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Thomas, Donald.

Caribou tagging at Contway to Lake
August 1960. [Ottawa] 1960.

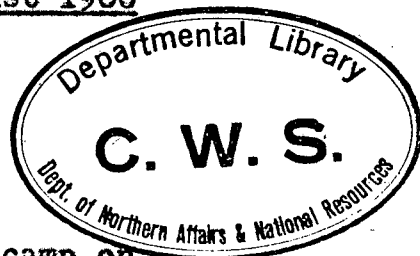
Iv. map.

1. Caribou - Marking - Keewatin. I Title.

Caribou Tagging at Contwoyto Lake - August 1960

By

Donald Thomas



Itinerary

Kolenosky and Thomas established camp on Contwoyto Lake, the afternoon of August 2. Kolenosky returned to Yellowknife August 12, at which time Walker entered the camp. Walker and Thomas broke camp and returned to Yellowknife August 21. Three Eskimos were instructed to continue tagging caribou until freeze-up.

Day-by-day Account

August 2

Weather: Sunny and calm.

Left Yellowknife at 15.30. Saw three caribou fifteen miles south of the Contwoyto Lake - Pellatt Lake Narrows. The Eskimos reported seeing one band August 1, but indicated that the main movement had passed through the third week of July. Camp was placed in a bay at the lower tip of Contwoyto Lake. The boat was made ready for the following day.

August 3

Weather: Sunny and calm.

In the morning and early afternoon, a boat trip was made up the lake a distance of eight miles. No caribou were sighted, but a crossing-place was discovered along the north side of the lake. It had been much used this year and in past years, judging from the numerous trails. Unfortunately, it was fairly narrow.

From the high island in the lower end of the lake, it was possible to count over 200 caribou carcasses scattered around the Eskimo campsite.

A calf that had been near the camp for a day was chased into the water by the Eskimos and tagged by Kolenosky and Thomas.

Bob Douglas and Jim McCauley arrived at 15.30. The latter stayed to manage the Eskimos on the fishing project.

After supper a systematic count of the killed caribou was begun. Fifty-one animals were recorded as to age, sex, and utilization, before it became too dark.

August 4

Weather: Sunny; wind calm to light from south-east.

When we arrived at Contwoyto Lake, two of the boats were in the bay of Contwoyto where we placed the camp. The other was on Pellatt Lake. We decided to portage the motor and seven gallons of gasoline, one mile over to Pellatt, so that we could explore the lake for crossing-places.

When we arrived at Pellatt, seven caribou crossed the shallow river and proceeded down the north-east side of Pellatt (see segregations). A crippled animal was sighted along Contwoyto earlier; Pellatt was explored to the east as far as the rapids, and south to a point about half way down the lake. The narrows along the east side of the lake was found to be too narrow and shallow for tagging purposes. The narrows at the head of Pellatt was also shallow. It was difficult to get the boat through in places without paddling. One caribou was sighted along the west side of the lake.

August 5

Weather: Clear to 17.00; calm except for a south-west breeze in afternoon.

Today was spent counting dead caribou. Two hundred and thirty were counted, which brought the total to 281 and there are many more yet to be counted (see Eskimo kill data). No live caribou around here today.

August 6

Weather: Mostly clear; winds south-west and west at 0 - 15 miles per hour.

In the morning we finished counting and segregating the dead caribou around the Eskimo camp. A total of 512 was reached.

One band containing about 35 animals passed near the Eskimo camp at noon. They came from the north-west. The Eskimos attempted to shoot them with .22's, but were not successful.

After waiting a short while for the plane, we boated over to the point west of camp. Looking towards the crossing-places, a few animals could be seen scattered along the north-east side of the lake. They moved towards the crossing when not feeding. An attempt was made to get the boat in position at the crossing before they arrived, but our speed to the crossing was drastically reduced by big waves that could not be taken broadside at any speed. There was much time lost in getting the boat through the very shallow channel between the two points. As a result, we were only able to catch one caribou of the forty that crossed the wide channel (see map of crossings).

August 7

Weather: Clear; very light winds.

We waited at the crossing all morning but saw no animals. So we returned to camp for lunch. As we returned to the first crossing, after lunch, a cow and

calf were noticed on one of the small islands. The cow had a broken leg, and was destroyed, but the calf was tagged and released on the north shore of the lake.

Since there was nothing around the first crossing, we continued eight miles up the lake to the second crossing. From the high hill at the crossing a small band was spotted on the nearer of the two islands in the narrows. We were able to tag nine of the eleven present on the island.

A total of 28 caribou were sighted in the morning. Most of these were moving north-west. About 20 animals were seen around the second crossing in the afternoon. Most of these were feeding and therefore moving little.

