



## Late Summer Habitat Conditions in Canada

August 21, 2006

*Habitat conditions have remained fairly stable over the past month. Conditions in eastern Canada remain very good while conditions are more varied in western Canada where the warm, dry weather continues. With few exceptions, waterfowl production was average or better throughout the country this year.*

Weather in much of **British Columbia** has been warm and dry over the past month. The warm, dry weather has combined with a low snowpack and early spring melt to produce low streamflows over much of the province. Coastal areas have received little precipitation during the summer and no precipitation in the last month. As a result, the lower Fraser River system is now experiencing 20-year low water levels, and conditions in the region have been downgraded accordingly. Crops in coastal areas are now being harvested and some perennial cover has already been cut four times. Broods in the coastal area are now in class III stage and some hens have second broods that are in class I stage. Early migrants should arrive in the area within the next month.

There has been no precipitation in the southeastern Interior in the past month with the exception of some rain in the Columbia system. Streamflows in the Kootenay system are now at a 20-year low. The southern Interior has also had a lack of precipitation in the past month and temperatures have been hot. Production in the southern Interior is expected to be good at mid and high elevations and only fair at lower elevations. Waterfowl including late nesting species such as ruddy ducks now have broods in class III stage and scaup broods are now moving into class II stage. In the central Interior, the mid-Fraser River system is also experiencing 20-year low water levels and weather has been warm and dry. Brood habitat is generally in good condition in the central Interior with the exception of areas around Prince George and Williams Lake, which are below normal. Vegetation growth has been good in the area, but many wetlands are now showing excessive algal growth.

Despite some good recent rains, precipitation has been well below average in the Peace region and the Peace River system is at a record low level. Uplands are now in poor condition in the Peace.

Habitat in the far northeast remains in fair-good condition.

July was hot and dry in much of **Alberta**, but habitat conditions generally remain unchanged from last month. The parklands including Red Deer received a good amount of rain in early August. There was also a significant hail storm south and west of Red Deer that left field water in the area. Production was good in Alberta this year and larger sized waterfowl broods are abundant.

In **Saskatchewan**, wetlands remain in good to excellent condition across the parklands and in fair to poor condition in the prairies. Habitat in the Missouri Coteau is in fair shape as warm weather has dried up some of the wetlands. The southeast is very dry and wetlands in the region are in poor to fair shape. The parklands including the Allan Hills, Thickwood Hills and Touchwood Hills have good to excellent moisture. Large numbers of broods have been observed ranging in size from class IA to III. Given the good wetland conditions, mallards are still being observed with class IA ducklings. The outlook is good for an above average fall flight. Harvest is well underway across most of the province and crops like winter wheat are already harvested and in the bin. Swathing of canola, wheat, barley, and peas has already begun. Some flocks of mallards have already been observed flying and feeding in harvested fields.

With the exception of about an inch of rain that fell last week, there has been little precipitation in southwestern **Manitoba** in the past month. Wetlands are flooded into the cover but have receded into their traditional basins with the recent lack of precipitation. Wetlands continue to be in very good to excellent condition due to their high levels in the spring and early summer, but additional precipitation will be needed to maintain them. Harvest was early this year and soil moisture is currently low in the uplands. Waterfowl production was excellent in southwestern Manitoba this year.

Habitat conditions are variable in the **Western Boreal Forest**. Despite having a high drought code, the habitat conditions throughout the Yukon are reported as average. Water levels in rivers and streams are very high throughout the Yukon. The high water levels in rivers do not benefit broods, although oxbows and wet areas along the rivers could be beneficial for late season brood rearing and staging. No brood surveys took place in the Yukon this summer, but DUC biologists believe that average brood production took place in the territory this year.

Water levels are good in the Northwest Territories (NWT) and were especially high in the north, around Inuvik. Unfortunately the high water levels and early spring did not coincide with high brood production. On one DUC project near Inuvik, scaup broods were half as numerous as they have been in recent years. Further south in the NWT, late nesting species, like scaup and ring-necked ducks fared better than early nesting species. Conditions in the NWT should be good for moulting, staging, and migrating waterbirds.

In the boreal region of British Columbia precipitation has been sparse around Fort St. John and average around Fort Nelson. Habitat conditions have been below average in these areas over the past few years, although the boreal wetlands seem resistant and brood production should be near normal.

