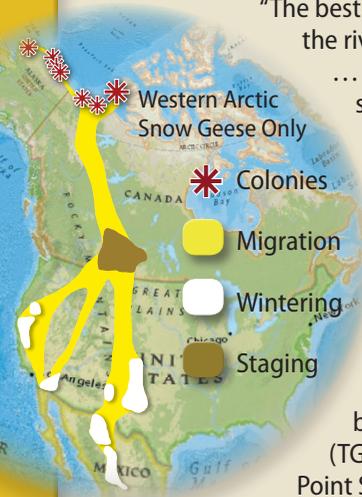


GUGEH (SNOW GEESE) ARE ABUNDANT...AND DELICIOUS!

Gugeh - Snow Geese, Wavies
*Latin name: **Cen caerulescens***

Geese, along with ducks and swans, are an important traditional food source hunted and shared in the spring and during break-up when the geese arrive and are in good shape.

"The best time to hunt is when the river starts breaking-up ... oh, you should just see the geese go back and forth, just crazy! You just don't know which way to shoot!" (Frederick Blake Jr.¹). Geese are often hunted on the islands of the Mackenzie River, especially the islands below Srehtàdhàdlaii (TG) / Srehtadhàlajji (GG), Point Separation. They're also hunted in many lakes and along the coast. Sometimes during the fall Canada Geese fly low enough to hunt, but Gugeh usually fly too high.



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hunted in many lakes and along the coast. Sometimes during the fall Canada Geese fly low enough to hunt, but Gugeh usually fly too high.

EASY RECIPES FOR GEESE

SOUP: Place geese bones and parts into a soup pot; bring to a boil and boil for 45 minutes; then add rice and tomato soup mix. You can also add macaroni or spaghetti noodles. Cook for another 15 minutes.

ROAST: Place goose in a roasting pan and add water. Cover roasting pan (with cover or foil wrap) and bake in the oven at 325° for one hour.

(Recipes from Sharon Snowshoe)

TG: Teet'it Gwich'in GG: Gwichya Gwich'in

DRIED GEESE

When we live out on [the] land, that's when my mom work with different kinds of meat, like geese — she dries it, too ... When they shoot geese they plucked it, singe it and then my mom cut all the bones off it and cut it thin, like making dry meat, then she hangs it up to dry and smoke. She keep turning it over until it's dried good. This is very good to eat (Annie Norbert²).

Hunting geese is a skill best learned from an experienced hunter or Elder, so plan trips together to ensure they can pass their knowledge on.

Other waterfowl with increasing populations include the Green-winged Teal, Northern Shoveler and Ring-necked Duck.

Photos: Shutterstock



This brochure was produced by the GSCI with scientific input and financial support from Environment Canada/Canadian Wildlife Service. Information provided by Gwich'in harvesters and Elders. Quotations are from the following GSCI and GRRB sources:

1. Gwich'in Traditional Knowledge of the Mackenzie Gas Project Area Project 2004
2. Arctic Red River Oral History Project 1989
3. Gwich'in Environmental Knowledge Project GRRB 1995-96
4. Committee on Original People's Entitlement (COPE) Story

FRIED DUCKS WITH RICE

- 2 whole duck breasts, cut in half
- 1 tbsp. oil
- 1 ½ cups steamed rice
- 4 celery stalks
- 1/2 cup barbeque sauce

Wash and dry ducks. Heat oil in a large frying pan, add celery stalks and cook until soft. Remove celery and set aside. Brown duck breasts on both sides (for ½ hour over medium heat). Brush breasts with barbeque sauce. Mix steamed rice with remainder of barbeque sauce, and cooked celery. Cover the ducks with rice mixture. Cook for another ½ hours over low heat.

(Recipe from Teet'it Gwich'in Vaka'a'hch'uu Idineht'e: Teet'it Gwich'in Cookbook)

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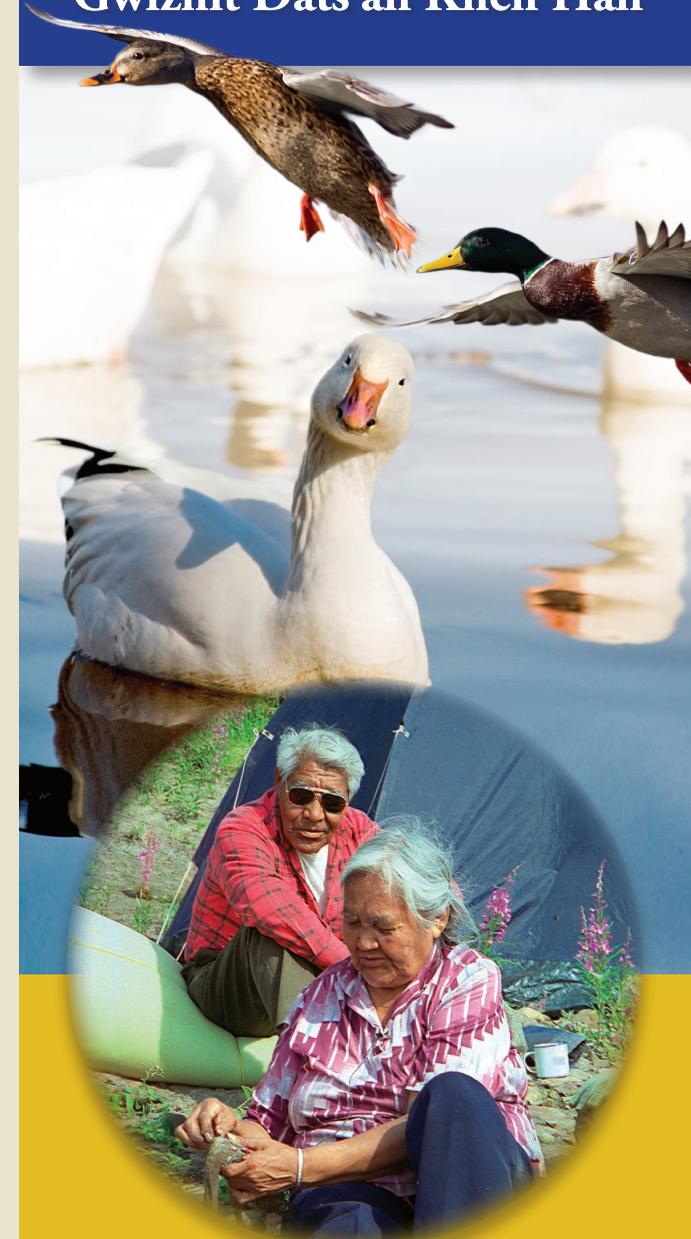
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Range map information credit:
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Cover Photo: I. Kritsch, GSCI. Duck and Geese images from Shutterstock.com and INGimage.com



