

STATE OF ALASKA

Jay S. Hammond, Governor



Annual Performance Report for

INVENTORY AND CATALOGING
INTERIOR ALASKA

by

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RESEARCH PROJECT SEGMENT

State: ALASKA Name: Sport Fish Investigations
of Alaska

Project No.: F-9-8

Study No.: G-I Study Title: INVENTORY AND CATALOGING

Job No.: G-I-K Job Title: Inventory and Cataloging
of Interior Alaska Waters,
Tanana River Drainage
Between The Little Delta
River and Mouth of Tanana
River

Period Covered: July 1, 1975 to June 30, 1976

ABSTRACT

The results of the first year of investigations of waters in the lower Tanana River drainage are presented.

Specific information is presented on 35 lakes and one stream in the job area. Survey data include physical, chemical, and biological features. Angler usage and recommend future management programs are also discussed.

A second year of investigations is planned to complete surveys in the drainage.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. To complete inventory and cataloging surveys on lakes and streams in the Tanana River drainage between the Little Delta River and the mouth of the Tanana.
2. To complete a report on the sport fish and sport fish waters between the Little Delta River and the mouth of the Tanana River.

OBJECTIVES

1. To review and utilize existing data on sport fish and sport fish waters of the Tanana drainage between the Little Delta River and the mouth of the Tanana River.

2. To determine the environmental characteristics and sport fish parameters of water in the job area.
3. To compile a report on the sport fish and sport fish waters between the Little Delta River and the mouth of the Tanana River.

TECHNIQUES USED

Graduated mesh monofilament gill nets 125' x 6' made from five panels with mesh sizes varying from 1/2" to 2 1/2" bar measure were used to sample the fish populations in lakes. Hook and line or visual observations were used to supplement the net returns.

All fish captured were measured for fork length in inches and weight in pounds; and a scale was taken for future age determination.

Water analyses were conducted on surface samples. Chemical analysis was done with a Hach model AL-36-WR kit. Water chemistry parameters measured include: (pH), methyl orange (total) alkalinity (MOA), and hardness. A Lowrance echo sounder was used to determine water depths.

Surface acreages were determined with a polar planimeter from 1:63,360 scale topographic maps on most lakes and a grid was used on the lakes determined from aerial observation to be too shallow for further investigation.

INTRODUCTION

The study area, the lower Tanana River Valley, includes all waters draining into the Tanana River from the Little Delta and Salcha rivers downstream to the mouth of the Tanana (Fig 1).

Fish species in this study area are listed in Table 1.

The lakes and streams along the highway system have been surveyed in the past and the information is being compiled for inclusion in the job completion report.

This job is centered upon the major lakes and streams in the Kantishna River drainage but is not restricted to them. The lakes were numbered 1, 2, 3, 4, etc. for ease in identification and to allow for unnamed lakes. These lakes may be located on Fig. 2. Many lakes were determined by aerial observation to be too shallow to merit further investigation but are presented here as a guide to future investigations.

More surveys will be conducted in the future and will be included in the job completion report.

