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Indian House Lake Banding Station

Indian House Lake Labrador

W. R. Barrow

prepared for the New Jersey Waterfowlers

by the Canadian Wildlife Service

December 1985

REPORT

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CANADIAN WILDLIFE SERVICE
P. O. BOX 1590
SACKVILLE, N. B.
EOA 3C0

Bill Barrow

BARROW, BILL

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Introduction

Newfoundland-Labrador is Canada's ninth largest province located approximately 1000 miles northeast of New Jersey. It is a vast wilderness area nearly 15 times the size of your state with approximately 1/200 of your population. Most of the population live along the coast or along larger rivers with hunting and fishing as their main occupation. The hydro development at Churchill Falls, logging near Goose Bay and mining near the Quebec border are the major industries. The interior of Labrador contains rugged mountains, vast string bogs, lichen forests and tens of thousands of unnamed lakes and ponds. Waterfowl breeding densities are low but the vast habitat compensates and supports a substantial total population. Recent Canadian Wildlife Service (CWS) surveys suggest that 160,000 geese and 420,000 ducks are produced in this area and use the Atlantic Flyway.

History

The first known waterfowl banding effort in Labrador was initiated in 1927 and 1928 by the Massachusetts Audubon Seabird Research Station (?) and Drs. O. L. Austin Sr. and Nisbet near Nain. A total of six Common Eider and one Harlequin Duck were banded. Later Howard Mendall carried out a study on the northern and southern races of Common Eider in the 1960's and 1970's with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Special Agent Bruce W. Parker assisted with island inventory work and the capture and banding of waterfowl by drive-trapping and other techniques. A rubber dinghy with a portable generator to night-light eider was also attempted with poor results.

In 1947 the first dabbling duck banding station was established at Tinker Harbour, Labrador by Dr. Bruce S. Wright, director of the Northeastern Wildlife Station at the University of New Brunswick, Fredericton. This

station was supported by Ducks Unlimited and the Wildlife Management Institute and was considered by many to be the most important banding station in the eastern portion of the Atlantic Flyway. It was operated for five years (1947-1951) before being abandoned due to high operating costs and the lack of experienced personnel. The CWS supervised and financed this station during 1950 and 1951 with its most successful season (1951) occurring under the guidance of Dr. F. G. Cooch, CWS, Ottawa.

Later in 1954-55, Ducks Unlimited again financed banding stations in Labrador. Those were operated by C. P. Gilchrist and E. B. Chamberlain and were located in Nain Bay. Both bait trapping of dabbling ducks and gill netting of Barrow's and Common goldeneye were conducted. Banding attempts were terminated in 1955 and did not resume until 1962 when USFWS Special Agents W. Snow, H. Brown and W. Diffendal conducted aerial surveys and established a bait trapping station in interior Labrador at Lobstick Lake near Churchill Falls. This station was operated for only three days. Agent Snow returned to Lobstick Lake in 1966 with three students and set up a second station in that area. All banding efforts were suspended in 1966 and were not revived until 1981. Increasing concern on the status of Black Duck populations and a need for additional information on other species prompted the re-establishment of Tinker Harbour bait banding station. In addition banding of molting waterfowl with dogs, gill netting goldeneye, netting eider, and a Black Duck study have been implemented. An experimental banding station for Indian House Lake was recommended for 1984.

Description of area

Indian House Lake is located approximately 75 mi. southeast of Goose Bay, Labrador within the Eagle Plateau Region. Bogs interspersed with stunted

open forest, lichen woodland and exposed bedrock are characteristic of this area. The abundance of wildlife is reflected in the number of outfitters camps operating in this region. Indian House Lake empties into Park Lake, a well known fly-in fishing and hunting camp location.

Waterfowl habitat is unlimited in that ponds, lakes, rivers, string bogs and associated ribbed fens are very numerous. Open water areas are bordered by dense growths of alder, willow, sedges and spikerush. The smaller ponds and bogs contain burreed, arrowhead, spikerush and many invertebrates, all important waterfowl food. The Eagle Plateau area includes 19,090 sq. km or 7% of Labrador and supports approximately 8600 pairs of breeding ducks and geese. A map showing the location of Indian House Lake and various station and habitat photos are shown in Figure 1 and Appendix A.

