

GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF THE SWAN LAKE MAP SHEET AREA, 63C

The area covered by the Swan Lake map sheet comprises 5835 square miles and lies along the Manitoba-Saskatchewan border between 52° and 53° north latitude and 100° and 102° west longitude. Approximately 85 percent of the area is in Manitoba. About 100 square miles of the area is occupied by lakes; the most prominent are Lake Winnipegosis and Pelican, Swan, Red Deer, Armit, and Whitefish lakes. Swan River, which has a population of 3470, is the largest town. It is linked to populated centers in the south and mining communities in the north by Highway 10 and the Canadian National Railway.

Two thirds of the land, mainly in the rugged Porcupine Hills, Duck Mountain, and the poorly drained lowlands west of Lake Winnipegosis, is forested. Agriculture, the main industry in the area, is confined to the rich lands in the Swan River valley. Lumbering, fishing, trapping, limestone quarrying, and tourism also contribute to the economic base.

Manitoba was covered by Continental glaciation during the Wisconsin Period. About 13,000 years ago, the Keewatin Ice Sheet began to recede from southern Manitoba. As the glacier retreated, the melting ice formed glacial Lake Agassiz over the lowlands of the area. The area gradually became exposed between 9000 and 7500 years ago as Lake Agassiz began to drain to Hudson and James bays.

The lowlands of the area are covered with glacial drift left by the retreating glacier and with lacustrine sediments deposited by glacial Lake Agassiz. Beneath these surface deposits lie Paleozoic and Mesozoic bedrock underlain by Precambrian rock.

The area may be divided into two physiographic regions: the Western Upland, which was not covered by glacial Lake Agassiz, and the glacial lake-covered Manitoba Lowland. The Western Upland includes the Porcupine Hills and Duck Mountain in the west and a lacustrine-alluvial plain that extends through the south-central part of the area. The Porcupine Hills are 1000 feet above sea level. In the east, the Manitoba Lowland is a boulder till plain modified by glacial Lake Agassiz. Elevations of this plain range from 1000 feet in the west to 830 feet at Lake Winnipegosis.

The Porcupine Hills escarpment, which is broken by numerous stream valleys, the drumlinoid Thunder Hill southwest of Swan River, and the strange rock formations of the Kettle Hills southeast of Swan Lake, are prominent landforms in the area.

The area, which lies within the Lake Winnipeg-Nelson River drainage basin, drains into Lake Winnipegosis by way of ten major rivers. The Red Deer, Steeprock, and Bell rivers drain into Lake Winnipegosis from the north and west. The Swan River valley is drained by the Woody and Swan rivers by way of Swan Lake and the Shoal River. The southeastern part of the area drains into Lake Winnipegosis by way of the Pelican, Drake, Duck, and Sclater rivers. In the east, large bogs and poorly defined stream channels characterize the flat terrain.

Three soil zones are present in the area: the Black soils and Gray Luvisols of the Swan River Plain, the Gray Luvisols of the Porcupine Hills and Duck Mountain, and the high-lime soils of the east.

CLIMATE

The area has a subhumid continental climate. The range of annual temperatures is much greater than the world average for this latitude. The eastern and central parts of the area have an annual precipitation of about 18 inches, about 14 inches of which falls as rain from April to October, and 4 inches as snow from November to March. The town of Swan River, which is 1115 feet above sea level, has a mean temperature of 33°F and a frost-free period of about 94 days. The Porcupine Hills and Duck Mountain have higher average precipitation, lower mean annual temperatures, and shorter frost-free periods than the surrounding lowlands.

The mean annual snowfall is 30 to 60 inches, half of which falls before January. The southern part of the area has an average maximum snow depth of 15 inches and the northern half has an average maximum snow depth of 20 to 30 inches.

ECOLOGY

After the glacial waters subsided 7500 years ago, spruce forest developed on the Porcupine Hills. Grassland replaced forest during the dry, warm summers 6700 years ago and remained until 4200 years ago, when a cooler, moister climate returned and spruce and pine forests again dominated the Porcupine Hills.

The area is in the Mixedwood, Aspen-Oak, and Northern Coniferous sections of the Boreal Forest Region. Mixedwood vegetation occurs on Duck Mountain, in the Porcupine Hills, and on the southeastern lowlands. Trembling aspen (*Populus tremuloides*), balsam poplar (*Populus balsamifera*), white birch (*Betula papyrifera*), white spruce (*Picea glauca*), and balsam fir (*Abies balsamea*) in older, undisturbed stands, are the main species. Some jack pine (*Pinus banksiana*) is found on the sand and gravel beach ridges of glacial Lake Agassiz. Black spruce (*Picea mariana*) and tamarack (*Larix laricina*) are common on peat deposits. Shrubs of the Mixedwood Section include hazelnut (*Corylus cornuta*) and roses (*Rosa spp.*) in association with trembling aspen. Willows (*Salix spp.*) and red-osier dogwood (*Cornus stolonifera*) grow on moist sites, whereas high bush-cranberry (*Viburnum trilobum*), saskatoon (*Amelanchier alnifolia*), red choke cherry (*Prunus virginiana*), and currants (*Ribes spp.*) are found throughout the uplands. Ground vegetation in the Mixedwood Section consists of various forbs including sarsaparilla (*Aralia nudicaulis*), vetches (*Vicia spp.*), wild strawberries (*Fragaria spp.*), meadow rues (*Thalictrum spp.*), Canada anemone (*Anemone canadensis*), and a variety of grasses and mosses.

In the Aspen-Oak Section, trembling aspen and balsam poplar occur in pure stands or are mixed with white spruce and white birch. Much of the Swan River valley, which was once covered by this forest type, has been cleared for grain production. Hazelnut and roses are the common shrubs. High bush-cranberry, willows, and red-osier dogwood are found along streams and on moist sites.

The Northern Coniferous Section occupies the northeastern part of the area and is dominated by continuous stands of black spruce. Flat terrain, poor drainage, and peat deposits 3 to 6 feet deep are common in this forest zone. Where peat deposits are more than 3 feet deep, black spruce is stunted; on shallower deposits, the trees are more vigorous. Wetter peatlands have treeless fens dominated by sedges (*Carex spp.*).

A variety of plants are adapted to the soil and moisture of bog community. Sphagnum mosses (*Sphagnum spp.*) and other mosses form a dense ground cover. Low health-like shrubs, such as Labrador tea (*Ledum groenlandicum*), leatherleaf (*Chamaedaphne calyculata*), bearberry (*Arctostaphylos uva-ursi*), bog-rosemary (*Andromeda polifolia*), and pale laurel (*Kalmia polifolia*) are common understory species. Till ridges covered with mixed woods or jack pine-lichen forests form occasional breaks in this lowland vegetation.

White-tailed deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*), moose (*Alces alces*), elk (*Cervus canadensis*), and woodland caribou (*Rangifer tarandus*) inhabit the area. In the past, bison (*Bison bison*), mule deer (*Odocoileus hemionus*), and possibly pronghorn (*Antilocapra americana*) were also found here.

White-tailed deer first moved into the area in the 1930's and increased in numbers as settlement modified the landscape. At present, in some localities, land clearing has passed the limit that is beneficial to deer. The harsh winter climate limits white-tailed deer populations; densities of five deer per square mile are considered high and are seldom sustained for more than a few years.

Mule deer, which were once common in the area, have declined, probably because of agricultural development and competition with white-tailed deer.

Moose have always been present in the area. They are abundant on the escarpments of the Porcupine Hills and Duck Mountain and in the vicinities of Swan, Pelican, and Red Deer lakes. Moose favor habitats that are associated with water bodies and are rich in deciduous vegetation.

In 1800, Daniel Williams Harmon, a North West Company fur trader, reported elk to be common in the area. A special edition of the Swan River Star, March 1900, indicated that excellent vegetative interspersion for elk existed in the valley at that time. Eventually, the valley was cleared and farmed intensively and the elk moved to the non-arable uplands of the Porcupine Hills and Duck Mountain. Elk are still abundant on Duck Mountain and occur in small numbers near Swan and Pelican lakes in the Porcupine Hills. The now-extinct bison once migrated north and south through the area.

