Canadian Wildlife Service
Artic Ecology Map Series
Critical Wildlife areas

Descriptive report

Maguse River

MAGUSE RIVER
(Sheet #2111)

The Maguse River map sheet encompasses an area of approximately 82,000 square miles of the coastal and marine area of west-central Hudson Bay. The area extends north from the Manitoba border and includes the coastal settlements of Eskimo Point, Whale Cove, Rankin Inlet and Chesterfield Inlet.

The land area is largely lowland which increases in altitude westward on the sheet. The surface topography varies from flat poorly drained plains to low rocky hills of precambrian origin. Approximately 150 miles of the southernmost coastal region consists of marshy plains and shallow tidal flats drained by several rivers. North of Angusko Point the coast is more rugged with many bays, inlets and inshore islands. Of the latter, Marble Island is of particular historical interest.

The resident human populations are mainly Eskimos who engage in hunting, trapping and fishing. A few Eskimos are employed seasonally in commercial Char fishing and whaling as well as the making of handicrafts.

The entire region is rich in fish and wildlife resources. Arctic Char, Lake Trout and Whitefish are abundant in many of the river systems. Beluga Whales frequent much of the coastal areas during the summer, particularly around

Term Point (Whale Cove) where they are hunted. The sheet contains a vital calving ground for the Kaminuriak Barren-Ground Caribou herd. In addition, good populations of Arctic Fox, Seals and large numbers of breeding and migrating waterfowl are found within the area. Large numbers of Willow Ptarmigan have been observed migrating along the coastal region.

The following is the descriptive text for units mapped on this sheet.

UNIT NUMBER	DESCRIPTION
1	The boundary includes adjacent rivers and lakes all of which are important Char areas. A quota of 20,000 pounds annual harvest has been set for the fresh water system of Chesterfield Inlet. (Hunter)
2	Bowhead Whales are found northeast from Chesterfield Inlet to the southern portion of Roes Welcome Sound. (Mansfield)
3	Marble Island is an important breeding area for Black Guillemots. A population of 2,000 to 3,000 occurs here.(Cooch)
4	At the present time Polar Bear are not numerous in this area, although it has been historically important. According to R.C.M.P. records of the 1930's this area sustained a substantial kill. Present harvests are low. The arrow portrays movement of two distinct populations of Hudson Bay Polar Bears. The approximate dividing line is indicated for bears moving north from southern areas of the Bay, and those from this region which move north. (Jonkel)
5	Seals and Walrus from Rankin Inlet to Dawson Inlet common here. (Loughrey) Harbour Seals (Phoca vitulina) occur in all fresh water bays on the sheet and may ascend 150 miles upstream from the sea. This is largely a resident population with small scattered numbers. (Mansfield) This is a concentration area for Beluga Whales during the summer and year round. Several thousand occur from James Bay to Repulse. (Mansfield)

UNIT NUMBER	DESCRIPTION
6	The arrows indicate the location of the McConnell Migratory Bird Sanctuary within the critical area of Unit 7.
7	Extremely important breeding area for Snow, Ross',Blue and Canada Geese. It includes White-Fronted Geese and Whistling Swans as well. The maximum September population of 150,000 birds consists of the breeding population and current production. This area encompasses the McConnell Migratory Bird Sanctuary (Federal Order in Council). It is utilized seasonally from May 1st to September 15th inclusive. The critical portion is indicated on the map and should be kept inviolate and undisturbed, including the winter. (Cooch) In the autumn this unit is a critical staging and migration area. In addition to the fall breeding population, approximately 100,000 geese, 20,000 Sandhill Cranes and 5,000 Swans pass through the area. The area is also important for numerous shorebird species such as Redback Sandpipers, Plovers, Turnstones, Godwits and Hudsonian Curlew. (Cooch) 100,000 Lesser Snow Geese nesting May 31st to September 31st. This is a loafing area as well. There is also a nesting concentration of loons along the coast with the majority of them nesting at the McConnell River mouth and other coastal ponds. An additional 2,000± Lesser Snow Geese nest at the mouth of the Thlemiaza River, and a similar number nest and molt May 31st to September 31st in the Eskimo Point Region. Canada Geese are found sporadically along the coast May 31st to September 31st. (Jones)
8	Caribou spring migration. Critical route for the Kaminuriak Herd. (Loughrey)