August 8

Weather: Cloudy with rain; clear by evening; winds west and north-west at 5 - 20 m.p.h.

We went to the first crossing early. At noon six crossed and were tagged. Fourteen got through our barrier at the shallows and passed to the east. At 15.00 28 crossed the wide channel. Twenty-four were tagged. One two-year-old female drowned when she got caught under the boat.

At 16.30 a dozen crossed. All but two were tagged. Later (20.15) five animals crossed. Two had tags in their ears but the other three were tagged to bring the total for today to 43. Several other animals were seen to the west of the crossing, but most of those sighted today eventually crossed. In unsettled weather, as was experienced today, the animals move much more than on a warm sunny day. They do not hesitate to swim a crossing, especially when there is a squall.

August 9

Weather: Partly cloudy; winds south-west and west at 10 - 15 m.p.h.

The entire day was spent at the first crossing. Approximately six animals stayed on the west side of the crossing all day. They seemed afraid to cross. The reason was established when a tag was noticed on one of them. At 20.30 about 18 animals got through the barrier at the shallows. But a little later the barrier deflected 16 animals to the wide crossing. We tagged all of them.

August 10

Weather: Cloudy; winds west and north-west at 10 - 25.

We stayed at the crossing all day, but it was too rough, both for the caribou to swim and for us to operate the boat.

Several animals could be seen between the two crossings. Fifteen crossed at 20.30, but it was too rough for two men to tag. Jack, the Eskimo, had gone home.

August 11

Weather: Cloudy with rain in the afternoon; winds west at 10 for most of the day, but increasing to north-west 20 in the late evening.

We remained at the crossing all day but none crossed. There were a few animals on the west side today, but they were not moving.

August 12

Weather: Windy with some rain overnight; the wind decreased steadily during the day.

At 14.00 we were able to proceed to the crossing. No animals could be seen there so we started to go to the narrows when the Champion came in for Kolenosky.

Five animals were noticed on the east side of the crossing and two on the west side, but that was all.

August 13

Weather: Cloudy with rain in the morning; winds west, north-west at 20-25 all day.

The water was too rough today. Tar was put along the joints of the boat. Saw five animals at the barrier, around noon.

August 14

Weather: Cloudy with rain beginning at 19.30; wind south-east at 10 - 15 m.p.h.

Today the crossings were glassed from the high island. Seeing only one band near the second crossing, we decided to travel up the lake to the hill at the crossing. From the high hill, over 100 animals could be seen in several bands to the north and west. Most of them were moving south-east, so we returned to the first crossing and waited for them. As we repaired our barrier at the shallows, one band came down to cross, but turned back when they saw activity there. That was the last band we saw although we stayed until it became too dark to tag.

August 15

Weather: Cloudy with rain; a heavy downpour started at 16.30, and lasted with interruption, until 21.00. There was fog in the morning as well. Winds were south-east.

No work could be done.

August 16

Weather: Heavy fog all day; visibility one-half mile or less; some precipitation; wind 20 m.p.h.

On a walk to the barrier, two bands were seen to the west of the shallows. Fifteen lower jaws were collected from Eskimo-killed caribou.

August 17

Weather: Fog and rain in the early morning; wind north at 15 - 20 m.p.h.

Sighting caribou at the barrier at 11.30, we walked to the crossing. Kaoloak and Algona were already there. We saw about 100 animals today. They wanted to go south-east along the lake.

Nineteen were tagged when bands of eight, thirty and nine crossed. With an experienced crew, about thirty-five would have been tagged.

August 18

Weather: Cloudy except for brief clear periods; winds north-west at 20 - 25.

We waited at the crossing until 19.00, but the water was too rough for any animals to cross. Eighteen animals had got through the shallows because an Eskimo had taken the poles and streamers down, and had knocked down the stone cairns. No other animals were seen.

August 19

Weather: Cloudy except for brief clear areas; wind south-west 10 - 15.

Only eight caribou were seen to the west of the crossing-places. A few more jaws were collected in the evening.

August 20

Weather: Cloudy with morning winds south-east at 10 m.p.h. and afternoon winds west, south-west at 10 - 15, decreasing to calm by evening.

Six animals were tagged when 13 crossed. We returned to camp when a plane was sighted going into the Beacon station. However, it did not come to our camp because of a mix-up in the airlines office.

August 21

Weather: Calm and clear.

The plane arrived at 10.00 from Bathurst. No caribou could be seen around Contwoyto Lake on the trip to Yellowknife. Yellowknife was reached at 13.00.

Additional Notes

The attached map should aid any workers attempting to tag caribou on Contwoyto Lake. The very good crossing is only effective if a barrier is constructed, as indicated on the map. We found that strings of streamers were very effective in keeping the animals from crossing the shallows.

