

Project Title:

Northwest Territories Small Mammal and Hare Survey

Project Contacts for the Inuvik Region:

Denise Auriat, Wildlife Biologist, Gwich'in Renewable Resource Board, Box 2240, Inuvik, NT, X0E 0T0. 1 (867) 777-3429 FAX: 1 (867) 777-4260

Suzanne Carriere, Ecosystem Management Biologist, Wildlife and Fisheries, Department of Resources, Wildlife, and Economic Development, Yellowknife, NT, X1A 3S8. 1 (867) 920-8064/ 1 (867) 873-7411 FAX: 1 (867) 873-0293 Suzanne_Carriere@gov.nt.ca

General Project Summary:

Small mammals and hare play a keystone role in both arctic and boreal ecosystems. The rise and fall of the numbers of small mammal and hare are reflected in a similar rise and fall of their predators. This project focuses on determining the number of small mammals and hare that are in the area. This information is useful in determining trend information for economically important furbearers and other wildlife. It also helps to monitor changes in ecosystems.

The Small Mammal Survey has been conducted every year, usually in August, since 1990 for most sites across the NWT. The Hare Survey has been conducted every year, in spring (usually June), since 1990 for most sites across the NWT. This would be the reactivation of the study in the Inuvik sites, as it has not been conducted in the area for several years.

Methods:

The project has two different components: the hare transects and the small mammal transects.

1) Hare Transects

The Hare survey is designed to monitor changes in hare in the Northwest Territories. The hare transects consist of using line transects as a guide to count hare pellets (turds). The previously used transects will be located and re-established. This includes measuring out the transects, marking the area with flagging tape, and sweeping the area clean of any pellets. The area will then be revisited the following year and the pellets will be counted. This should be done within the month of June.

2) Small Mammal Survey (SMS)

The SMS is designed to monitor changes in vole, mouse, lemming, and shrew abundance across the Northwest Territories and Nunavut. This is to be done using transects with traps set up on the transects, with the traps being checked everyday for 5 days in the first week of August. It has not yet been determined if live traps or snap traps will be used.