

Northern Richardson Mountains Dall's Sheep Survey
June 19 to 22, 2017
Field Summary

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An aerial Dall's Sheep survey was conducted in the Northern Richardson Mountains between June 19th and 22nd. This was a co-operative project between Government of the NWT (GNWT), Yukon Government and Gwich'in Renewable Resources Board. The survey was flown with an Astar helicopter in 29.9 hrs flight time. There were no delays for weather.

The study area included blocks surveyed in pass surveys with the addition of a small area to the north recommended by the Aklavik HTC (Figure 1). Observers scanned areas of sheep habitat above tree line as contour lines were flown with focus on high ridges (Figure 1). Sheep were classified as nursery sheep (ewes and young rams), lambs and rams with rams categorized as one-quarter, half, three-quarter, or full curl.

Preliminary Results:

A total of 647 sheep were observed (Figure 2): 323 nursery sheep (ewes, yearlings, young rams), 141 lambs, and 183 rams compared to a total of 496 sheep observed in 2014 (259 nursery sheep (ewes, yearlings, young rams), 92 lambs, 112 rams and 33 unclassified). Figure 3 shows the population over time of sheep observed during surveys in the Northern Richardson Mountains.

Other wildlife observed during the flights included 29 muskox (including 2 calves), 11 grizzly bears (including 2 cubs), 2 bull moose, 2 wolverine, and approximately 400 caribou (Figure 3). No wolves were observed.