Gwich'in Social & Cultural Institute

Nan Srìdatr'igwìjùnlik Gwizhìt Dats'an Kheh Hàh



Ducks and Geese in the Gwich'in Settlement Area

NEET'AI / DEHDRIK (MALLARDS) ARE STABLE AND EASY TO HUNT

Neet'aii (TG)
Dehdrik (GG) - Mallard
Latin name: *Anas platyrhynchos*

Mallards are a favourite for Gwich'in hunters — they are large and soft-fleshed. "They're well known birds, mallards, because they're the first birds [that] come into the north" (Thomas Mitchell²). They are often hunted in the spring after they migrate into the GSA. It is best to hunt for ducks in the morning or evenings, from shores of rivers and lakes. At this time, the ducks are flying to feeding areas, and a hunter in a blind can shoot the ducks when they land.

Ducklings hatch in the summer and stay with their mother until September when they can fly and take care of themselves. Mallards and other ducks are not hunted in the summer because they are taking care of their young ones.

Well, we use to do the ridding in a canoe around there and we see them ... further from the water on the lake shore, like amongst the willows and that.

That is where they make their nest (Catherine Mitchell³).

Other waterfowl with a stable population include the American Wigeon, Blue-winged Teal, Canvasback, Goldeneye, Brant, Canada and White-fronted Geese, and Swans.

WATERFOWL MANAGEMENT IN THE GWICH'IN SETTLEMENT AREA

Which government agencies are responsible?

Waterfowl (ducks and geese) are migratory. They spend their summers in the Gwich'in Settlement Area and fly south to overwinter in the southern part of the continent. Because their migrations take them across international borders, waterfowl management is a shared effort between different organizations in Canada, the United States, and Mexico. The Canadian Wildlife Service (CWS) and the United States Fish and Wildlife Service work together to monitor waterfowl populations in North America. CWS works with the Gwich'in Renewable Resources Board (GRRB) on waterfowl issues in the Gwich'in region.

Where does the information come from?

The GRRB uses Gwich'in knowledge and scientific knowledge to identify management issues, plan research and develop management plans. The GRRB often works with the Gwich'in Social and Cultural Institute to document Gwich'in traditional knowledge on wildlife.

Annual waterfowl surveys of important breeding areas have been ongoing for more than 50 years. The surveys include a count of the number of birds during flight transects. There are some transects in the Gwich'in region. The information gathered in these surveys is used to understand population trends and help set regulations for non-Aboriginal harvesting of ducks and geese.

Pluck them, and singe them, and cook it, and eat it with your family. (Jane Tyrrell³).

Feathers, you use it to make blanket out of it, make good warm blanket for travelling in winter and then you make pillow out of it. Can make a nice little seat for your chair, real nice (John Kendo Sr.³).

DEETRÈE'AA AND NJAA (BLACK DUCKS) ARE DECLINING

Deetrèe'aa - Surf Scoter, Black Ducks
Latin name: *Melanitta perspicillata*
Njaa - White-winged Scoter, Black Ducks
Latin name: *Melanitta fusca*



Although black duck populations are declining (around 50% decline over the last half-century), they are not considered 'at risk' at this time. Traditional Gwich'in hunting should continue, "you get enough ... to handle. If you get too much, it's no good. Just get enough to handle and that's it" (Robert Alexie Sr.³).

Black ducks arrive in the GSA in the spring and start nesting in June. They nest far back from the water in thick vegetation, and hatch 1-12 ducklings. Black ducks eat underwater insects and small shrimp-like creatures. In the fall, the adults leave before the young can fly, then the young head south once they can fly.

When the ducks are on the river in the spring, [the men] would get them from the river. So it would be black ducks ... we favour black ducks in the spring, so whenever possible that's what they get. [The condition of the birds] depends on the weather. If it's cold too long, when there's still snow on the ground — usually about 10 days, two weeks, sometimes longer — ... that's when the ducks would either freeze or they would be very, very poor (Grace Blake¹).

Right after open water, you see lots of them on the river, and in the fall time too, but any other time if you hunt ducks, you go in the lakes, big lakes. You see lots of them around on the big lakes (Jane Tyrrell³).

In grass, in willows, amongst stones if they find a good place, that is where they lay their eggs (Sarah Ann Gardlund³).

Other waterfowl with a low or decreasing population include Northern Pintail, Scaup, and Long-tailed Ducks.

Photos: Shutterstock

