

# 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.](#)

## FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT:

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Northwest Territories Environment and Natural Resources

NWT Water Stewardship Strategy and Action Plan:  
[www.enr.gov.nt.ca/\\_live/pages/wpPages/water\\_resources\\_management\\_strategy.aspx](http://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.

— Wekwezi 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