The eastern part of the area is favorable habitat for woodland caribou, but the herds are small and widely distributed. The landforms of the Porcupine Hills are suited to caribou but vegetation is scarce. Fires and high relative humidity have resulted in dense coniferous forests, and lichen growth is therefore restricted by lack of sunlight.

LAND CLASSIFICATION FOR UNGULATES

About 62 percent of the area has been rated Class 3 or better for wild ungulate production. Class 4, 5, and 6 lands comprise 19, 14, and 5 percent of the area, respectively. There are no Class 7 lands. Water bodies comprise 18 percent of the area.

Moose has been used as an indicator species over 60 percent of the land. High capability moose range comprises 1600 square miles of fertile deciduous uplands, alluvial lowlands, and extensive shorelands.

A combination of sedge fens, lichen-covered uplands, and willow-bordered lakes is considered ideal habitat for caribou. The vegetation in the eastern part of the area, however, is mainly black spruce, occasionally interspersed with jack pine beach ridges or sandy uplands. The land is limited by low soil fertility (F), and both deficient and excessive soil moisture (M). Twenty-three percent of the land has been rated Class 3 and 4 caribou habitat because of the lack of ideal interspersion of landforms.

Land rated primarily for elk comprises 17 percent of the land. Much of this high-capability habitat is found on the rich, deciduous upland of Duck Mountain and in the Swan River valley. Before settlement, the valley had an ideal interspersion of grassland and forest for elk. Although there are no elk in the valley at present, the land has high potential for elk production.

Poor distribution of landforms (G) is the main limitation over 60 percent of the land. Excessive and poorly drained soils (M) limit 26 percent of the land, mainly peatlands, tills, and sands. Soils that have moderate to low fertility (F) affect the quality and quantity of vegetation over 13 percent of the land. Two units in the northeast are limited by shallow soil depth (R).

The entire area has been classified for white-tailed deer, but populations are limited by the harsh winter climate (C). Class 4 is the highest capability rating.

Except for the Swan River valley, the best prime wild ungulate habitat is located on public land. As the pressures of human population and intensive land use increase, greater recreational demands will be made on these wild lands.

Capability classification by D. J. Bigelow, E. J. Searle, H. D. Goulden, and I. J. Milliken, Canada Land Inventory Project, Manitoba Department of Mines, Resources, and Environmental Management, Winnipeg. Descriptive narrative by D. J. Bigelow, V. H. Scott, and H. D. Goulden.

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DESCRIPTION DU TERRITOIRE DE LA FEUILLE DE SWAN LAKE – 63C

Le territoire représenté sur la feuille de Swan Lake couvre 5 835 milles carrés le long de la frontière du Manitoba et de la Saskatchewan; il va de 52 à 53° de latitude nord et de 100 à 102° de longitude ouest. Environ 85% du territoire appartient au Manitoba. Les lacs y occupent environ 1000 milles carrés; les plus importants sont les lacs Winnipegosis et Pelican, Swan, Red Deer, Armit et Whitefish. Swan River, qui compte 3 470 habitants, est la plus grande ville. La route 10 et le chemin de fer Canadien National la relient aux localités du sud et aux communautés minières du nord.

La forêt occupe les deux tiers des terres, surtout dans les monts Porcupine, le mont Duck et les basses terres mal drainées à l'ouest du lac Winnipegosis. L'agriculture, principale activité de la région, n'est pratiquée que dans les riches terres de la vallée de la rivière Swan. Contribue aussi à l'économie: la coupe du bois, la pêche, le trappe, l'extraction du calcaire et le tourisme.

Le cours du Wisconsin (période géologique), le Manitoba a subi la glaciation continentale. Il y a environ 13 000 ans, le glacier Keewatin a commencé de se retirer du sud du Manitoba. Pendant la phase de recul, les eaux résultant de la fonte des glaces ont formé le lac glaciaire Agassiz qui a envahi les basses terres. Les terrains de ce secteur ont été découverts graduellement à mesure que les eaux du lac Agassiz s'échappaient en direction des baies James et Hudson, il y a de 7 500 à 9 000 ans.