UNIT NUMBER	DESCRIPTION
9	The Maguse River system is important for Arctic Char. Annual recommended harvest quota is 20,000 pounds. (Hunter)
10	Caribou fall migration route following eskers en route towards Eskimo Point. Rutting takes place west of Eskimo Point. (Loughrey)
11	This is a breeding area for small Canada Geese. Approximately 5,000 birds in total. It is an important rather than critical area. (Cooch)
12	This area contains scattered population of Short Grass and Small Prairie Canada Geese. It is not a critical area but is important. Care to avoid habitat destruction and disturbances during the breeding season should be taken. (Cooch)
13	Caribou fall migration route, some may winter here and to the north. (Loughrey)
14	Whitefish and Lake Trout are the most important species on the Kaminuriak and Kaminak Lake systems. Both of these are important Whitefish lakes. Harvests of 330,000 pounds of Whitefish have been taken from these systems. (Hunter)
15	This unit encompasses the Kaminuriak Caribou calving grounds. Calving varies within the delineated area. A herd of approximately 70,000 animals are dependent on this area and approximately 20,000 cows use it at any one time. This herd sustains a kill of about 3,000 animals per year. Hunting occurs from Eskimo Point to Rankin Inlet, Broche, Manitoba and Black Lake, Saskatchewan.

UNIT NUMBER	DESCRIPTION
15 (continued)	The calving and post calving staging areas are of critical importance within this unit. Use and construction of roads with respect to the migration route is critical since the herd must attain the calving area by a specific time in the spring. (Macpherson)
16	Important Arctic Char systems. Both the Wilson and Ferguson River systems contain Arctic Char. Recommended harvest quotas for these combined systems is 30,000 pounds annually. (Hunter)
17	Important Char systems. A harvest quota of 10,000 pounds has been set for the Corbett Inlet system. (Hunter)
18	Important Char system. A harvest quota of 30,000 pounds has been set for the Rankin Inlet system. (Hunter)
20	Post calving migration route, Kaminuriak Herd. (Macpherson)
21	Nesting Gyrfalcons and Peregrine Falcons occur in this unit. (Kuyt)
22	This unit includes Whitefish, Lake Trout and Char. A harvest quota of 50,000 pounds for all species combined has been set. Baker Lake has a salt bottom, probably a relict marine stratum. (Hunter)

REFERENCES

Personal Communication

A. H. Macpherson
F. G. Cooch
A. G. Loughrey (Canadian Wildlife Service)
C. J. Jonkel
E. Kuyt

R. Jones University of Western Ontario

A. H. Mansfield
J. G. Hunter (Fisheries Research Board)

Reports and Publications

BEALS, C. S. 1968. Science, History, and Hudson Bay, Volume 1. Publ. of the Dept. of Energy, Mines and Resources, Ottawa, 501 pages.

COOCH, F. G. 1968. Birds, Part IV, pages 443-446, Science, History and Hudson Bay, Volume I. Publ. of the Dept. of Mines and Resources, Ottawa.

KELSALL, JOHN, P. 1958. The Barren-Ground Caribou, Cooperative Investigation 1957-58, Report No. One, Canadian Wildlife Service, Ottawa.

KELSALL, JOHN, P. 1955. Barren-Ground Caribou Resurvey 1955. Canadian Wildlife Service, Ottawa. Restricted not for publ.

MACPHERSON, A. H. 1968. Land Mammals, Part V, pages 446-501, Science, History and Hudson Bay, Volume I, Publ. of the Dept. of Mines and Resources, Ottawa.

MANSFIELD, A. W. 1967. Seals of arctic and eastern Canada, Bull. No. 137, 2nd Edition, Fisheries Research Baord of Canada, 35 pages.

PARKER, G. R. 1970. Biology of the Kaminuriak population of barren-ground caribou, Part I. Unpubl. Mimeo., Canadian Wildlife Service, Eastern Region.

SERGEANT, D. E. 1962. The biology and hunting of beluga or white whales in the Canadian Arctic, Circ. No. 8, Fisheries Research Board of Canada, Arctic Unit, Montreal, P. Q., 13 pages.