Results

The Indian House Lake banding station was initiated in 1984 as a result of several CWS aerial and ground surveys. It would be an attempt to band immature birds, a population segment at that time unsampled for interior Labrador. Banding at this location would provide recent trends in harvest patterns and migratory movements for the Black Duck, additional information on other species such as the Green-winged Teal and Northern Pintail, and important data required for management and protection for our northern waterfowl populations.

Mr. Vern Stotts, Maryland, U.S.A., and Ms. Maria Berger, Ontario, Canada ran this banding station in 1985. A late spring delayed waterfowl migration and contributed to fewer birds banded than in 1984 (330 vs. 287). It was however, a very successful station by Labrador standards and the results are presented in the following table:

Species	Age* & Sex						Total
	Local		Hatch Year		After Hatch Year		
	M	F	M	F	M	F	
Mallard					1		
Black Duck	14	12	56	49	35	23	189
G.-w.Teal	1		26	44	1	8	80
Pintail		1	4	7		1	13
C. Goldeneye	1	3					4
							287

*Age definition

Local - immature - non-flying bird

Hatch Year - immature - capable of sustained flight

After Hatch Year - adult bird

As explained earlier the banding efforts for Labrador fall within two main periods, 1947-61 and 1981-85. Recovery information for the more recent period is still limiting in quantity. To date, data for six species and 251 birds have been received. Black Ducks and Green-winged Teal account for 85% of this total with pintail, eider, mallard, geese and blue-winged teal accounting for the remaining records.

The Indian House Lake station has twenty-two recoveries from the 1984 banding effort. A Black X Mallard Hybrid was recovered in Rhode Island and a pintail was shot later in Delaware. The recovery location for 20 Indian House

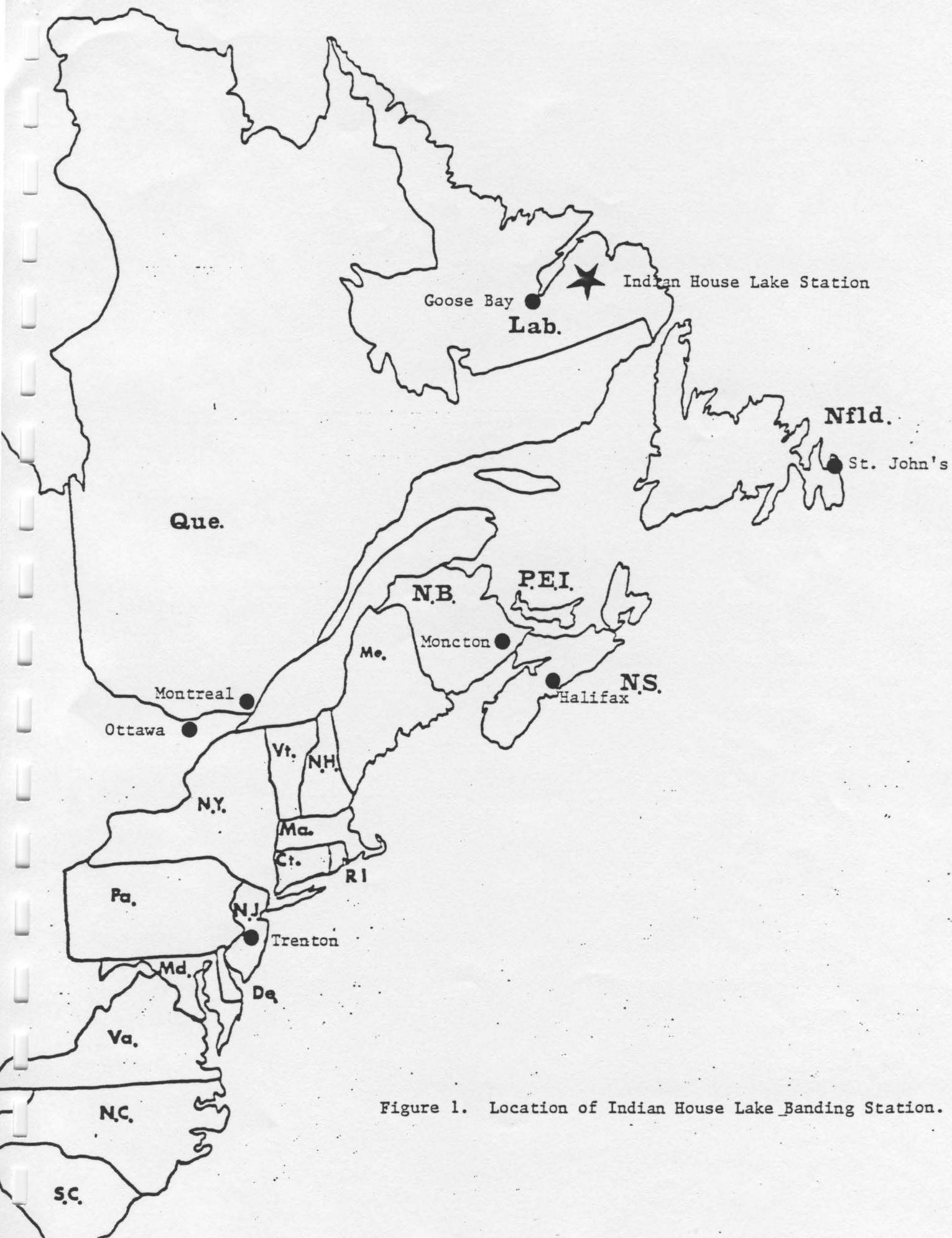
Lake and 88 other station Black Ducks is shown in Figure 2. Further interpretation of this data can be carried out when more recoveries are available.

