

Ducks Unlimited in the Western Boreal Forest: Utikuma Project

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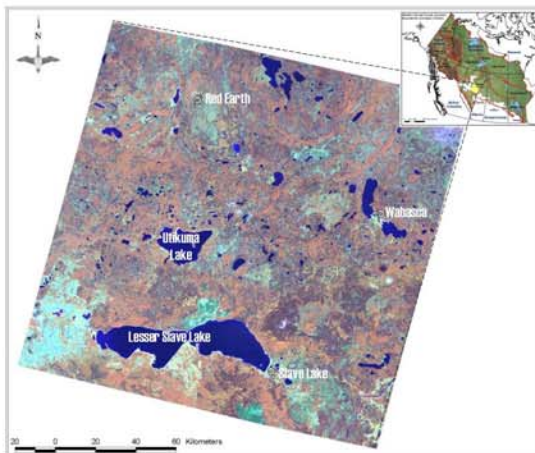
The Western Boreal Forest

The western boreal forest is second only to the prairie pothole region in terms of continental waterfowl production and is ranked third in priority of the twenty-six most important waterfowl habitats in North America. Because waterbird information is scarce in this region, Ducks Unlimited Canada initiated a series of projects in collaboration with several partners to investigate waterbird use in the boreal forest.

The Utikuma Project

Aerial waterbird surveys were conducted from 2000 to 2002 to look at bird use in the Utikuma Lake area during breeding, brood rearing, and staging periods (Figure 1). Additionally, using satellite imagery, a detailed habitat mapping project was completed for the entire study area. These projects were designed to assess the relative importance of various wetland types to waterbird communities.

Figure 1. Satellite imagery of the Utikuma project area.



Would You Like More Information?

- For more information on the Western Boreal Forest Program or the Utikuma Project please contact the Western Boreal Office.
- Help yourself to the brochures provided.
- Please take a business card.



Breeding Pair Surveys

- 19 breeding duck species were recorded in all years.
- Mallard, blue-winged teal, bufflehead, ring-necked duck, and American wigeon account for more than 75% of all breeding pairs each year.
- Northern shoveler, white-winged scoter, redhead, and ruddy duck have all increased since 2000.



Brood Surveys

- Broods were observed from 16 duck species over 3 years.
- Mallard, bufflehead, ring-necked duck, and American wigeon produced the most broods each year.
- Since 2000, noticeable increases in broods have been recorded for American wigeon, gadwall, northern shoveler, canvasback, and redhead.



Staging Surveys

- Lubicon, Loon, Muskwa, Tepee, and Bat Lakes, along with other un-named lakes were all observed to host close to, or in excess of 10,000 staging birds each year surveyed.
- In 2001, Lubicon and Loon lake alone hosted more than half of all waterbirds counted out of 150 wetlands surveyed.
- Shorebirds, most dabbling ducks, loons, and grebes migrated before many of the diving ducks, geese, and swans.

