

INDICATOR GROUPS

■ BENTHIC INVERTEBRATES (BUGS IN THE SEDIMENT)

- live at the bottom of our lakes and rivers and are sensitive to:
- Changes in water level and water flow
 - Increases in water temperature
 - Contaminants

■ FISH

- Sensitive to:
- Changes in water level
 - Changes in water flow
 - Increases in water temperature
 - Contaminants

■ VEGETATION

- Sensitive to:
- Changes in water levels and water flow
 - Contaminants

■ AQUATIC FUR-BEARERS

- Sensitive to:
- Low water levels
 - Contaminants

■ SHORE BIRDS AND WATERFOWL

- Sensitive to:
- Changes in habitat (wetland)
 - Contaminants



COMMUNITY INPUT

A key to success under the Northern Waters: NWT Water Stewardship Strategy (May 2010) is to identify and use aquatic ecosystem health indicators to monitor the health of our waters.

In 2011, a community workshop was held in Fort Smith to gather input on potential indicators for the Slave River and delta from a local and Traditional Knowledge perspective.

OTHER NWT WATER STEWARDSHIP STRATEGY INITIATIVES

- Working with communities to better understand our watersheds.
- Support NWT wide community-based monitoring for better understanding of our aquatic ecosystems.
- Work with communities and other water partners to increase the communication and information sharing about the waters in the NWT.
- Continue developing the Slave River and delta partnership, *for an h.*

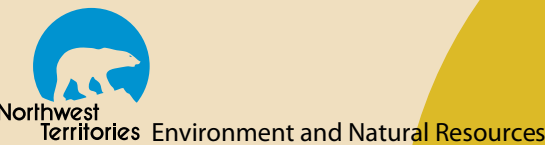
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NWT Water Stewardship Strategy and Action Plan:
www.enr.gov.nt.ca/_live/pages/wpPages/water_resources_management_strategy.aspx

OUR WATER, OUR STEWARDSHIP

WATER AND LAND IS THE BLOOD IN THE BODY. IF YOU POLLUTE OR CUT OFF THE WATER, THE LAND WILL DIE. WATER IS FUNDAMENTAL TO ALL LIFE AND WE MUST WORK TOGETHER TO PROTECT IT.

— Wekweti Chief Charlie Football, NWT



HOW CAN YOU TELL IF THE WATER IS HEALTHY?

Aquatic Ecosystem Health Indicators help us to understand:

1. if an aquatic ecosystem is healthy, and
2. if an aquatic ecosystem is being affected by natural and human disturbance or stress, such as storm or contaminant loading.

This brochure highlights some of the things that these indicators are sensitive to. Usually, indicators are sensitive because disturbance or stress affect where they live, what they eat and what they do.



AQUATIC ECOSYSTEM HEALTH INDICATORS

for the SLAVE RIVER and the SLAVE RIVER DELTA of the NORTHWEST TERRITORIES



CATTAIL
Typhasp



HORSETAIL
Equisetum arvense



MUSKRAT
Ondata zibethicus



MALLARD DUCK
Anas platyrhynchos



WILLOW
Salix sp



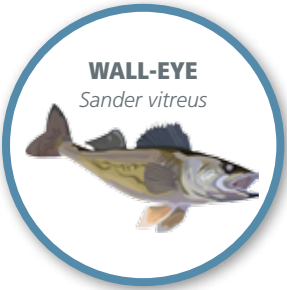
SAGO WEED
Potomogeton pectinatus



PICKERAL WEED
Potomogeton richardsoni



AQUATIC WORM
Oligochaeta



WALL-EYE
Sander vitreus



NORTHERN PIKE (JACKFISH)
Esox lucius



LAKE CISCO
Coregonus artedii



BEAVER
Castor canadensis



INCONNU
Stenodus leucichthys



LAKE WHITEFISH
Coregonus clupeaformis



BURBOT
Lota lota