Costing

Labrador banding expenses have traditionally been high. Transportation and wages for expert help quickly inflate costs and station expenses may be triple that for more southerly areas. Compared to 1984 station costs decreased approximately \$1700. The following is a breakdown of Indian House Lake expenses:

Commercial aircraft	1098.00
Bush plane charter	2202.00
Wages & expenses	5628.00
Lodging	333.00
Bait	325.00
Equipment purchases	2400.00
repairs, food, fuel	
Total	11,986.00

The New Jersey Waterfowlers assistance (2734.00) to this station was historically significant in that it was the first time such a group contributed to the Atlantic Region Banding program. Your contribution to a successful operation and to the management of our waterfowl populations was sincerely appreciated.



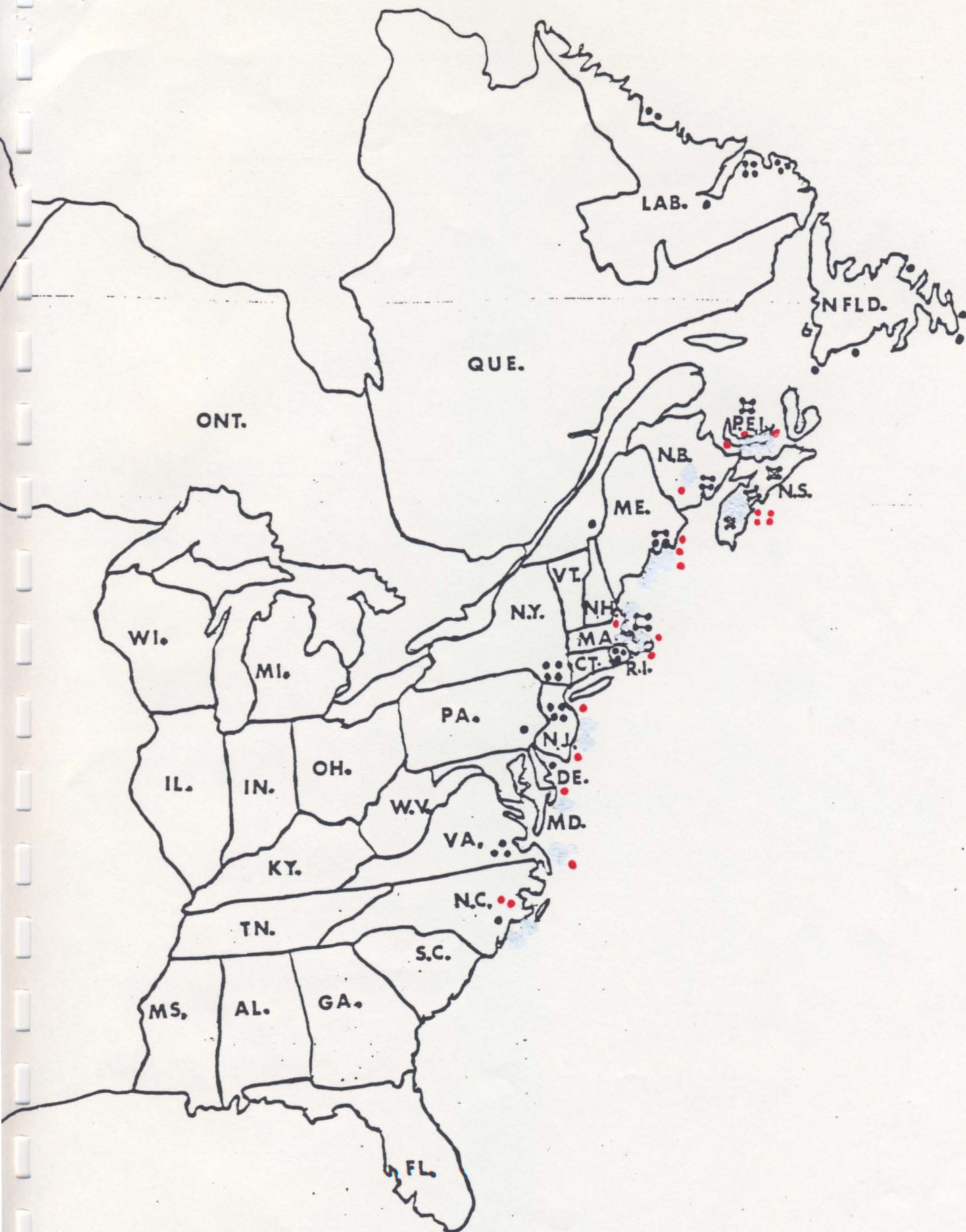
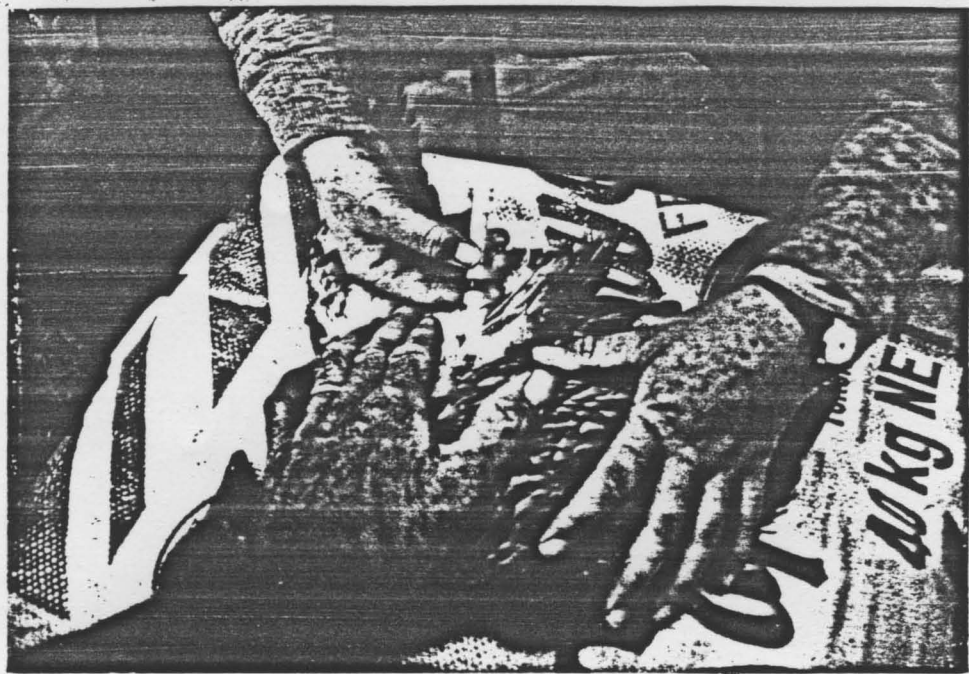
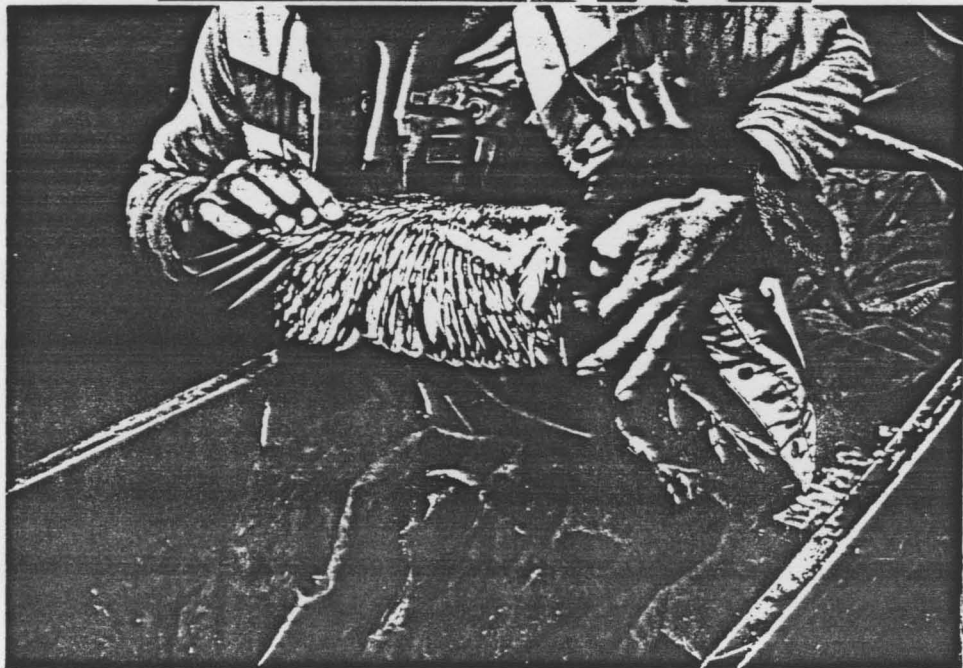