Eskimos, on one occasion, took the barrier down, for it stopped the flow of animals past their camp.

The crossing that was used to tag the majority of caribou is very wide. With a good crew it would be possible to tag nearly every member of bands containing less than 25 animals.

There were no places on Pellatt Lake suitable for a tagging operation.

When the water was rough on Contwoyto Lake, we walked back to camp, and left the boat at the crossing-place.

The seventeen-foot Eskimo boat was slow and not as manoeuvrable as a canoe, but it was satisfactory for the light run of caribou. A few more could have been tagged with an eighteen-foot canoe.

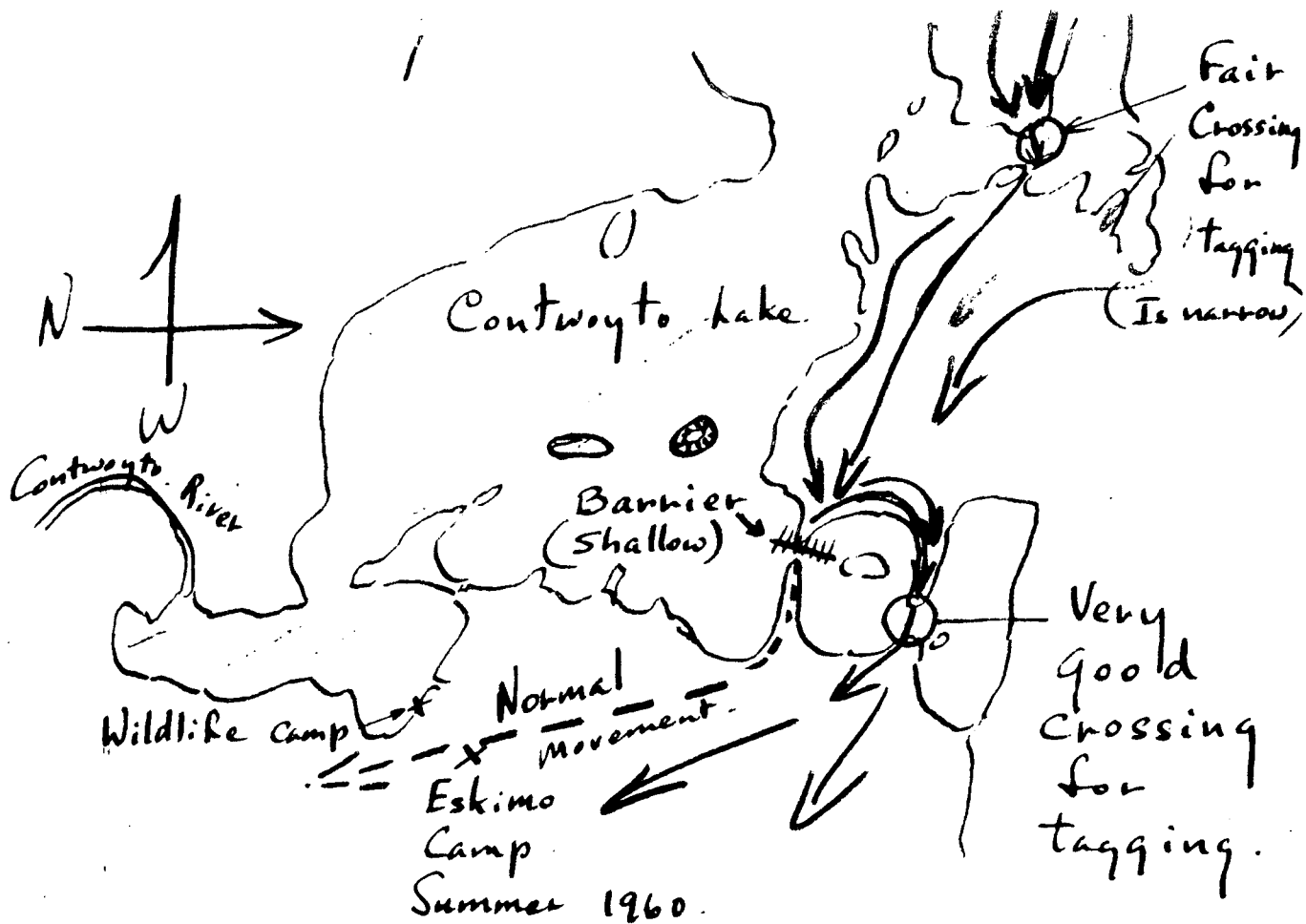
Segregation of Eskimo-killed Caribou, Contwoyto Lake

