

UPPER HUMBER WETLANDS COMPLEX (BIRCHY BASIN)

The Upper Humber Wetlands Complex (Birchy Basin) is an important wetland habitat area for waterfowl and other wildlife and plants. Boasting 21,215 hectares in size, it is located at the base of the Northern Peninsula, approximately thirty kilometers northeast of Deer Lake and ten kilometers southwest of White Bay on route 430. Comprised of the Upper Humber and Adies River watershed areas, it is situated in the main waterfowl migration corridor.



The Upper Humber Wetlands Complex is an important area for waterfowl. Its productive wetland habitat supports the highest inland breeding duck densities on the island and provides areas for waterfowl to build up energy reserves before continuing on their migration. As a result, it was protected by the "Newfoundland and Labrador Habitat Protection Plan for Migratory Birds" (1987).



The wetlands in the area resulted from a dam that was constructed in 1952 by Bowaters Newfoundland Pulp and Paper Co. Ltd. for the transportation of logs to the pulp and paper mill in Corner Brook. Transport of pulpwood by water in this area ended in 1968, and by the early nineties the dam had deteriorated, jeopardizing 400 hectares of prime wetland habitat in the flooded area behind the dam. In May of 1992 the government of Newfoundland and Labrador and Ducks Unlimited Canada, as Partners in the Eastern Habitat Joint Venture, signed a 30-year Corporate Stewardship Agreement with Corner Brook Pulp and Paper Limited. This agreement resulted in the restoration of the dam, construction of a large fish ladder, and conservation of approximately 25,000 hectares of wetland. During the term of this agreement the Newfoundland and Labrador Inland Fish and Wildlife Division, in cooperation with the Upper Humber Wetlands Complex Committee, will manage the stewardship area.

Some of the waterfowl that can be observed within the complex are the ring necked duck, American black duck, Canada goose, green-winged teal, blue-winged teal, northern pintail, and the common merganser. The Humber River, which flows through the complex, is one of the major Atlantic salmon producing rivers in eastern Canada, providing nearly 9,000 angler days annually. Other wildlife present is moose, caribou (the Humber River Caribou Herd), beaver, otter, mink, red fox, muskrat, lynx and black bear. Vegetation within the area includes black spruce, trembling aspen, balsam fir, feather moss, pondweed, yellow waterlily, sedge, rush, blue flag, marsh marigold, tall meadow rue, horsetail, bulrush, spike rush, bur-reed, sweet gale, leather leaf, and Labrador tea. Visitors to the reserve participate in a variety of recreational activities such as hunting, fishing, trapping, snowmobiling, canoeing, cross-country skiing, bird watching, and hiking.