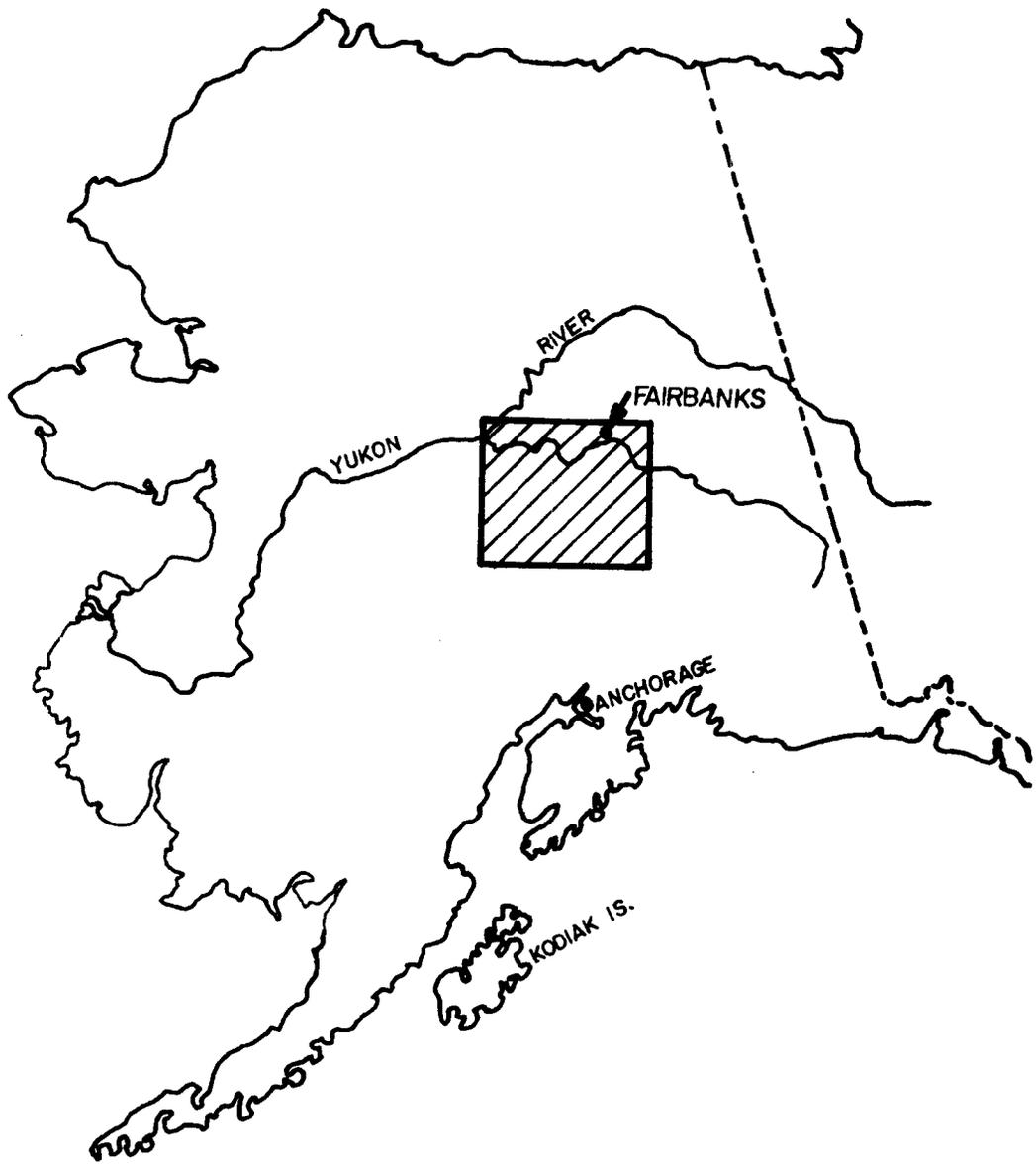


FIGURE 1: Location of Lower Tanana Drainage

Table 1. List of fish commonly found in the study area.

Common Name	Scientific Name	Abbreviation
Northern pike	<u>Esox lucius</u> Linnaeus	NP
Humpback whitefish	<u>Coregonus pidsehian</u> (Gmelin)	HWF
Least cisco	<u>Coregonus sardinella</u> Valenciennes	LCI
Burbot	<u>Lota lota</u> (Linnaeus)	BB
Broad whitefish	<u>Coregonus nasus</u> (Pallas)	BWF
Round whitefish	<u>Prosopium cylindraceum</u> (Pallas)	RWF
Arctic grayling	<u>Thymallus arcticus</u> (Pallas)	GR
Alaska blackfish	<u>Dallia pectoralis</u> Bean	BL

