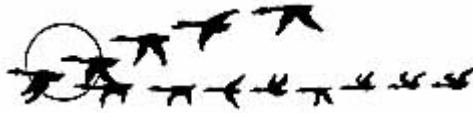
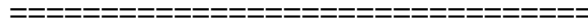


Atlantic Population Canada Geese – Ungava Peninsula
2009 Preliminary Report:
PRESEASON BANDING



Atlantic Flyway Technical Committee

Richard Cotter, Canadian Wildlife Service-Québec Region

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In 1997 a preseason banding program was initiated for Atlantic Population Canada Geese breeding on the Ungava Peninsula in Nunavik, in northern Québec. Each year from late July to mid August banding crews capture and band brood flocks of Canada Geese along the northern Hudson Bay coast (2 crews) and along the south and west coasts of Ungava Bay (1 crew). Helicopters are used to round up and help drive flightless geese toward funnel-shaped traps; when conditions are favourable each 4-person crew conducts, on average, 4-6 catches per day.

2009 Summary:

Breeding AP Canada Geese on the Ungava Peninsula in 2009 experienced a very late spring (snow melt), which resulted in a very late nest initiation and considerably lower nest density than in 2008; they also experienced a warm July and a very wet and rainy August. We estimate peak hatching occurred 5-8 July, approximately 2 weeks later than the long-term average. Banding operations along Ungava Bay were greatly affected by persistent rain which, coupled with very low production, resulted in a greatly reduced number of catches (n=11) being made and in the number of geese banded: 277 adults and 259 goslings for a total of 536 birds. Rain during banding was less a factor along Hudson Bay, though the late snow melt (and nest initiation) resulted in smaller brood flocks and hence catches; the two crews made 78 catches and banded 1113 adults and 1281 goslings for a total of 2394 Canada Geese (similar to 2007, another year with a late spring). Combining both regions, the preliminary Immature:Adult ratio in our catches is 1.11, slightly lower than the 1.21 value predicted by Eric Reed's model; this would be the lowest ratio since 2000. In conclusion, productivity of AP Canada Geese from the Ungava Peninsula in 2009 was poor.

Ungava Bay – Kuujjuaq

From 2 to 6 August 2009, a crew comprised of Pierre Brousseau (CWS), Jim Bennett (MD), Kate Guerena (DE), and Peter May (Makivik), along with Nunavik Rotors (A-Star BA) pilot Peter Duncan, banded 536 geese, including 277 adults and 259 goslings (12 other goslings were captured but were not banded due to their small size). An additional 22 previously banded adults were recaptured. Only 11 catches were made, with a mean of 49 geese per catch (range: 33-89 geese); all captured flocks contained goslings. In general, the inclement weather seriously limited the banding operations; 3.5 full days were lost due to fog and/or rain. All catches were made between the LeFroy River (between Aupaluk and Kangirsuk) and Big Island, but mainly in the Aupaluk area. We flew north of Lefroy River to Virgin Lake (north of Kangirsuk) but we did not observe any brood flocks. The ratio of immatures (goslings) to adult females with brood patches (I:BP) was 2.06:1, the lowest since banding began in 1997. As expected, plumage characteristics suggested that goslings hatched very late; most goslings were class 2A (19-27 days) and some were class 1C (14-18 days). We observed what appeared to be more flying adults than in previous years, which suggests that these adults moulted early and were nonbreeders or failed breeders. We checked the success of 56 active nests at 5 sites found during the nest surveys conducted in June. Nest success was variable: Aupaluk (n=20) 65%; Tryon Escarpment Flats (n=14) 36%; Qikirtajuaq Island, Leaf Bay (n=9) 67%; Dry Bay (n=3) 0%; and Big Island and Little Big Island (n=10) 50%. Overall, in 2009 AP Canada Goose productivity along Ungava Bay was very poor.

Hudson Bay – Puvirnituk

From 5 to 13 August 2009, two crews banded 2394 geese, including 1113 adults and 1281 goslings. One crew consisted of CWS personnel Richard Cotter, Shirley Orichefsky, Vincent Carignan, and Stéphane Turgeon, along with Coast Guard (Bell 206 Long Ranger) pilot Serge Arseneault, while the second crew was comprised of Kevin Jacobs (PA), Tom Bidrowski (VA), Benoit Audet (CWS), and Doug Holtby, pilot of the Ontario MNR A-Star B2 helicopter. An additional 61 previously banded adults were recaptured. A total of 78 catches were made by both crews, with a mean of 31 geese per catch (range: 11-67 geese); all captured flocks contained goslings. The ratio of immatures to adult females with brood patches (I:BP) was 2.53:1, the lowest since 1999. In addition to AP Canada Geese, 12 adult Cackling Geese (Richardson's; 8 new birds and 4 recaptures) and 38 Lesser Snow Geese (22 adults, 16 goslings; both blue and white phase) were captured and banded. All catches were made in an area extending approximately 185 km along the Hudson Bay coast and extending 40 km inland, specifically from the Sorehead River in the north to just south of the Mariet River in the south. Overall, in 2009 along eastern Hudson Bay AP Canada Goose productivity was poor.