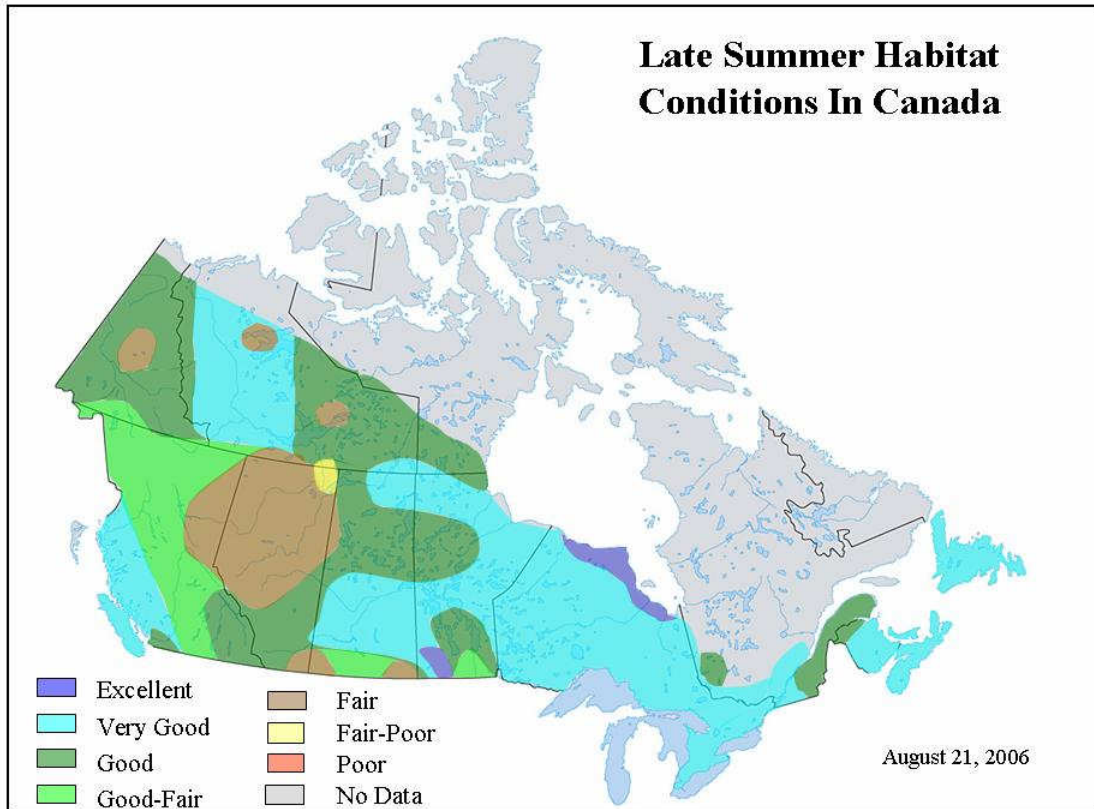
Precipitation was average in the boreal region of the Prairie Provinces with the exception of Saskatchewan and the Peace River Delta, where precipitation was above average. Production was very good in central areas of Saskatchewan. Reports from Melfort and Meadow Lake indicate very good water conditions and an abundance of waterfowl. No movement of birds or flocking has been noted in these areas at this time. In northern Alberta, conditions were mainly below average, although production was average to above average. A high number of mallard, ring-necked duck, American wigeon, and scaup broods were observed on surveys.

The long range forecast (0-3 months) predicts average temperatures in the boreal regions of Saskatchewan and Manitoba, and above average temperatures elsewhere in the western boreal forest. Below average precipitation is forecast for boreal regions of British Columbia, as well as the Yukon, NWT, and northern Manitoba. Precipitation is forecast to be above average further south in Manitoba (the Interlake region, The Pas), and in northeastern Alberta and northwestern Saskatchewan.

Little has changed in **Ontario** since July with wetlands continuing to be rated as very good to excellent throughout the province. Despite hot temperatures, brood habitats across the southern regions of the province remain at or near full supply, due largely to extreme single-day rainfall events. Although northern Ontario received below-normal precipitation for the month, conditions also remain very good. Broods continue to be observed in the field suggesting a protracted hatch, while waterfowl numbers are beginning to build on some coastal marshes. Waterfowl production is expected to be above average for Ontario in 2006.

Temperatures and precipitation totals in July were above average throughout **Quebec**. Habitat conditions have been maintained by the abundant precipitation and conditions currently range from good to very good. Water levels in the St. Lawrence River are above average and water levels are also high elsewhere in the province. Waterfowl production was very good in Quebec this year; broods are abundant and clutch size was average.

Habitat conditions are very good throughout **Atlantic Canada**. Sufficient water levels were maintained in DUC wetlands by sporadic rain events. Seasonable temperatures and precipitation amounts have resulted in waterfowl production that is on par with past years. Very good habitat conditions have resulted in successful brood production in late nesting species such as ring-necked ducks and blue- and green-winged teal.



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