

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF THE
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES
6TH COUNCIL, 38TH SESSION

RECOMMENDATION TO
COUNCIL NO. 2-38

TABLED ON JANUARY 13, 1969



December 24, 1968.
CONFIDENTIAL-
Not for release before
1st reading during the
38th Session of Council

Recommendation to Council
Tabled 9th January 13, 1969

RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL NO.2
(First Session, 1969)

BEAVER ZONES AND QUOTAS
MACKENZIE DELTA

DISPOSITION

Tabled	To Committee	Accepted as Read	Accepted as Amended	Deferred (to Session)	Rejected	Noted not Considered
13-1-69	20-1-69		20-1-69			

Beaver Zones and Quotas
Mackenzie Delta

At the 37th session, Council adopted a motion that present beaver zones and quotas in the Mackenzie Delta be abolished and that the following new quotas be established:

- (1) Head of Household: 10 Beaver
- (2) Single Persons: 5 Beaver

This same motion was also moved at the Regional Trappers Conference at Aklavik on June 23 and 24, 1968.

At the Regional Conference the Superintendent of Game explained the reasons behind the present zoning and quota system in the Mackenzie Delta, emphasizing that this system would ultimately benefit all Delta Trappers. However, the delegates demanded that the regulations be revoked and the above quotas be instituted instead.

Considered from an administrative or humane point of view there would be no arguments against the request of the people. However, there are strong objections from a game management viewpoint.

Game management aims at the most realistic harvest of any species that can be taken annually without jeopardizing the continuation of the populations. The abundance or scarcity of game or furbearing animals within ecological units defines the limits in which a game manager can work to achieve his ends.

Therefore, the wishes of the people must necessarily remain of a secondary significance if the ultimate objective is to be attained.

The present system under which a certain number of beaver can be taken from a designated area is the first step in breaking away from the over-simplified concepts of game management centering on the ideas of human desires and conveniences. This approach was taken assuming that the wish of the Territorial Government is to make the fullest use of all game resources to improve the northern economy without interfering too greatly with the traditional ways of the native people.

Generally speaking, no game resource is rationally utilized in the N.W.T. at the present time. There are definite indications that the harvest of game and fur-bearing animals could be doubled, or in some instances, even tripled without jeopardizing animal populations. Consequently, the Game Management Service has embarked upon the task of designing a meaningful program aimed at gradual increases of harvests within tolerable bounds. This should not interfere with traditional modes of living for it means a liberalization of former legislative restrictions instead of further curtailments of present rights. (Polar bear necessarily present a reversed approach):

The reasoning behind the request of the Mackenzie Delta trappers is difficult to comprehend for they ask in fact for a voluntary restriction. At present, in one particular zone, the maximum number of beaver available to one person is 7.

In other zones trappers are permitted to take in excess of sixty beaver. The average permitted take of beaver in the Delta is 25 to 30 animals.

In complying with the request of the trappers to reduce the beaver quota to ten per head of household and to five per single person we would automatically tolerate a gross under-utilization.

In 1964/65 when no specific regulation as to the take of beaver existed, 441 were harvested. The present system was implemented four years ago. The following statistics show that it has worked to the benefit of the trappers:

- | | | | | |
|-----|---------|-------|--------|----------------|
| (1) | 1965/66 | 1,168 | beaver | |
| (2) | 1966/67 | 1,466 | " | |
| (3) | 1967/68 | 1,150 | " | (not complete) |

It is expected that when all returns are tabulated for 1967/68, the figures will approximate those for 1966/67.

It is felt, therefore, that there are no valid reasons to impose a smaller quota and deprive the more aggressive trapper of an opportunity to secure additional revenues. An enthusiastic trapper will most likely be induced to venture into a remote area if the expected financial returns are sufficiently high. Whether the allowable take of five or ten beaver will provide the desired incentive is questionable, indeed.

It must be stressed that a sound game management program is based on detailed knowledge of each unit area and its game population. Unfortunately, the lack of authentic data for the different ecological units of the Northwest Territories is presently the biggest hindrance to a swift program expansion. With the exception of the Mackenzie Delta, our knowledge of game populations and their biological requirements is very limited.

For approximately seven years, a biologist of the Canadian Wildlife Service has studied the ecology of the Delta with special emphasis on muskrat and beaver. Since 1965, the Game Management officers have participated extensively in this program and a wealth of information is now available.

Although the present system of beaver quotas per established zone is based on this research this does not mean that it is the ultimate end of beaver management in the Mackenzie Delta. As game management is an empirical discipline, further experiments and subsequent assessments are necessary in order to determine the rationale of the methods employed. Unfortunately, experiments cannot be conducted conclusively within a brief period of months or even a few years. Findings must be given a chance to prove themselves, otherwise, the probability of coincidence will jeopardize the attainment of the ultimate objective.

Recommendation

As the Administration wishes to provide the Game Management Service with the opportunity to prove or disprove the validity of the present system, and to ensure that no reduction occurs in the present harvest of beaver the Commissioner, therefore, strongly recommends that the present zoning and quota system in the Mackenzie Delta be retained.

Motion: