

Heidi Wiebe

From: Jason Charlwood [j_charlwood@ducks.ca]
Sent: Wednesday, October 06, 2004 8:41 AM
To: hwiebe@dehcholands.org
Subject: 2003 DUC dehcho recon survey

Heidi,

Just wanted to get this summary report to you before the meeting, hope I made it. I had passed it to Bill Carpenter to have a look and he wanted me to include that WWF would also support the protection of the Falaise Lake Area. A more complete DUC report will follow. Any questions just give me a call. Thanks.

PS. I would have sent a CD but too late so I'm sending the report then the figures separately due to their size.

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Summary of the 2003 Preliminary Results from the Dehcho Small Scale Waterbird Survey



by
**Ducks Unlimited Canada
Western Boreal Program**

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In 2003, Ducks Unlimited Canada (DUC) conducted aerial surveys in the southeast Dehcho to investigate wetland use by waterfowl during approximate breeding (Figure 1) and staging periods (Figure 2). Lakes and wetland complexes were chosen within or near the Interim Land Withdrawals with the intent that information collected would assist planners and communities with future land-use decisions. These were preliminary small scale surveys and the results cannot be applied throughout rest of the Dehcho region. Peak wetland use by waterfowl in any area is dependent on seasonal factors that may shift annually. While our survey dates are scheduled to capture peak times, we can only make general statements based on the limited data collected.

Community members from the Dehcho assisted with most surveys, giving local people an opportunity to learn about DUC's waterbird research and providing DUC an opportunity to learn about the area from community members.

One breeding pair survey was flown June 18 to 20 (Figure 1 and 3). During this survey, we flew 1584 km of transects while recording all waterbirds within 150 meters of either side of the aircraft, covering 475 km². This took 21.3 hours with a helicopter. During this survey, 17 species of waterfowl were detected and of these species, scaup were the most prevalent followed by northern shoveler and ring-necked Duck. The Falaise Lake area (Block 12) and the area on the southern shore of Tathlina Lake (Block 1) had the highest densities of waterbirds of the areas surveyed with an overall duck density of approximately 19 and 14 ducks per square kilometre respectively. These areas also had the highest breeding duck pair densities with 4 pairs per square kilometre in both areas, twice that of the area with the next highest density.

One staging survey was flown from September 9 to 12 (Figures 2 and 4). During this survey, we flew 1013 km of transects while recording all waterbirds within 200 meters of each side of the aircraft, covering 405 km². Due to the difficulty of identifying ducks to species during this survey, we categorize the observations into diving, dabbling and unidentified ducks. Diving duck species were most commonly detected during this survey and we observed the highest numbers of staging waterbirds in the Falaise Lake area (Block 12), with an overall duck density of approximately 44 ducks per square kilometre. This area also had higher numbers of ruddy duck, redhead and blue-winged teal than any other previously surveyed DUC project areas in the Northwest Territories.

The Falaise Lake area (Block 12) clearly stood out as having the highest density of waterbirds of the areas we surveyed in the Dehcho in 2003. DUC is committed to working with the Dehcho in any effort to conserve and protect wetlands in their traditional lands. We would be happy to assist in moving the Falaise Lake area through the Protected Areas Strategy if the desire arose. We will be submitting a more comprehensive report on our findings from the 2003 Dehcho small scale waterbird survey to the Dehcho in the near future.