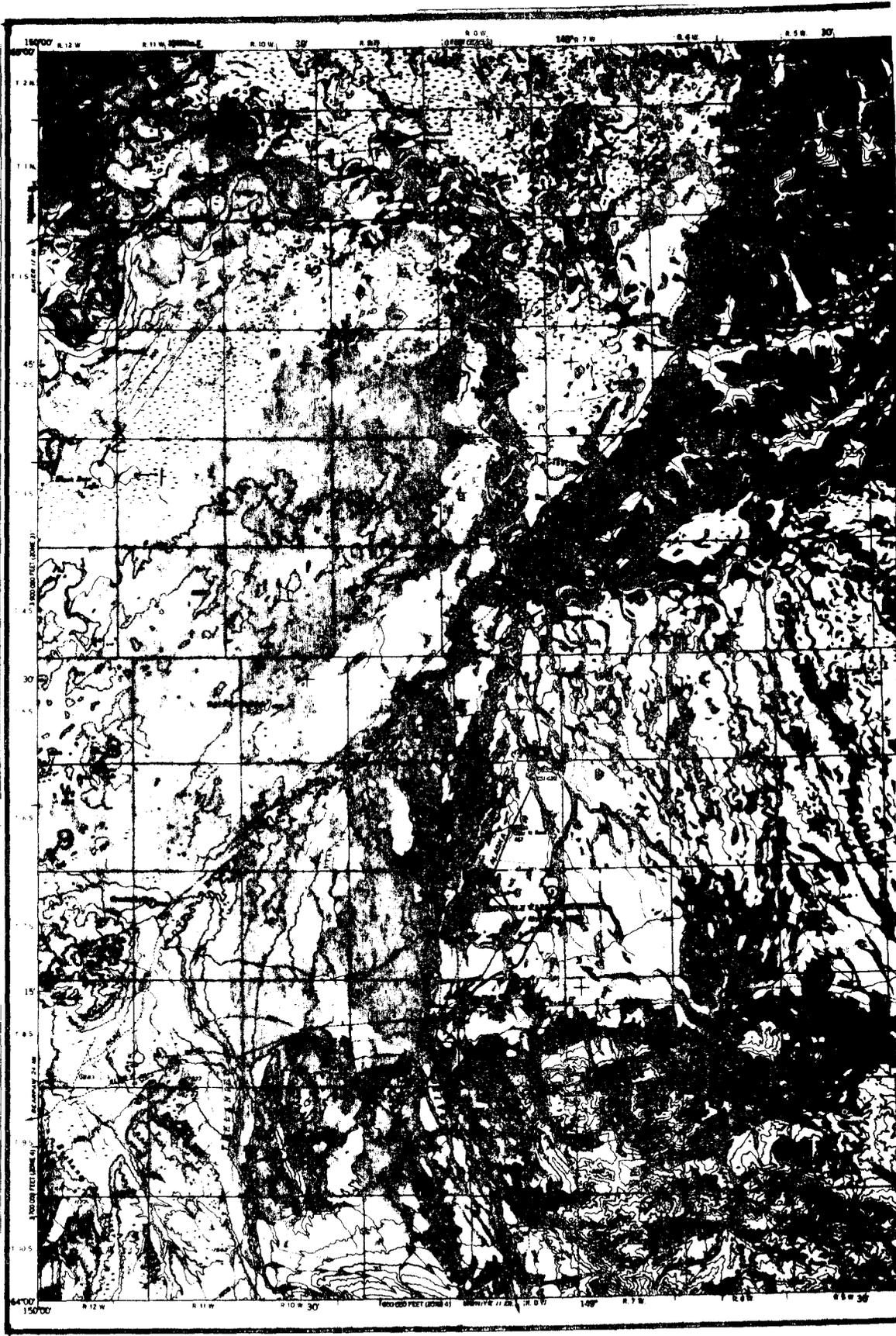


FIGURE 2A: Eastern Half of Lower Tanana Drainage

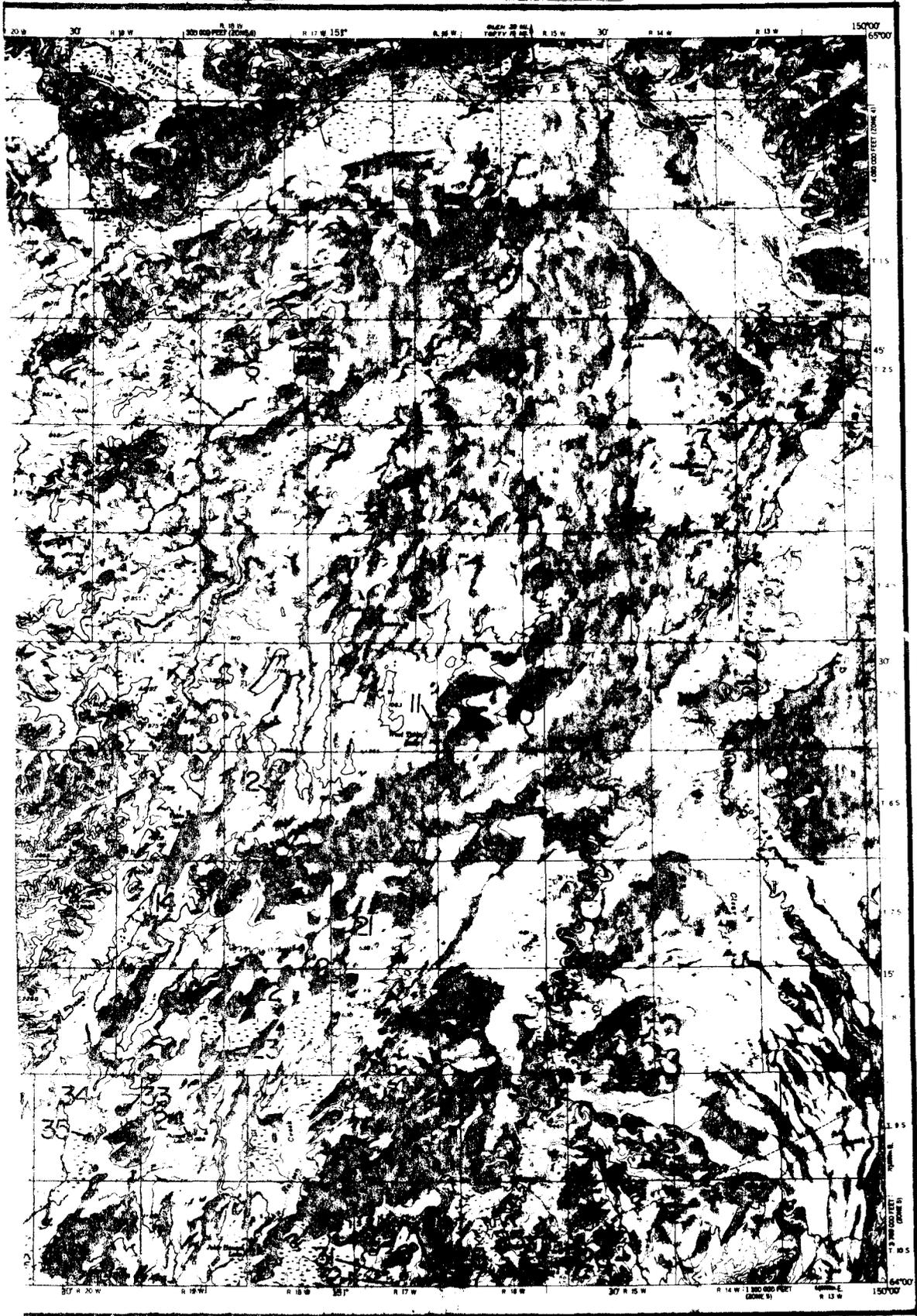


FIGURE 2B: Western Half of Lower Tanana Drainage

FINDINGS

Lake Surveys

Name of Lake: #1

Latitude: 64° 40' Longitude: 149° 51'

Fish sampling summary:

Lake #1 was determined by aerial observation to be too shallow for further investigations. This 500 acre lake had emergent vegetation covering the entire lake and had no outlet.