Le glacier en fusion et le lac glaciaire Agassiz ont couvert les basses terres de dépôts glaciaires. Sous ces dépôts superficiels, la roche en place, d'âge précamalien et mésozoïque repose elle-même sur des matériaux d'âge précamalien.

Le territoire peut être divisé en deux régions naturelles: les hautes terres de l'ouest qui n'ont pas été couvertes par le lac glaciaire Agassiz et les basses terres du Manitoba qui ont reçu ces dépôts glaciaires d'origine lacustre. Les hautes terres de l'ouest comprennent les monts Porcupine et le mont Duck à l'ouest et la plaine constituée d'alluvions et de dépôts lacustres qui recouvre le centre-sud de ce secteur. Les Monts Porcupine s'élèvent à 1000 pi d'altitude. A l'est, une plaine de till remanié par le lac Agassiz constitue les basses terres. Cette plaine a une altitude de 1000 pi à l'ouest et de 830 au lac Winnipegosis.

L'escarpement des monts Porcupine rompu par de nombreuses vallées de rivières, le mont Thunder, en forme de drumlin, au sud-ouest de Swan River, et les étranges formations rocheuses des monts Kettle, au sud-est du lac Swan, sont les principaux éléments du relief.

Le territoire appartient au bassin du lac Winnipeg et de la rivière Nelson; dix rivières principales se déversent dans le lac Winnipegosis, en assurant le drainage. Les rivières Red Deer, Steeprock et Bell, en provenance du nord et de l'ouest, coulent vers le lac Winnipegosis. La vallée de la rivière Swan s'étend dans les rivières Woody et Swan par l'intermédiaire du lac Swan et de la rivière Shoal. Les rivières Pelican, Drake, Duck et Sclater, tributaires du lac Winnipegosis, drainent le sud-est. Dans l'est, de grandes tourbières et des chenaux de rivières assez mal délimités caractérisent ces terrains plats.

Trois zones pédologiques se partagent le territoire: les sols noirs et les luvisols gris de la plaine de la rivière Swan, les luvisols gris des monts Porcupine et du mont Duck et les sols riches en chaux de la partie est.

CLIMAT

Le territoire jouit d'un climat continental subhumide. L'écart annuel de température est beaucoup plus grand que la valeur moyenne établie pour le monde entier à cette latitude. Dans l'est et dans le centre, la précipitation atteint environ 18 po dont 14 tombent sous forme de pluies d'avril à octobre et 4 sous forme de neige, de novembre à mars. La ville de Swan River, située à 1 115 pi d'altitude, a une température annuelle moyenne de 33°F et la période sans gel y dure environ 94 jours. Les précipitations sont plus abondantes dans les monts Porcupine et Duck; les températures annuelles moyennes y sont plus basses et les périodes sans gel plus courtes que dans les basses terres avoisinantes.

Il tombe en moyenne de 30 à 60 po de neige par année dont la moitié avant janvier. Dans le sud du territoire, l'épaisseur de la neige atteint en moyenne 15 po alors que dans la moitié nord, elle varie de 20 à 30.

ECOLOGIE

Après le retrait des eaux d'origine glaciaire, il y a 7 500 ans, la forêt de conifères a commencé de se développer sur les monts Porcupine. La prairie a remplacé la forêt pendant la longue période de chaleur et de sécheresse commencée il y a 6 700 ans et terminée 2 500 ans plus tard. A ce moment-là, un climat plus frais et plus humide a favorisé le retour des forêts de pins et d'épinettes lesquelles ont à nouveau envahie les monts Porcupine.