Figure 2. Labrador Black Duck Recoveries 1981-84

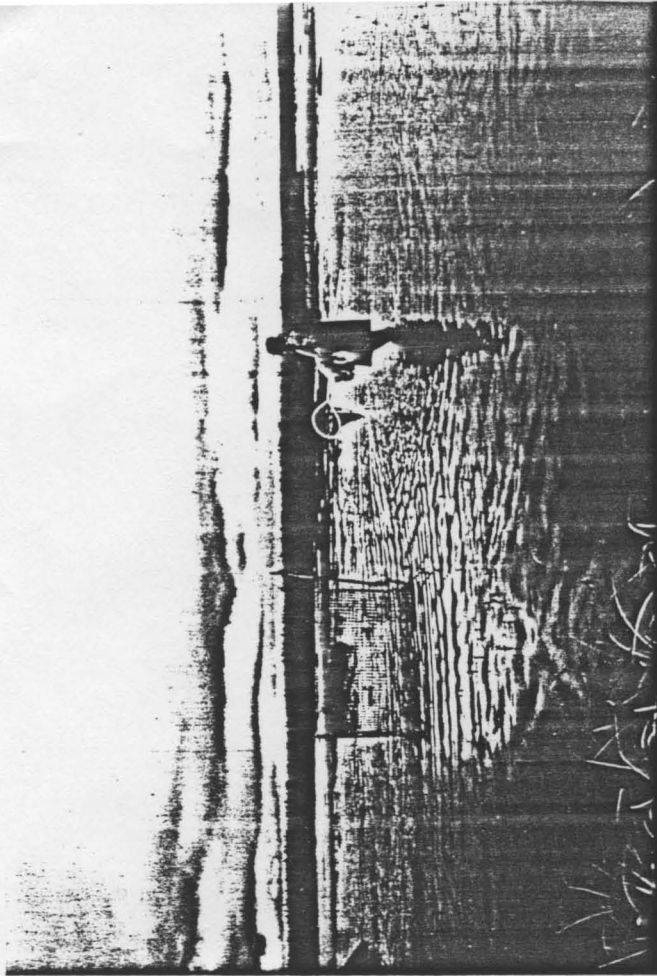
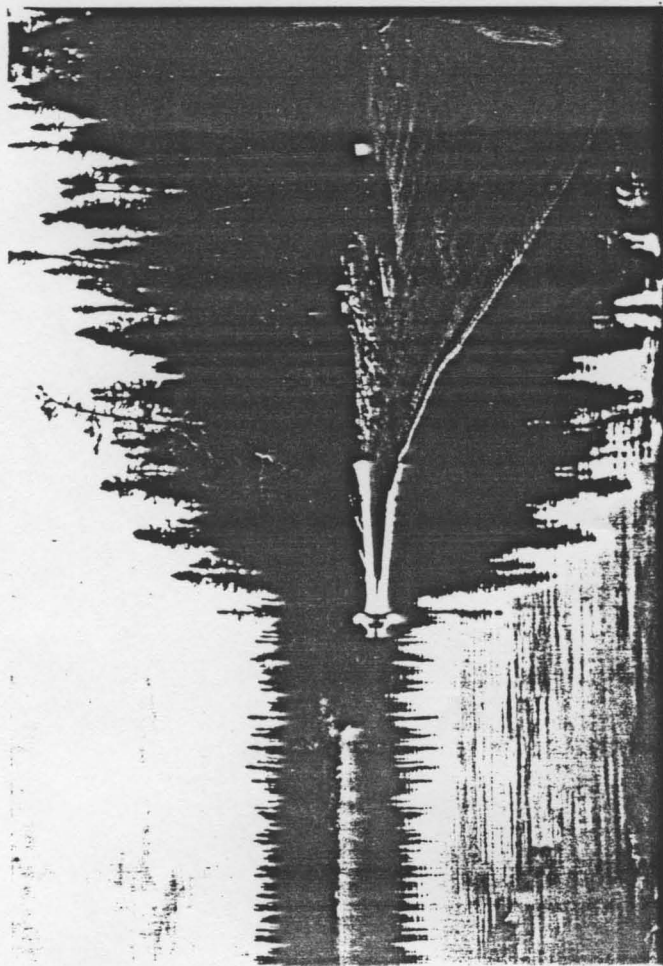
Indian House Lake recoveries —●—
 Other station recoveries —●—



