



Ducks Unlimited Canada
CANADA'S CONSERVATION COMPANY

Winter Habitat Conditions in Canada

January 20, 2006

Winter has been unseasonably mild and dry in many regions of the country. As such, previously good conditions in many regions have been downgraded this month.

With the exception of the coast, conditions are generally below average in **British Columbia**. The coast region recently received 27 consecutive days of rain and ditches and wetlands are now full. Good numbers of waterfowl are present in the region and they continue to feed on forage and cover crops. The majority of the snow geese that were in the Fraser River Delta have now moved south with approximately 4,000 remaining in the area. In the Interior, snowfall has been below average to average and temperatures have been unseasonably mild. Snow pack is minimal at lower elevations in the Interior, and increases at higher elevations. The Peace is experiencing a record dry period and temperatures have been unseasonably mild.

In **Alberta**, areas south of Red Deer have received average to above average precipitation since the beginning of September. For the same period, areas in the north including Edmonton and Grande Prairie have below average precipitation totals. However, precipitation totals from November to present are below average to extremely dry for all of Alberta except the extreme southwest. Mean temperatures this winter have been 2-5°C above normal for all areas of Alberta. There are minimal snow accumulations throughout the Province with the exception of the extreme northeast (Wood Buffalo) and the mountains.

Winter has been unseasonably mild in **Saskatchewan**. The parklands currently have 6-10 inches of accumulated snow, which is slightly below average for this time of year. The northwestern parklands have fairly good moisture levels due to the abundant precipitation they received this past fall. In the prairies, conditions have been drier and unseasonably warm and fields are generally bare and dry. Areas near Melfort and Saskatoon received a good amount of snow in the past week.

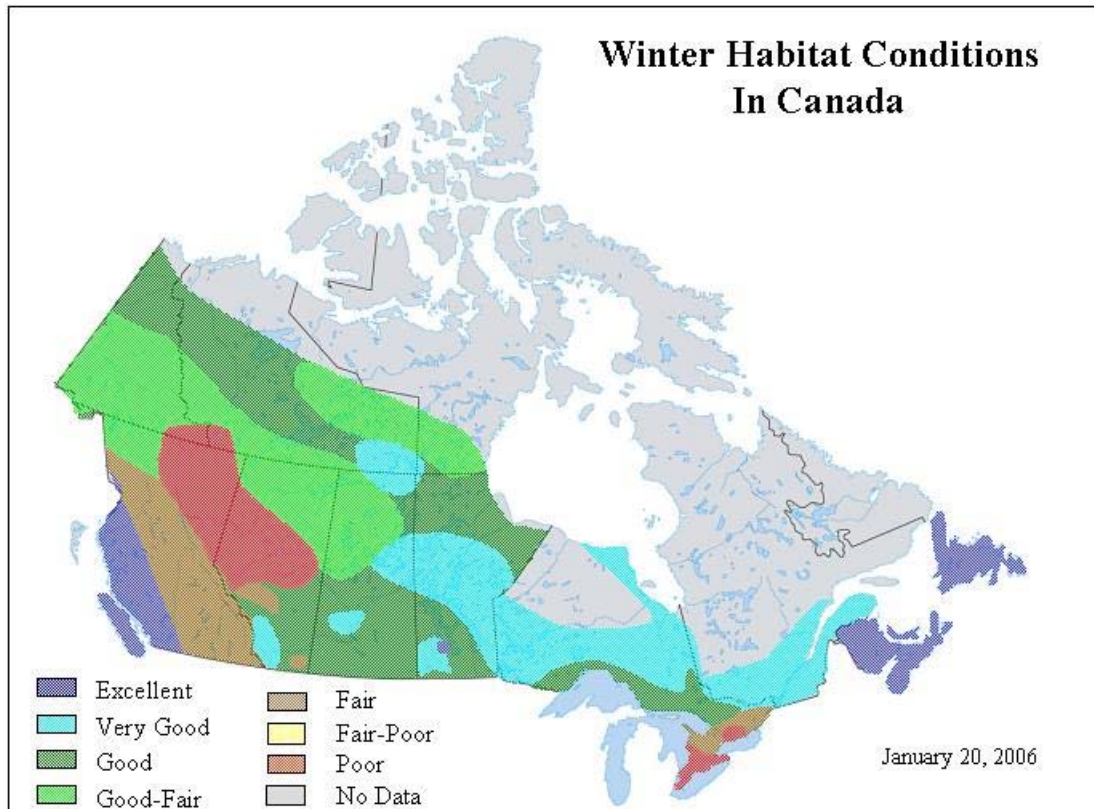
Conditions in southwestern **Manitoba** now range from good to excellent with snow accumulations increasing towards the northeastern limit of the region. Since the beginning of November, precipitation has been well above average north of Brandon and average to well above average south of Brandon. The area around Deloraine and Killarney has received very little snow and large amounts of soil are visible in fields. The area including Neepawa and Dauphin has good snow accumulations and the area is now rated as excellent.

With the exception of the area surrounding Yellowknife, which has average snow accumulation, the **Western Boreal Forest** has received below average amounts of snow this winter. Temperatures have been above average throughout the region.

A continuation of mild, soggy weather into January has wiped out most early season snow accumulations across southern **Ontario**. Although wetlands are generally at full supply throughout the region, an already limited frost seal has now all but disappeared. Habitat conditions currently range from poor in the southwestern and central parts of the Province to fair in the southeast, however, conditions improve across the Muskoka, Algonquin and upper Ottawa Valley regions, where snow still remains. Although snow accumulations are below normal throughout much of northern Ontario, conditions are still good to very good.

Mean temperatures continue to be above average across **Quebec**, especially in the central region and along the St. Lawrence River. Temperatures were above 0°C for three days in early January and this thaw increased the level of the St. Lawrence by an average of 1.1 m. This should help to maintain habitat conditions throughout the Province. Snowfall has been above normal in southwestern and eastern regions and normal for the remainder of the Province. Temperatures are now near normal and abundant precipitation is forecast for the Province.

Temperatures have been unseasonably mild in **Atlantic Canada** and rain has been plentiful. Most coastal areas and some inland waters have remained ice-free and are supporting larger than normal numbers of Canada geese and black ducks. Birds that typically move further south into the United States or along the Atlantic Coast are remaining in coastal areas throughout the region. These ice-free areas are providing waterfowl with access to abundant food supplies, which will help to ensure the good health and overall success of these waterfowl over the coming winter months and into the breeding season.



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