



## Early Winter Habitat Conditions In Canada

December 24, 2003

*Habitat conditions in eastern Canada continue to be very good to excellent while dry conditions persist over much of the central prairies and parklands. Habitat conditions have begun to improve in southern British Columbia but remain dry in central and northern parts of the province. With a generally poor frost seal in the west, considerable snow accumulation will be needed to substantially improve spring habitat conditions.*

Habitat conditions throughout **Atlantic Canada** continue to be very good to excellent. In many parts of the region several storm events have deposited major amounts of precipitation (both rain and snow).

Wetland habitat in southern **Quebec** is also in very good condition as a result of above normal precipitation throughout the province.

Above-normal precipitation has continued across most of southern **Ontario**. Habitat in the south is generally in very good to excellent condition with the exception of the extreme southwest corner near Windsor where habitat is rated as good. Very good habitat conditions extend north to the North Bay area and west to Ste Saint Marie. Further west very good habitat degrades to only fair near Thunder Bay. Habitat in the Timmins clay belt continues to be rated as good. Heavy late fall rains and several early winter snowstorms have improved habitat in the Lake of the Woods region.

Habitat conditions range from fair to good throughout much of the **Boreal Forest**. Very good conditions exist across northern Saskatchewan and in the far north of Manitoba.

Habitats in southern **Manitoba** continue to be very dry except in and around Riding Mountain National Park and east toward Lake Manitoba where good to fair conditions exist. Fair habitat exists in the Interlake area. Continued abundant precipitation in the extreme southeast corner of the province has maintained very good habitat.

Much of the north-western **Saskatchewan** prairie and the central and eastern Aspen Parklands continue very dry. Precipitation accumulations range from 10 percent of normal near Kindersley to 60 percent of normal elsewhere in this region. Good to fair habitat conditions extend in a narrow band from the Boreal Forest south through the central Aspen Parkland and into the prairies near Moose Jaw. Good habitat conditions still exist in the southwest corner of the province.

Lack of fall precipitation in the **Alberta** Peace Parklands and western Aspen Parklands has resulted in habitat conditions being downgraded to fair. Central areas of the parklands are in fair to good condition while the south-eastern aspen parklands are in fair to poor condition. In the prairies good to fair habitat conditions exist from Calgary to Lethbridge and improve to good near

Medicine Hat. South of Lethbridge along the Milk River ridge conditions are dryer and habitat conditions are rated as fair.

Wetter conditions have returned to south-central and south-eastern **British Columbia** where habitat conditions are rated as good in the Okanogan and Kootenay inter-mountain regions. Habitat in the central inter-mountain regions near Williams Lake is dryer and rated as fair. In the northern part of the province, habitat grades from good in the west inter-mountain region to fair in the eastern Peace River Valley. Continuing below-normal precipitation in the north-eastern portion of the province is beginning to impact habitat quality.