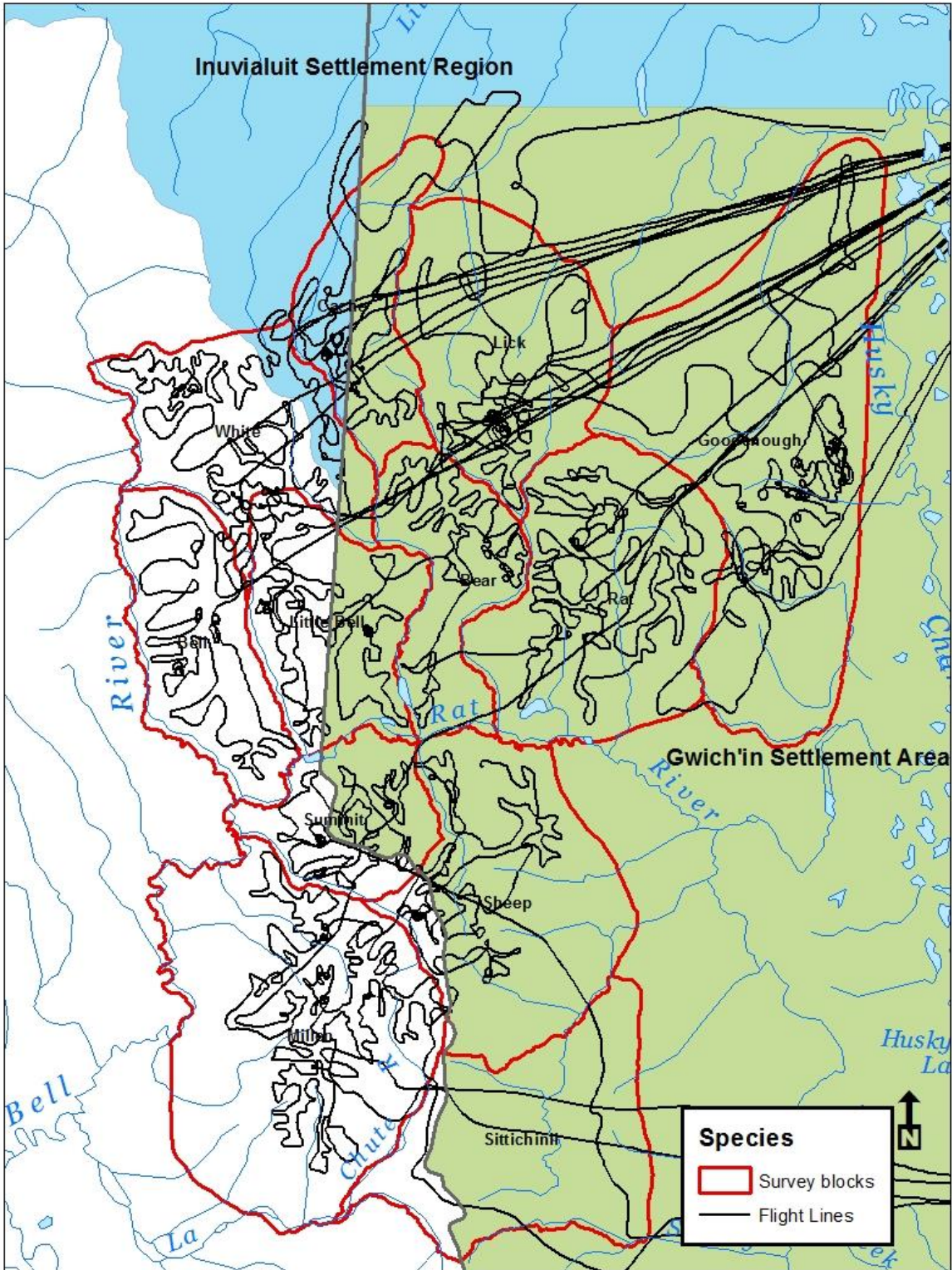


Figure 1: Study blocks, and flight lines for the survey.

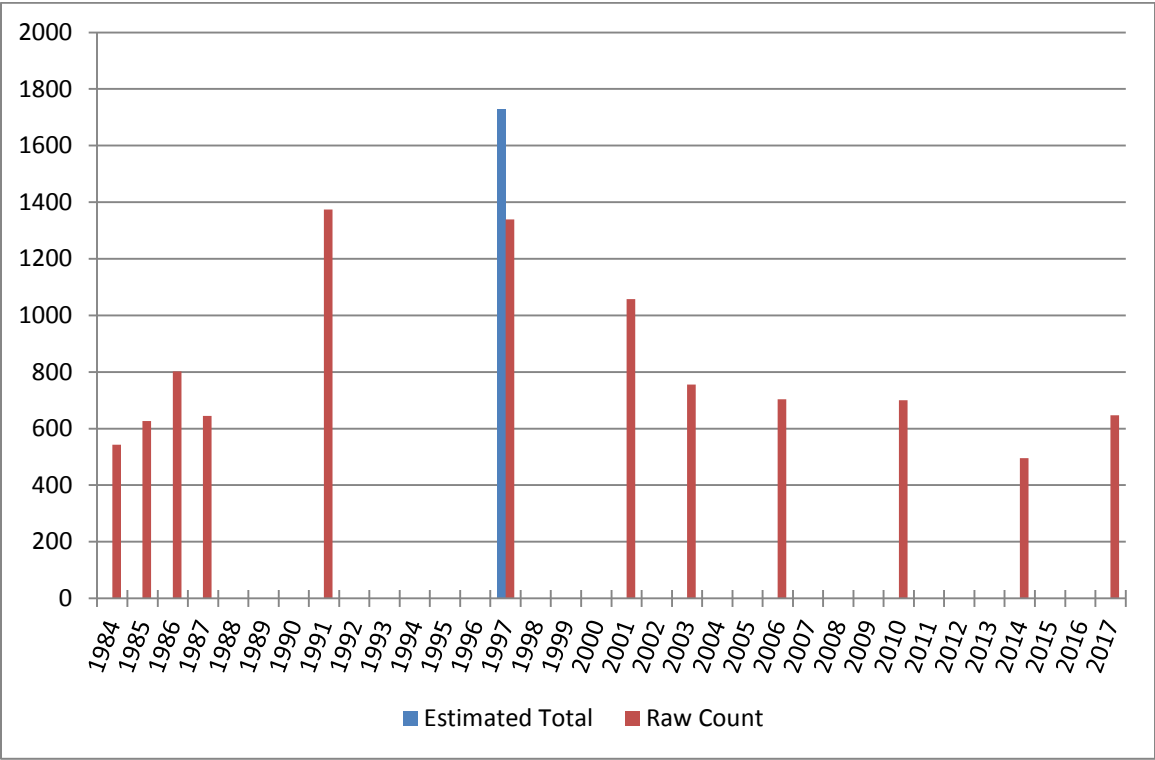


Figure 2: Population trend of Dall's sheep in the Northern Richardson Mountains.

