction

Black Duck management depends, in part, on the ability to determine harvest distribution and to monitor harvest rates. This information is determined from recoveries of banded birds. The banded samples should be distributed throughout the major breeding range of the species. There are several areas in the Atlantic Provinces where a sample of banded blacks has never been obtained. One of those areas is western Labrador. A banding station near Julian River-Baikie Lake has banded only 331 Black Ducks in six years. Black Ducks no longer concentrate in the area, possibly due to habitat change related to the Twin Falls dam. Previous surveys in western Labrador did not locate bandable concentrations of blacks but all of the wetlands were not surveyed. This is a report on an aerial survey of selected wetlands in an attempt to locate a bandable concentration of Black Ducks in western Labrador.

Methods

The survey was flown in a Cs 206 on wheels (Labrador Travel Air). The areas to be surveyed were selected based on prior information that suggested concentrations of Black Ducks might be present. The areas were surveyed at ground speeds of 120 to 130 km per hour and an altitude of about 30 m agl. Topographical maps (1:250 000) were used for navigation and recording sightings. The aircraft was equipped with a geographical positioning system. The pilot and one observer carried out the survey.

Results and Discussion

A fixed-wing survey of selected areas in western Labrador was flown on September 11-12, 1994. A total of 12.7 hours was flown. Areas selected for survey were Ashuanipi Lake, Lac a l'Eau-Claire, Dumbell Lake, Menihek Lakes, Lac Chabot PQ, Lac Dauphine PQ, Lac Gouffier PQ, Knox Lake, Vezina Lake, Crossroads Lake, parts of the McKenzie River, Woods Lake and the Flour Lake area (Figure 1).

No large concentrations of Black Ducks was recorded (Table 1). The largest number of blacks (64) was observed in the Flour Lake area which is now part of the Smallwood Reservoir. Those blacks were not in one flock but dispersed in groups of less than 30 birds. It probably would not be economical to attempt a Black Duck banding station there with that number of birds. Thirty-two blacks were observed at Woods Lake. Although the Flour Lake and Woods Lake areas had the most blacks recorded, neither of the areas had numbers which would warrant a banding station given the logistical problems of working there.

Local reports of large numbers of Black Ducks at Crossroads Lake and Ashuanipi Lake did not correspond to observations on this survey.

Summary and Recommendations

No large concentrations of Black Ducks were recorded on this survey. The largest number (64) was recorded in dispersed groups in the Flour Lake area. It is not recommended that a pre-season banding station be attempted at any of these sites.

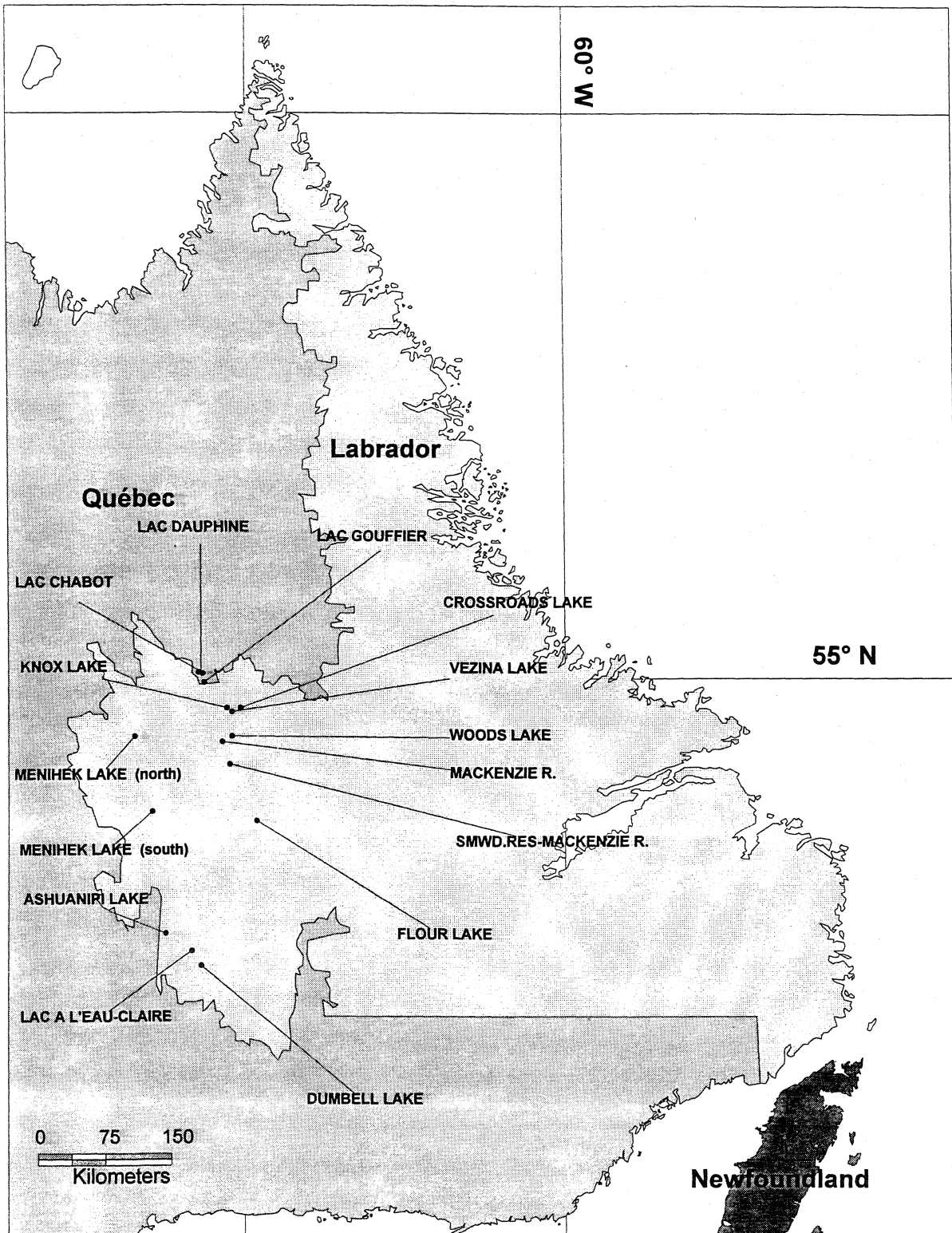


Figure 1. Approximate locations of areas surveyed for bandable concentrations of Black Ducks, 11-12 September 1994.

Table 1. Areas surveyed and numbers of waterfowl observed on a fixed-wing survey for bandable concentrations of Black Ducks in western Labrador, 11-12 September 1994.

Location	Black Duck	G-w Teal	G-eye	R-neck Duck	Surf Scoter	Unid. Scoter	Unid. Merg.	Unid. Scaup	Canada Goose	Total
Ashuanipi L.	-									0
Lac a l'Eau-Claire	-									0
Dumbell L.	-							2		2
Menihok L.	8					5	18		47	78 (3 Loon)
Lac Chabbot PQ	6						75	4		85
Lac Dauphine PQ	-									0
Lac Gouffier PQ	-				2		10		38	50
Knox L.	-	10					25		9	44
Vezina L.	-	15	4		8				11	38
Crossroads L.	-						6		7	13
McKenzie River	12						30	16	48	106
Woods L. area	32+1 mal			6			37	20		96
Flour L. area	64	6	45			6		45	78	244
Smallwood-McKenzie R.						3			69	72
Total	122+1 mal	31	49	6	13	11	201	87	307	828