Name of Lake: #2 (Black Bear Lake)

Latitude: 64° 40' Longitude: 149° 52'

Surface acres: 934

Water Chemistry:

Date: 8-6-75

M.O. Alkalinity ppm: 51

Total Hardness ppm: 34

River System: Tanana

Elevation: Approx. 300'

Maximum depth: unknown

Fish sampling summary:

No fish caught in 48 hours of gill netting. Bottom was visible over entire lake. The lake had an approximate average depth of 5'.

Name of Lake: #3 (Iksgiza Lake)

Latitude: 64° 45' Longitude: 150° 15'

Surface acres: 294

Water chemistry:

Date: 8-6-75

pH: 7.5

M.O. Alkalinity ppm: 51

Total Hardness ppm: 34

River System: Tanana

Elevation: 343'

Maximum depth: 22'

Fish sampling summary:

Date	No.	Species	Length (in) Range	Fish/ Net hr
8-08-75	10	NP	8.0-33.0	0.4

The lake has emergent vegetation around the entire shoreline and at the time of survey the only outlet from the lake was not flowing. Accessibility is by float plane only. The lake appeared to be approximately 6' below normal water level at the time of survey.

Name of Lake: #4 (Kindanina Lake)
 Latitude: 64° 45' Longitude: 150° 29'
 Surface acres: 390
 Water Chemistry:

River System: Tanana
 Elevation: 420'
 Maximum depth: 30'

Date: 8-8-75
 Water Temp: 63°F
 pH: 7.5
 M.O. Alkalinity ppm: 51
 Total Hardness ppm: 51

Fish sampling summary:

Date	No.	Species	Length (in) Range	Fish/ Net hr.
8-08-75	17	NP	8.0-20.0	0.35
	2	HWF	9.1-10.6	0.04

Rushes and lilies surround the entire shoreline. Accessibility to the lake is by float plane only.

Name of Lake: #5 (Bear Lake)
 Latitude: 64° 47' Longitude: 150° 45'
 Surface acres: 614
 Water Chemistry:

River System: Zitziana R.
 Elevation: 650'
 Maximum depth: 33'

Date: 8-6-75
 Water Temp: 63°F
 pH: 8.5
 M.O. Alkalinity ppm: 86
 Total Hardness ppm: 68

Fish sampling summary:

Date	No.	Species	Length (in) Range	Fish/ Net hr.
8-08-75	13	NP	8.0-30.7	0.5
	78	LCI	5.1-15.7	3.2

The outlet of the lake appeared to be intermittent. It was not flowing at the time of survey. The lake was green with a bloom of algae and submergent vegetation. Accessibility to the lake is by float plane only.

Name of Lake: #6 (Mooseheart Lake)
 Latitude: 64° 45' Longitude: 151° 15'
 Surface acres: 698
 Water Chemistry:

River System: Zitziana R.
 Elevation: 704'
 Maximum depth: 36

Date: 8-6-75
 Water Temp: 63°F
 pH: 8.5
 M.O. Alkalinity ppm: 120
 Total Hardness ppm: 120

Fish sampling summary:

Date	No.	Species	Length (in)		Weight (lbs)		Fish/ Net hr
			Range	Mean	Range	Mean	
8-08-75	21	NP	10.6-26.8	16.9	0.3-5.4	1.9	0.9
	1	LC1	No Data		No Data		
	5	HWF	9.1-18.5	14.8	0.3-3.2	2.0	0.2

Sport fishing for pike in this productive lake produced three fish in 15 minutes. All were less than 2 lbs and they had numerous leeches attached to them. Accessibility is by float plane only. The lake has some subsistence fishing, mostly for whitefish. The lake should be monitored for usage and more biological information should be gathered for future reference.

