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# MOOSE

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## Concern

### **Moose populations are low, populations need to be counted, and harvest by all users monitored.**

Low moose numbers were a main concern in the Mount Nansen area. In 1988, an area around Mount Nansen (Game Management Subzones 5-22, 5-23, 5-24, and 5-26; see Figure 1) was closed to resident hunting. A count in 1987 recorded the lowest moose density recorded in North America, and a count in 2003 showed numbers are still low. Bear and wolf populations do not seem high enough to affect moose, but increasing caribou populations may be bringing wolves into areas, that then kill moose. The easy access to this area results in high hunting pressure, and First Nation hunters from Whitehorse use this area.

Moose populations were reported to be low in the highway corridor from Braeburn to Twin Lakes. Some residents believe that elk are competing with moose for space, as moose numbers seem to have dropped at about the same time that elk began staying around the Braeburn area. Residents report that over the last 15 to 20 years, moose tracks and sightings in this area have noticeably decreased, and that fewer moose tracks than expected have been seen where many bison and elk tracks are sighted. Hunting activity on the east side of the North Klondike Highway, towards Frank and Coghlan lakes, is reportedly high for “Sunday afternoon” hunters, using ATVs and vehicles as far as the trail provides access. Wildfires in this area (1958 and 1998) will probably produce good moose habitat through regeneration of shrubs and browse species, but residents have not yet seen any response by moose to the burns.

Some people feel that moose are being pushed away from the Yukon River by the many river travellers. In the last ten years, moose numbers have really dropped along the river. Hunting does not seem to be the problem, as few people are hunting along the river, and licensed harvests are low. Harvest data are needed from the First Nation here and in other parts of the traditional territory. In the “old days,” near the end of August, people would leave from Carmacks, travel with dogs and packs to the other side of Big Salmon Lake, build rafts, and float down the Yukon River to Carmacks with two or three moose dried. People have changed the way they hunt, from river hunting to travelling into the mountains to find moose.

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**Solution** **Count moose from the air and monitor composition of moose populations using ground-based surveys; monitor harvest by all users; and improve information for First Nation hunters.**

**Commitment**

By who? By when?

**CRRC, YTG, LSCFN**  
EARLY IN PLAN

Establish ground-based monitoring of moose, and do some low intensity aircraft counts in the fall for a couple years to see if similar patterns in percentages of cows, bulls and calves are seen. [54]

A good way to monitor moose populations and survival of calves is to follow the ground-based surveys started in Mayo. This involves asking about 20 knowledgeable local hunters and trappers to record their sightings of moose in the fall. Recruitment of calves can be estimated by dividing the number of calves seen by the number of cows, and the number of bulls can be compared to cows as well. This composition information can be helpful in understanding if moose numbers are stable, increasing, or decreasing. This is intended to be a volunteer project with small prizes only. This work should consider including placer miners in collecting information because they see a lot of country and wildlife.

**YTG, LSCFN**  
EARLY IN PLAN

Complete an aerial moose count southwest of Carmacks where moose have never been studied before. [55]

Moose have never been counted from Braeburn north and along the Nordenskiold Valley, and this is an important area to look at in the near future (Figure 16). Survey costs will be covered by YTG and the LSCFN will participate in the survey.

**YTG**  
2004-2009

The YTG Regional Biologist will provide harvest information for resident hunters to CRRC in all years. [56]

This information is available on an annual basis. The YTG Regional Biologist will present this information for the consideration of the CRRC upon request.

**LSCFN**  
EARLY TO MIDWAY  
IN PLAN

Consider hiring a Game Guardian to monitor First Nation hunting activities in the traditional territory. [57]

LSCFN has committed to collecting harvest information and presenting it at the annual May gathering. LSCFN met with some hunters in April 2004 to see what other First Nations are doing, and ask what were the best ways to monitor harvest in the traditional territory.

**LSCFN**  
2004

Put up a sign on Mount Nansen road to inform all First Nation hunters about concerns for low moose numbers. [58]

The LSCFN made a sign previously stating that other First Nation hunters need permission from LSCFN to hunt within the LSCFN traditional territory. The LSCFN will erect the sign near the start of the Mount Nansen road.

