

## ***CANADA 8: HAY-ZAMA LAKES, ALBERTA***

### ***Information Sheet on Ramsar Wetlands***

**Effective Date of Information:** The information provided is taken from the List of Canadian Wetlands Designated as of International Importance, May 1982 and updated by the Canadian Wildlife Service – Prairie and Northern Region in October 2001.

**Reference:** 8th Ramsar site designated in Canada.

**Name and Address of Compiler:** Environmental Conservation Branch, Environment Canada, Twin Atria Bldg., Room 200, 4999 - 98th Avenue, Edmonton, Alberta, T6B 2X3.

**Date of Ramsar Designation:** 24 May 1982.

**Geographical Coordinates:** 58°30'N., 119°00'W.

**General Location:** Located in northeastern Alberta, 100 km west-north-west of High Level.

**Area:** 50 000 ha.

**Wetland Type (Ramsar Classification System):** *Inland wetlands:* Type O - permanent freshwater lakes; Type Ss - seasonal freshwater ponds, marshes and swamps; Type W - shrub swamps.

**Altitude:** The area is about 320 m above sea level.

**Overview (Principal Characteristics):** The wetland comprises freshwater eutrophic lakes and the floodplains and interior deltas of a lowland river.

**Physical Features (Geology, Geomorphology, Hydrology, Soils, Water, Climate):**

**Ecological Features (Habitats, Vegetation):**

**Land Tenure:**

(a) **Site:** The area is owned by the Government of Alberta.

(b) **Surrounding Area:** Mainly privately-held and provincial Crown lands.

**Conservation Measures Taken:** 48,600 ha designated as the Hay-Zama Lakes Wildland Provincial Park in 1999 by the province of Alberta. Designated as an IBA (Important Bird Area) by the Canadian Nature Federation and Bird Studies Canada.

**Conservation Measures Proposed:** Gradual phase out of oil and gas activity.

**Current Land Use/Activities in:**

(a) **Site:** There is no active management practised specifically for waterfowl at present but future management may include the control of water levels.

Fluctuations in levels and resultant goose behaviour seem to determine the degree of waterfowl use in the autumn. Existing oil and gas activity on the wetland is strictly controlled by shut down dates in spring and fall, and any further expansion will be restricted.

**(b) Surrounding Area:** Provincial Crown land.

**Threats to Integrity of:**

**(a) Site:** The area is somewhat isolated from major developments, but a potential threat is future expansion of oil and gas activity.

**(b) Surrounding Area:** None currently.

**Hydrological/Physical Values:**

**Social/Cultural Values:**

**Noteworthy Fauna:** Up to 130 000 Lesser Snow Geese *Anser c. caerulescens*, 47 000 Canada Geese *Branta canadensis* and over 200 000 ducks (up to 90% dabblers) have been known to use this wetland in the Fall. Used by migrating shorebirds in the fall.

**Noteworthy Flora:**

**Current Scientific Research and Facilities:** None.

**Current Conservation Education:**

**Current Recreation and Tourism:**

**Management Authority:**

Fish and Wildlife Division  
Alberta Sustainable Resource Development  
South Tower, Petroleum Plaza  
9915 - 108th Street  
Edmonton, Alberta  
T5K 2G8

**Jurisdiction:** Provincial - Alberta Sustainable Resource Development.

**Selected Bibliography:**

- Environmental Research Associates. 1979. Waterfowl use of the Hay Zama Lakes in relation to oil pumping operations. LGL Ltd. Edmonton, Alberta.
- Hennan, E. and A.J. Macaulay. 1974. Hay-Zama Lakes Project, waterfowl habitat assessment. Special Report No. 1503, Ducks Unlimited Canada. Winnipeg, Manitoba. 55 p.
- Kelland, C.D. 1967. Summarization of goose, vegetation and water level data collected during the summer of 1967 for Hay-Zama Lakes Goose Project. Unpublished progress

report, Project 82-4-5-27, Canadian Wildlife Service, Environment Canada. Edmonton, Alberta. 70 p.

- Macaulay, A.J. 1969. Job completion report, Hay-Zama Lakes Goose Project. Project No. 82-4-5-78. Unpublished report to Canadian Wildlife Service, Environment Canada. Edmonton, Alberta. 30 p.
- Macaulay, A.J. 1969. Hay-Zama Lakes Project, summer 1969. Unpublished report of Ducks Unlimited Canada. Winnipeg, Manitoba. 34 p. and plates.

**Reasons for Ramsar Designation:** The wetland is of continental importance to spring and fall migrating ducks and geese. Waterfowl from three of the four North American Flyways (Pacific, Central and Mississippi) utilise the complex. Up to 375 000 ducks and geese use this area during the fall migration period.

**Status of Management Plan:** A management plan does not exist for this area.