



Ducks Unlimited Canada
CANADA'S CONSERVATION COMPANY

Winter Habitat Conditions in Canada

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In British Columbia abundant snow has slightly improved conditions in the central and northern Interior and in the Peace region. Levels of accumulated snow are good or better in the parklands further improving the outlook for habitat conditions in the spring. Dry conditions are persisting in the prairies of Alberta and Saskatchewan and there is little to no accumulated snow throughout much of the region. Conditions are generally good in the Western Boreal Forest. In eastern Canada temperatures have returned to more seasonal levels after a mild early winter and habitat conditions remain very good.

Coastal **British Columbia** has received abundant precipitation this winter and accumulated snow is above average. Waterfowl over-wintering in the coastal region were dispersed by recent storms and suffered some short-term effects, but their food source was not affected. Migrant snow geese and trumpeter swans should reach peak numbers in the coastal region in the next month as they return from the south.

The southern Interior has received above average snowfall and has been slightly colder than normal this winter. However, the frost seal in the region is poor and wetland conditions are also below average. In the central Interior precipitation has been 50 per cent above average and mid-low elevation snow pack is good. The frost seal remains below average in the central Interior but the abundant precipitation has resulted in an upgrading of conditions in the region to good. Conditions in the southeast are variable but remain good overall.

The Peace region has also received 50 per cent more precipitation than normal this winter which should help to alleviate the drought that the region has experienced over the past year. As a result, conditions in the region are now considered good.

The prairies of **Alberta** continue to be dry and there is little to no accumulated snow in the region. The parklands continue to be rated good and have received average to slightly above average snowfall, amounting to 15-30 cm of accumulated snow. The Alberta Peace parklands have received above average snowfall this winter amounting to more than 30 cm of accumulated snow, which should help wetlands in the region recover from the previous year's drought. The boreal transition zone has also received average to above average snowfall as has the southern mountain region, which feeds the irrigation areas.

Conditions in the parklands of **Saskatchewan** remain good to excellent while conditions in the prairies continue to range from poor to fair. In the prairies, there is generally little accumulated snow south of the Trans Canada highway. The Missouri Coteau has 5-7 cm of accumulated snow and there is no accumulated snow in the southwestern corner of the

province where conditions were dry during much of 2006. Southeastern Saskatchewan has received above average precipitation this winter but conditions in the region were very dry going into fall.

The parklands have received abundant snow this winter. Saskatoon and other parts of central Saskatchewan received at least 25 cm of snow in a recent storm. Conditions in the northwest range from good to very good and conditions in the northcentral region of the province are very good with 30-60 cm of accumulated snow on the ground. Strong winds in the region have blown snow into depressions including wetlands and the surrounding tree rings which should help to further boost conditions this spring.

Accumulated snow is uniform and near average in southwestern **Manitoba** and the snow pack is solid with little blowing snow. However, more snow will be needed to ensure good conditions in the region this spring. The current snow pack bodes well for winter wheat planted last fall and there should help protect the crop from winter kill.

Conditions are generally good in the **Western Boreal Forest**. Levels of accumulated snow are good in the boreal regions of Manitoba and Saskatchewan with much of this region receiving precipitation ranging from 150-200 per cent of average. In the boreal region of Alberta conditions are dry in the north and improve towards the south. White Court and Grande Prairie recently received large amounts of snow. In northeastern British Columbia the mountain snow pack is good but there is little accumulated snow at lower elevations. Conditions are good in the extreme north and south of the Yukon but are below average in central portions of the territory including Dawson City. In the Northwest Territories, conditions are average around Yellowknife and Norman Wells. Conditions are better in the southwestern corner of the Northwest Territories where precipitation around Trout Lake is currently less than 200 per cent of average.

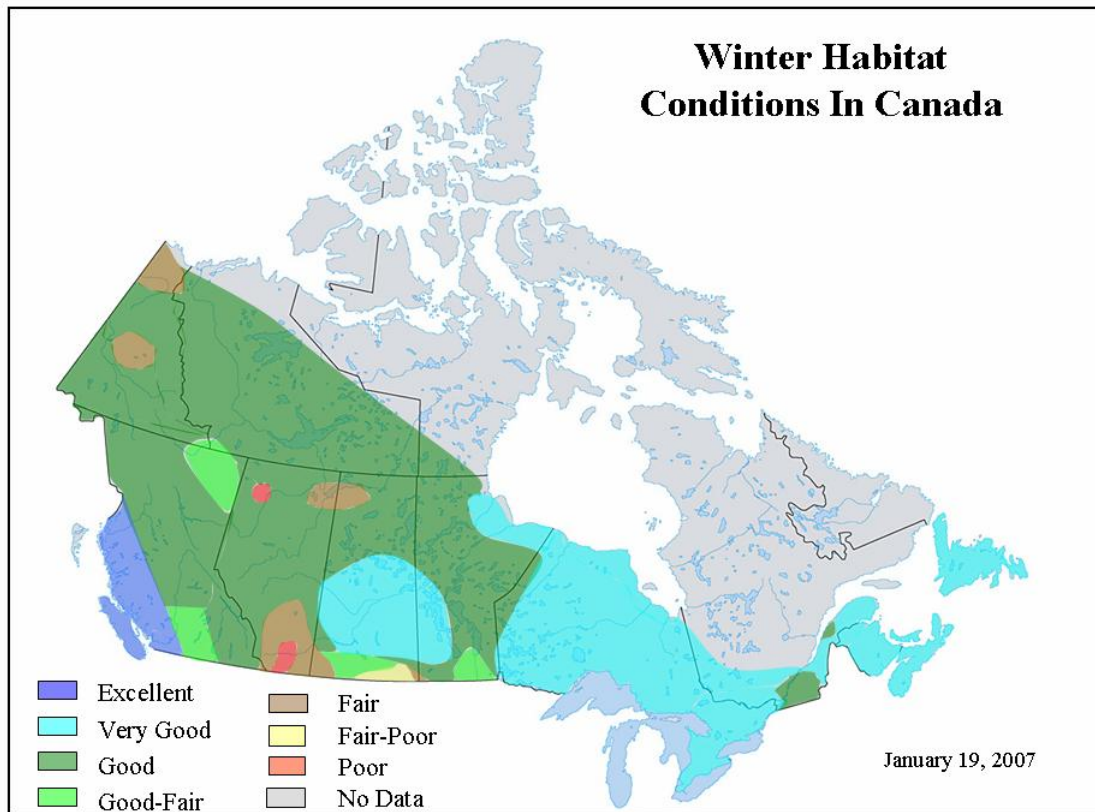
The long range forecast for the Western Boreal Forest calls for above average temperatures in all areas except the northern Yukon. Below average precipitation is forecast for northern Alberta and Saskatchewan and the Northwest Territories east of the McKenzie River. Precipitation is forecast to be average elsewhere.

Habitat conditions across **Ontario** continue to be rated as very good, despite snow accumulations being well below average for this time of the year. Precipitation totals have been normal but record-breaking above average temperatures have meant that most precipitation has fallen as rain, which has maintained wetlands at full capacity. The weather outlook is calling for a return to more seasonal temperatures, which if sustained could form a good frost seal as soil moisture levels are presently high. Lakes and rivers in southern Ontario remain ice-free and good numbers of waterfowl can be found staging along the lower Great Lakes coast.

December temperatures were 2-6°C above normal throughout **Quebec** and early January temperatures were also mild. Temperatures have now returned to normal and range from -10°C to -20°C throughout the province. Total precipitation in December was below normal in all regions except Montreal, where the precipitation fell as rain. Accumulated

snow is below average in all regions due to mild temperatures. Wetlands and other water bodies remain at full supply due to the abundant precipitation received in previous months and are ice-free. The frost seal is currently poor in all regions but should improve with the return of colder temperatures. Waterfowl remained in southern regions until the end of December which is much later than usual.

In **Atlantic Canada** snow accumulation is very low and rivers, lakes and wetlands have just frozen over within the last week. Recent weather patterns have brought some very cold temperatures and high winds to the region. The long range forecast is calling for unseasonably mild temperatures for the next week. Preliminary numbers from winter waterfowl surveys report strong waterfowl numbers throughout the region.



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