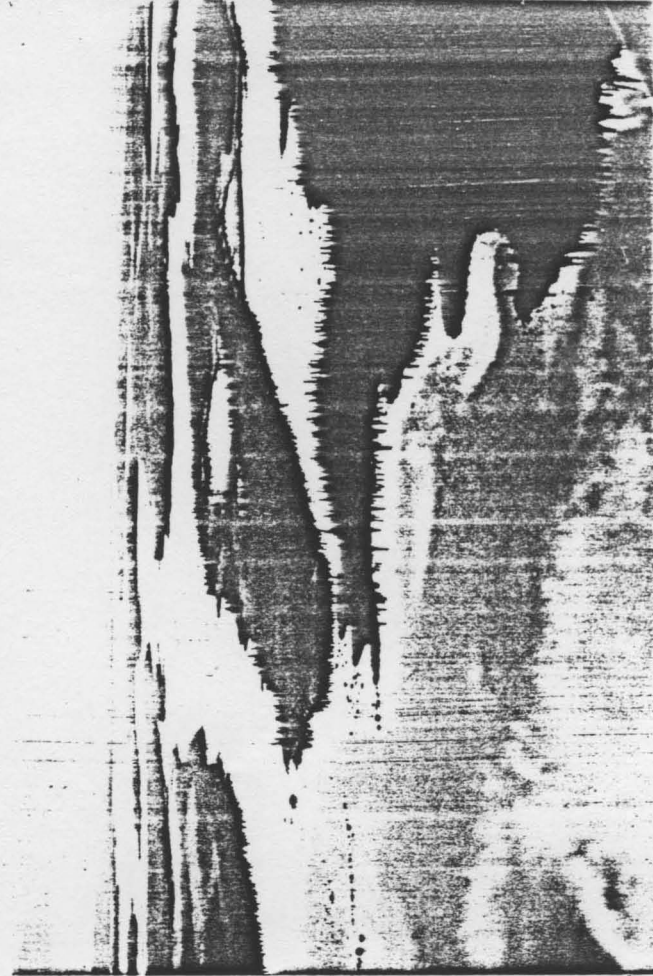
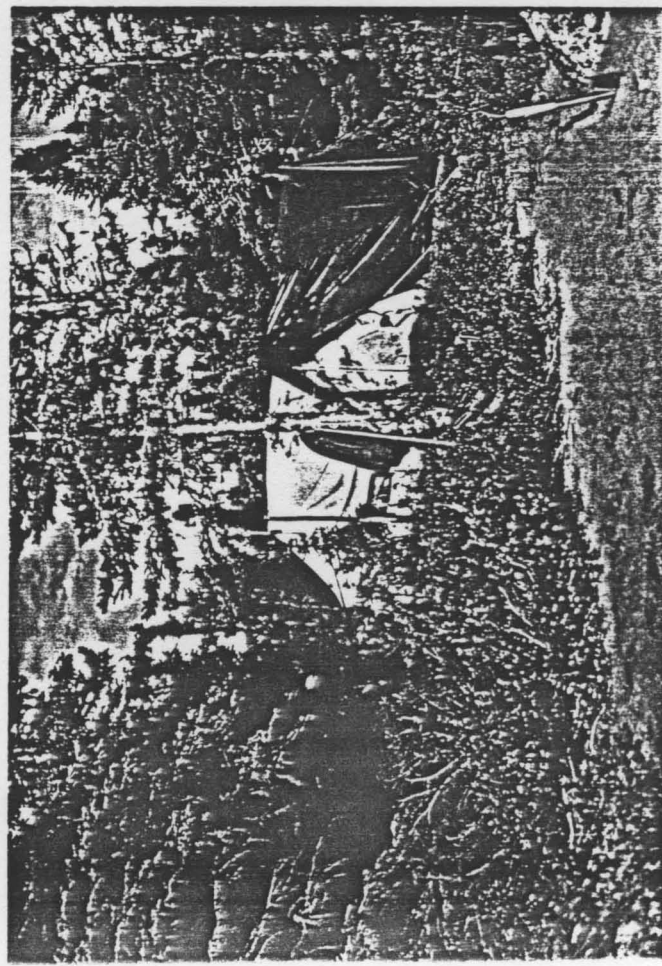
*Original photos
sent to New Jersey
Warner Horne*

