

HAMPDEN DOWNS

Hampden Downs is a large area of mostly barrens, which runs from Birchy Lake north almost to Westport on White Bay. For certain wildlife species, it is an oasis of food in a desert of forest. Hampden Downs was identified as a Sensitive Wildlife Area by the Inland Fish and Wildlife Division in the 1980's, due to its importance to caribou as a source of food and as a calving area. The 41,182 hectares of barrens are scattered with patches of productive forest.



There are many distinctive characteristics of this fairly isolated area. It is a lichen barren completely surrounded by forest, providing the caribou's main food source, reindeer moss, during the summer months. It also produces a huge volume of blueberries, blackberries and partridgeberries over a large area, which provides food from July until snowfall for Canada geese, black ducks, common goldeneye, willow ptarmigan, other barren-ground birds, and black bears, as well as caribou.

Some of these animals in turn provide food for red-tailed hawks. The partridgeberries also overwinter, providing much needed food from late April to May, before other food sources are available. In addition, Hampden Downs has a tremendous number of small ponds containing islands, which are very important nesting areas for geese, ducks and ptarmigan. One area of Hampden Downs also has special geological features; the boulder strewn landscape (glacial erratics) is visually appealing, especially "Rocky Village".



Hampden Downs is part of the habitat of the Hampden Downs Caribou Herd, one of a number of herds of Woodland caribou (*Rangifer*

tarandus) across the province. Although not classified as "cyclic", Woodland caribou on the island of Newfoundland have undergone population fluctuations in the past, and are currently experiencing a population decline for reasons yet to be determined. A number of these caribou herds reside within the timber limits of Corner Brook Pulp and Paper Limited (CBPPL), and we realize that we have to give full consideration to the protection of adequate habitat required to maintain healthy herd levels. In 2003, CBPPL formed a Forestry-Wildlife Liaison Committee with the Newfoundland Forest Service and the Inland Fish and Wildlife Division, to deal with areas of concern to wildlife that required special consideration. Through this committee CBPPL has activated a number of measures to ensure the availability of sufficient caribou habitat. Where harvesting is to occur, we plan operations so as to avoid the calving/post-calving season (May 15 – July 30), and the wintering period (December 1 – April 30). We also designate leave areas where no harvesting is scheduled on a Five-Year Plan basis. Wildlife corridors are also established to provide continuous forest cover between blocks of forested land. These wildlife corridors may shift location from one 5-Year Plan to the next, but will always ensure forested passageways for wildlife species.