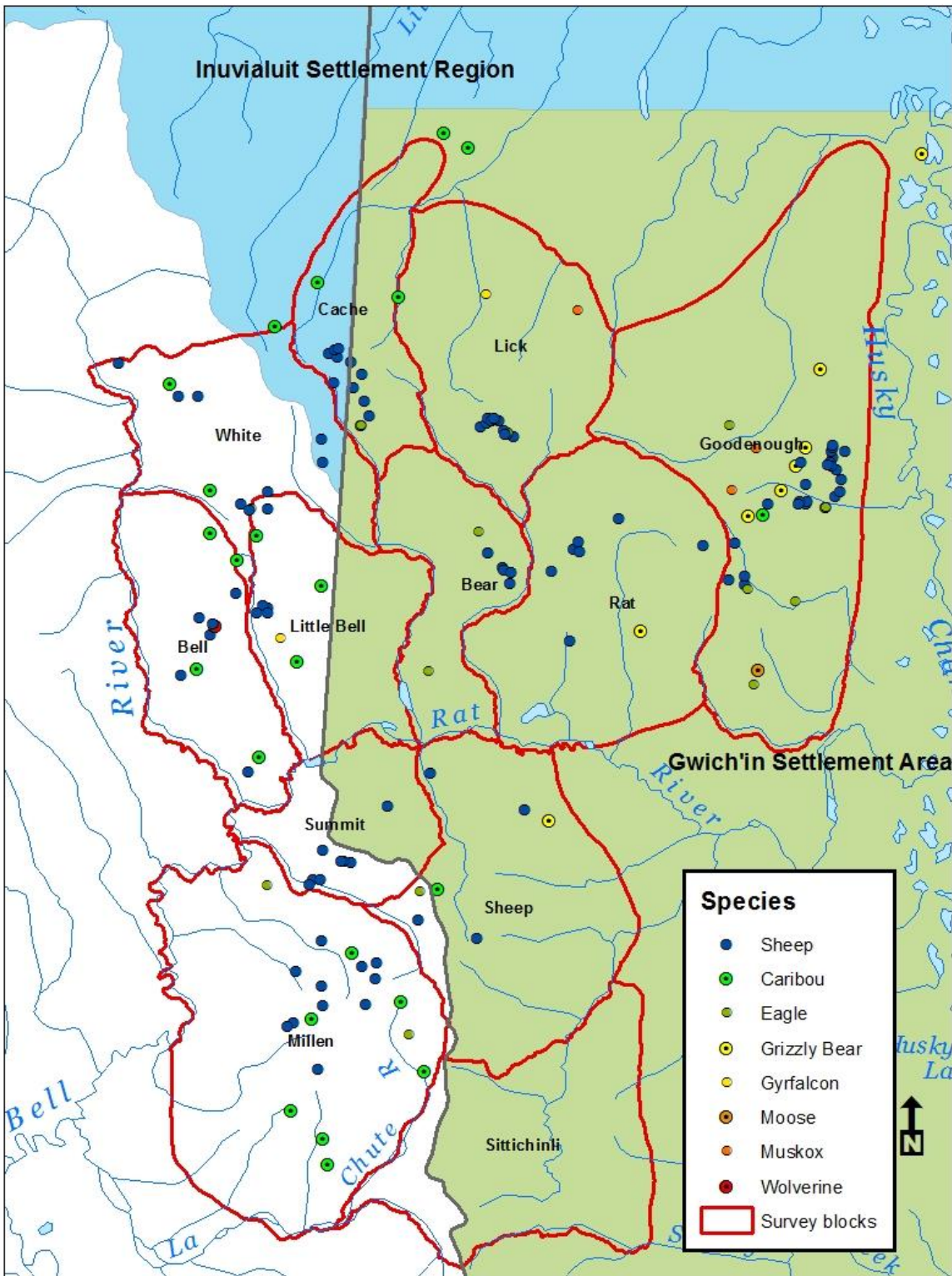


Figure 2: Wildlife Observations made during the survey.

Acknowledgments:

Daniel Benlert (Canadian helicopters) safely piloted the helicopter for this survey. We would like to thank Jim Kay (Ehdiitat RRC), and Peter Archie (Aklavik HTC) for assisting in the survey locating sheep.