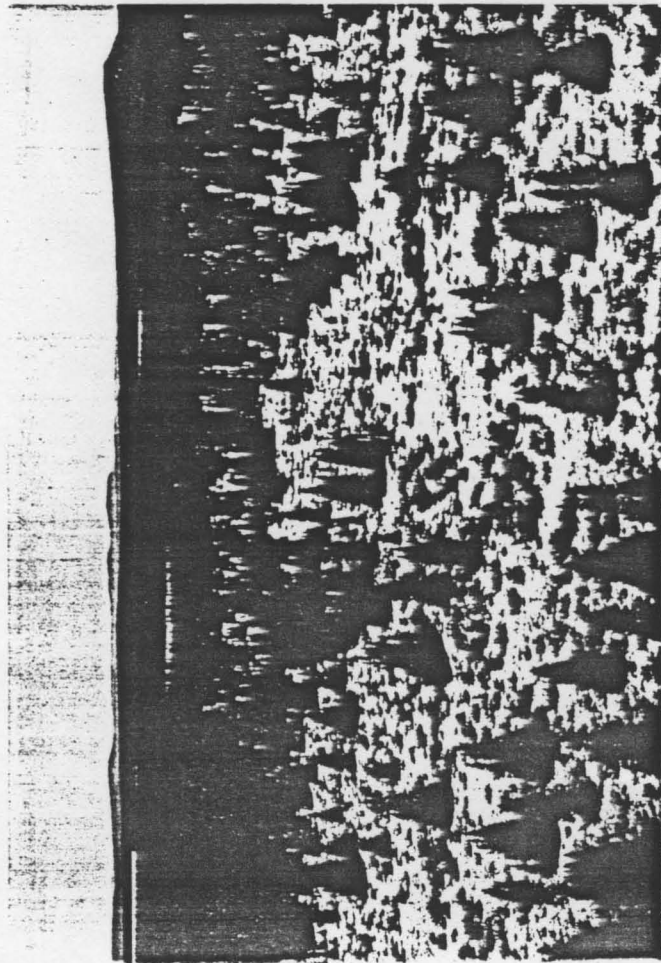


Black Ducks are the target species for Labrador studies

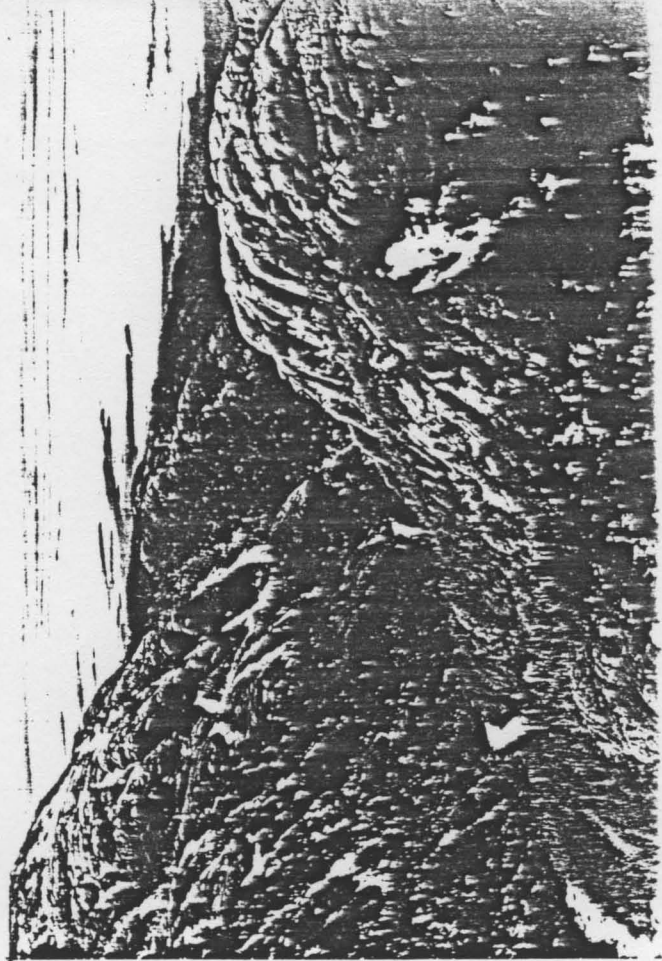


Indian House Lake campsite and work area





Large expanses of rugged terrain common to Labrador



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