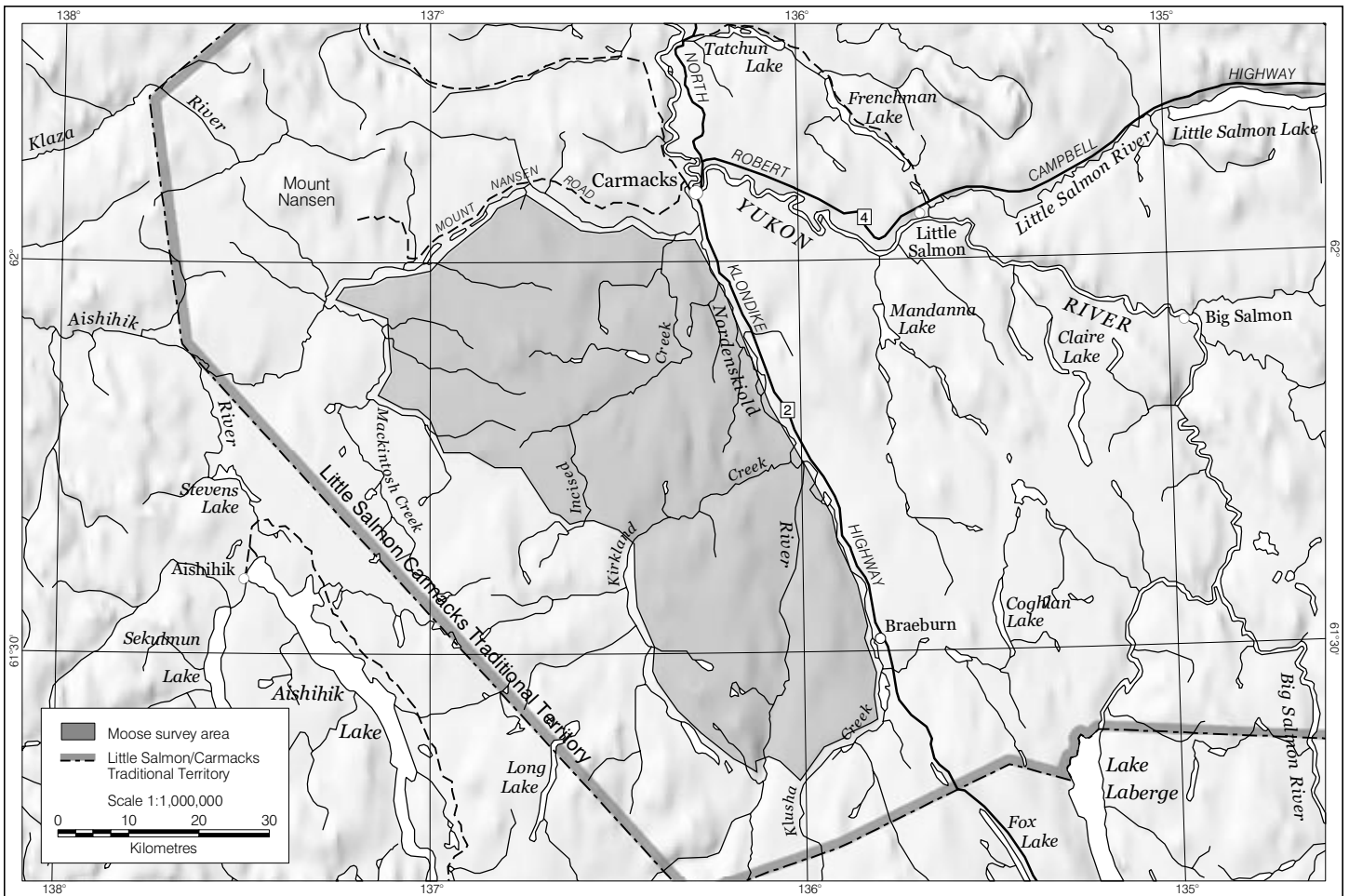


Figure 16. Proposed Nordenskiöld moose survey area.