Le territoire appartient aux sections des bois mixtes, de l'association peuplier/chêne et des conifères du Nord, subdivisions de la région de la forêt boréale. On trouve la forêt mixte sur le mont Duck, dans les monts Porcupine et dans les basses terres du sud-est. Le peuplier faux-tremble (*Populus tremuloides*), le peuplier baumier (*Populus balsamifera*), le bouleau à papier (*Betula papyrifera*), l'épinette blanche (*Picea glauca*) et le sapin baumier (*Abies balsamea*) sont les principales essences des peuplements plus anciens non perturbés. Quelques pins gris (*Pinus banksiana*) croissent sur les crêtes de plage de sable et de gravier du lac glaciaire Agassiz. L'épinette noire (*Picea mariana*) et le mélèze laricina (*Larix laricina*) sont communs sur les dépôts tourbeux. Les dicotylédones herbacées de la section de la forêt mixte comprennent le noisetier (*Corylus cornuta*) et les rosiers (*Rosa spp.*) associés au peuplier faux-tremble. Les saules (*Salix spp.*) et le cornouiller stolonifère (*Cornus stolonifera*) croissent sur les sites humides tandis que la viorne trilobée (*Viburnum trilobum*), l'amélanchier à feuilles d'aule (*Amelanchier alnifolia*), le cerisier de Virginie (*Prunus virginiana*) et les groseilliers (*Ribes spp.*) croissent n'importe où sur les hautes terres. Dans la section de la forêt mixte, la végétation, aux strates inférieures, comprend différentes variétés de dicotylédones herbacées dont l'aralie à tige nue (*Aralia nudicaulis*), les vesces (*Vicia spp.*), les fraises sauvages (*Fragaria spp.*), le pigamon (*Thalictrum spp.*), l'anémone du Canada (*Anemone canadensis*) et plusieurs variétés de lichens et d'herbes.

Dans la section peuplier/chêne, le peuplier faux-tremble et le peuplier baumier croissent en peuplements purs ou mixtes en compagnie de l'épinette blanche et du bouleau à papier. La majeure partie de la vallée de la rivière Swan, autrefois couverte par une forêt de ce type, a été déboisée pour la culture des céréales. Le noisetier et les rosiers sont les arbisseaux les plus communs. L'airelle, les saules et le cornouiller stolonifère croissent le long des rivières et dans les sites humides.

La section des conifères du Nord occupant le nord-est du territoire est surtout couverte de peuplements continus d'épinette noire. Un relief plat, de mauvaises conditions de drainage et la présence de dépôts tourbeux d'une épaisseur variant de 3 à 6 pi, caractérisent la zone qu'occupe la forêt. Lorsque l'épaisseur des dépôts de tourbe dépasse 3 pi, l'épinette noire se rabougri; sur les dépôts plus minces, les arbres sont plus vigoureux. Les carex (*Carex spp.*) occupent les plaines marécageuses des régions de tourbières où l'arbre est absent.

Certaines plantes se sont adaptées aux sols et à l'humidité des tourbières. Les sphagnes (*Sphagnum spp.*) et d'autres variétés de mousses recouvrent le sol. Les principales espèces des strates inférieures sont des arbisseaux bas semblables aux bruyères: thé du Labrador (*Ledum groenlandicum*), cassandre réticulé (*Chamaedaphne calyculata*), arctostaphyle raisin-d'ours (*Arctostaphylos uva-ursi*), andromède (*Andromeda polifolia*) et kalmia à feuilles d'Andromède (*Kalmia polifolia*). Des crêtes morainiques couvertes de forêts mixtes ou de forêts de pin gris et de lichen viennent rompre la monotonye de ce couvert végétal des basses terres.

Le cerf de Virginie (*Odocoileus virginianus*), l'original (*Alces alces*), le wapiti (*Cervus canadensis*) et le caribou des bois (*Rangifer tarandus*) habitent le territoire. Autrefois, le bison (*Bison bison*), le cerf mulot (*Odocoileus hemionus*) et, probablement, l'antilope d'Amérique (*Antilocapra americana*) y vivaient également.

Les premiers cerfs de Virginie sont arrivés dans le territoire vers 1930 et leur nombre a augmenté à mesure que le peuplement et la mise en valeur des terres modifiaient les paysages. Aujourd'hui, dans certains endroits, le défrichage a dépassé une limite favorable au cerf. La rigueur de l'h