Name of Lake: #7 (Geskakmina Lake)
 Latitude: 64° 37' Longitude: 150° 15'
 Surface acres: 256
 Water Chemistry:

River System: Kantishna R.
 Elevation: 589'
 Maximum depth: 25'

Date: 8-15-75
 Water Temp: 64°F
 pH: 7.0
 M.O. Alkalinity ppm: 34
 Total Hardness ppm: 34

Fish sampling summary:

No fish were caught in 48 hours of gill netting.

Accessibility is by float plane only.

Name of Lake: #8 (Dune Lake)
 Latitude: 64° 25' 30"
 Longitude: 140° 53' 50"
 Surface acres: 179

River System: Teklanika R.
 Elevation: 400'
 Maximum depth: 17'

Water Chemistry:

Date: 8-13-75
Water Temp: 62°F
pH: 9.0
M.O. Alkalinity ppm: 86
Total Hardness ppm: 86

Fish sampling summary:

No fish caught in gill net.

Freshwater shrimp, Gammarus sp., are very abundant in this lake. There are no inlets or outlets on the lake and accessibility is by float plane only. The east shore has some relief and would make a good site for cabins. It is recommended that more data be collected on this lake.

Name of Lake: #9
Latitude: 64° 22' Longitude: 149° 98'
Surface acres: 256
River System: Toklat R.
Elevation: 496'
Maximum depth: No Data

Fish sampling summary:

The lake was determined by aerial observation to be too shallow for further investigation.

Name of Lake: #10 (East Twin Lake)
Latitude: 64° 26' Longitude: 150° 40'
Surface acres: 1,600
River System: Kantishna R.
Elevation: 692
Maximum depth: 39'

Water Chemistry:

Date: 7-22-70
Water Temp: 62°F
pH: 8.7
M.O. Alkalinity ppm: 120
Total Hardness ppm: 51

Fish sampling summary:

Past survey information indicates that northern pike and least cisco inhabit the lake but no fishery data was taken. Moderate sport fishing occurs on the lake's northern pike during the open water season and there is also a good winter fishery for northern pike. The lake has one outlet that drains to the Kantishna River. Accessibility is by float plane only. It is recommended that a more comprehensive study be performed on this lake due to its popularity.

Name of Lake: #11 (West Twin Lake)
 Latitude: 64° 27' Longitude: 150° 50'
 Surface acres: Approx. 2,000
 Water Chemistry:

River System: Kantishna R.
 Elevation: 748'
 Maximum depth: No Data

Date: 7-23-70
 Water Temp: 62°F
 pH: 8.7
 M.O. Alkalinity ppm: 93
 Total Hardness ppm: 51

Fish sampling summary:

Past survey information indicates that northern pike and least cisco inhabit the lake but no fishery data were taken. There is a moderate sport fishery for northern pike on the lake. The lake's only outlet drains to East Twin Lake but was dry in August, 1975. Year round accessibility is by float plane only. It is recommended that a more comprehensive study be performed on this lake due to its popularity.

Name of Lake: #12
 Latitude: 64° 23' Longitude: 151° 08'
 Surface acres: 179
 Water Chemistry:

River System: Zitziana R.
 Elevation: Approx. 1,100'
 Maximum depth: 27'

Date: 81375
 Water Temp: 60°F
 pH: 6.5
 M.O. Alkalinity ppm: 17
 Total Hardness ppm: 34

Fish sampling summary:

Date	No.	Species	Length (in)		Weight (lbs)		Fish/ Net hr
			Range	Mean	Range	Mean	
8-14-75	2	NP	17.3-18.7	18.0	0.7-1.4	1.0	0.08

Sport fishing yielded no fish but test netting caught northern pike. Accessibility is by float plane only. The lake's only outlet had very little flow at the time of survey.