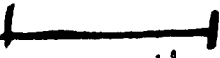
Adult ♂'s (over 3 years)	-	67	=	13.1%
Adult ♀'s (over 2 years)	-	67	=	13.1%
3-year old ♂'s	-	53	=	10.4%
2-year olds - total	-	122	=	23.8%
♂	-	77		
♀	-	43		
1-year olds - total	-	132	=	25.8%
♂	-	67		
♀	-	50		
Calves				
total	-	61	=	11.9%
♂	-	19		
♀	-	28		
Not known	-	10	=	2.0%
Total 512				


Utilization of Eskimo-killed Caribou

Adult ♂'s - total	-	67
tongue and hide used	-	64
utilized - meat dried	-	29
dressed - meat cached	-	5
nothing used	-	3
Adult ♀'s - total	-	67
lactating	-	38
nothing used	-	16
tongue only	-	12
tongue and hide	-	29
utilized	-	5

3 year old s's	- total	- 53
nothing utilized		- 1
hide and tongue used		- 48
partly utilized		- 4
completely utilized		- 5
2 year olds	- total	- 122
nothing utilized		- 1
head used		- 33
tongue used		- 101
hide used		- 118
completely utilized		- 8
1 year old	- total	- 132
nothing used		- 2
head used		- 71
tongue used		- 130
hide used		- 128
completely utilized		- 22
Calves	- total	- 61
nothing used		- 7
head used		- 53
tongue used		- 1
hide used		- 54
completely utilized		- 6




 one mile.

 Caribou pathways

Tag No.	Type	Colour	Species	Sex	Age	Location	Date of Application Day. Mo. Yr.	Date of Return Day. Mo. Yr.	Remarks
419	KETCHUM VISA	blue	CARIBOU	M	calf	Contwoyto Lake,	Aug. 3/60		Streamer Colour gray
421	EAR TAGS			F	adult	Mackenzie District, N.W.T.	6/60		"
464				F	calf		7/60		blue
465				-	yearling				
466				F	adult				
467				-	calf				
468				M	3 year				
469				-	2 year				
470				F	adult				
471				-	calf				
472				-	2 Yr.				
473				-	" "				
474				M	2-3 Yr.		8/60		
477				F	adult				calf st. foot.
478				M	-				
480				M	2-3 yrs.				
482				F	1-2 yr.				
483				-	calf				
484				-	yearling				
485				-	calf				
486				F	adult				

Tag No.	Type	Colour	Species	Sex	Age	Location	Date of Application Day. Mo. Yr.	Date of Return Day. Mo. Yr.	Remarks
487	KETCHUM VISA EAR	blue	CARIBOU	-	calf	Contwoyto Lake.	Aug. 8/60		Streamers Colour blue
488	TAGS					Mackenzie District, N.W.T.			
489									
490									
491					Females.				
492					calves.				
493					Young males				
494					& females				
495					No adult				
496					males				
497									
498									
499									
500					Females.				
501					calves.				
502					Young males				
503					& Females				
505				M	2 yr.				
506				-	calf				
507				F	adult				
508				F	adult				

Tag Record

Officer Mr. D. Thomas

Field Office

Job No.

Tag No.	Type	Colour	Species	Sex	Age	Location	Date of Application Day. Mo. Yr.	Date of Return Day. Mo. Yr.	Remarks
509	KETCHUM VISA	blue	CARIBOU	F	adult	Contwoyto Lake, Mackenzie District, N.W.T.	Aug. 8/60		Streamer Colour blue
510	EAR TAGS			-	calf				
511				F	adult				
512				F	adult				
513				-	calf				
514				F	adult				
515				F	adult				
516				-	calf				
517				F	adult				
518				-	calf				grey
519		blue		-	calf				blue
520				F	adult				Calf at foot.
521				-	1 yr.				
522				F	adult		Aug. 9/60		
523				-	calf				
524				F	adult				
525				F	adult				
526				F	adult				
527				F	adult				
528				-	calf				

Tag No.	Type	Colour	Species	Sex	Age	Location	Date of Application Day. Mo. Yr.	Date of Return Day. Mo. Yr.	Remarks
530	KETCHUM VISA	blue	CARIBOU	-	calf	Contwoyto Lake, Mackenzie District, N.W.T.	Aug. 9/60		Streamer Colour blue
531	EAR TAGS			F	adult				
532				M	-				
533				F	adult				
534				M	-		Aug. 17/60		
536				M	-				
537				-	2 yr.				
538				-	calf				
539				F	adult				
540				F	adult				
541				-	calf				
542				F	adult				lamtler ?
543				-	-				
544				M	2 yr.				
545				F	adult				
546				-	calf				
547				-	calf				
548				F	adult				
549				M	-				
550				F	adult				
551				-	calf				

CWS

60-3 Thomas, D. C.
Caribou tagging at
Contwoyo Lake, August
1960.

TITLE

DATE
LOANED

BORROWER'S NAME

PRO
DART