Name of Lake: #13
 Latitude: 64° 25' Longitude: 151° 16'
 Surface acres: 275
 Water Chemistry:

River System: Zitziana R.
 Elevation: 982'
 Maximum depth: 64'

Date: 8-13-75
 Water Temp: 64°F
 pH: 6.8
 M.O. Alkalinity ppm: 17
 Total Hardness ppm: 34

Fish sampling summary:

Date	No.	Species	Length (in)		Weight (lbs)		Fish/ Net hr.
			Range	Mean	Range	Mean	
8-14-75	5	NP	5.1-29.5	18.1	0.04-7.5	2.4	0.2

Lake has burned area around entire shoreline. Sport fishing was unproductive. Accessibility is by float plane.

<i>Name of Lake:</i> #14 (Wien Lake)	<i>River System:</i> Kantishna R.
<i>Latitude:</i> 64° 21' <i>Longitude:</i> 151° 18'	<i>Elevation:</i> 1,001'
<i>Surface acres:</i> Approx. 3,500	<i>Maximum depth:</i> No Data
<i>Water Chemistry:</i>	
<i>Date:</i>	7-24-70
<i>Water Temp:</i>	60°F
<i>pH:</i>	8.0
<i>M.O. Alkalinity ppm:</i>	68
<i>Total Hardness ppm:</i>	51

Fish sampling summary:

Past survey information indicates that northern pike, least cisco and burbot occur in lake but no fishery data were taken. Accessibility is by float plane only. The outlet drains into Lake Minchumina which is headwaters to the Kantishna River. Several cabins surround the lake and a small subsistence fishery occurs. Occasional fly-in fishermen catch northern pike. It is recommended that a more comprehensive study be done on this lake due to its scenic value and popularity.

<i>Name of Lake:</i> #15	<i>River System:</i> Kantishna R.
<i>Latitude:</i> 64° 16' <i>Longitude:</i> 150° 30'	<i>Elevation:</i> Approx. 580'
<i>Surface acres:</i> 102	<i>Maximum depth:</i> 23'
<i>Water Chemistry:</i>	
<i>Date:</i>	8-18-75
<i>pH:</i>	7.0
<i>M.O. Alkalinity ppm:</i>	34
<i>Total Hardness ppm:</i>	34

Fish sampling summary:

Date	No.	Species	Length (in)		Weight (lbs)		Fish/ Net hr.
			Range	Mean	Range	Mean	
8-19-75	8	NP	10.8-15.9	13.6	No Data		0.33

All northern pike captured during the survey were caught in gill nets; none were captured with sport fishing gear. Access to the lake is by float plane only. A burn area surrounds the entire lake. The northwest end of the lake has suitable cabin sites.

<i>Name of Lake:</i> #16	<i>River System:</i> Kantishna R.
<i>Latitude:</i> 64° 15' <i>Longitude:</i> 150° 33'	<i>Elevation:</i> Approx. 550'
<i>Surface acres:</i> 198	<i>Maximum depth:</i> 16'
<i>Water Chemistry:</i>	
Date:	8-18-75
pH:	6.8
M.O. Alkalinity ppm:	17
Total Hardness ppm:	34

Fish sampling summary:

No fish were caught in 24 hours of gill netting. Access to the lake is by float plane only. A burn area surrounds the entire lake.

<i>Name of Lake:</i> #17	<i>River System:</i> Kantishna
<i>Latitude:</i> 64° 10' <i>Longitude:</i> 150° 35'	<i>Elevation:</i> 458'
<i>Surface acres:</i> 90	<i>Maximum depth:</i> No Data

Fish sampling summary:

Aerial observation determined the lake to be too shallow for further investigation.

<i>Name of Lake:</i> #18	<i>River System:</i> Kantishna
<i>Latitude:</i> 64° 10' <i>Longitude:</i> 150° 30'	<i>Elevation:</i> 581'
<i>Surface acres:</i> 186	<i>Maximum depth:</i> 15'
<i>Water Chemistry:</i>	
Date:	8-18-75
pH:	6.8
M.O. Alkalinity ppm:	17
Total Hardness ppm:	17

Fish sampling summary:

Date	No.	Species	Length (in)		Weight (lbs)		Fish/ Net hr.
			Range	Mean	Range	Mean	
8-12-75	6	NP	12.2-33.8	20.3	No Data		0.25
	1	BWF	26.4		14.5		0.04

Northern pike and broad whitefish were captured using gill nets in this productive lake. The whitefish is one of the largest specimens captured in the Interior. Access is by float plane only. The lake outlet appears to have intermittent flow.

Name of Lake: #22

Latitude: 64° 14' Longitude: 151° 10'

Surface acres: 736

Water Chemistry:

Date: 8-11-75

Water Temp: 63°F

M.O. Alkalinity ppm: 154

Total Hardness ppm: 137

River System: Kantishna R.

Elevation: 665

Maximum depth: 21'

Fish sampling summary:

Date	No.	Species	Length (in)		Weight (lbs)		Fish/ Net hr.
			Range	Mean	Range	Mean	
8-15-75	3	NP	5.1-24.8	16.9	No Data		0.12

A heavy bloom of algae was present at survey time. Sport fishing produced only one 20" pike. Access is by float plane only. Water chemistry taken at time of survey shows this lake to be very productive and more intensive investigations should be planned for this lake.

Name of Lake: #23 (Square Lake)

Latitude: 64° 11' Longitude: 151° 13'

Surface acres: 198

Water Chemistry:

Date: 8-12-75

pH: 8.0

M.O. Alkalinity ppm: 137

Total Hardness ppm: 137

River System: Kantishna R.

Elevation: 647'

Maximum depth: 15'

Fish sampling summary:

Date	No.	Species	Length (in)		Weight (lbs)		Fish/ Net hr.
			Range	Mean	Range	Mean	
8-12-75	11	NP	4.7-15.0	7.3	No Data		0.46

Sport fishing gear produced no fish during the survey, however, gill netting produced 11 northern pike after 24 hours and all pike were small. Access is by float plane only. This productive lake has an open outlet to Jeanne's Lake and an open inlet from Lake #22.

Name of Lake: #24 (Jeanne's Lake) River System: Kantishna R.
Latitude: 64° 07' *Longitude:* 151° 17' Elevation: 630
Surface acres: 100 Maximum depth: shallow-approximately 5-10'

Fish sampling summary:

Aerial observation indicated that lake was too shallow to warrant further investigation.

Name of Lake: #25 (Alma Lake #1) River System: Bearpaw R.
Latitude: 64° 02' *Longitude:* 150° 37' Elevation: 538'
Surface acres: 147 Maximum depth: 40'
Water Chemistry:
 Date: 8-19-75
 Water Temp: 65°F
 pH: 7.8
 M.O. Alkalinity ppm: 51
 Total Hardness ppm: 51

Fish sampling summary:

Date	No.	Species	Length (in)		Weight (lbs)		Fish/ Net hr.
			Range	Mean	Range	Mean	
8-20-75	2	NP	14.6-25.2	19.9	No Data		0.08

Only two northern pike were caught during 24 hours of gill netting in this very scenic lake. Sport fish gear produced no fish. Accessibility is obtained by float plane or via sled road originating at old site of Bearpaw at mouth of Bearpaw River. It is recommended that more work be done on this lake due to its scenic value.

Name of Lake: #26 (Alma Lake #2)
 Latitude: 64° 01' Longitude: 150° 37'
 Surface acres: 256
 Water Chemistry:

River System: Bearpaw R.
 Elevation: 608'
 Maximum depth: 60'

Date: 8-19-75
 pH: 7.5
 M.O. Alkalinity ppm: 34
 Total Hardness ppm: 34

Fish sampling summary:

Date	No.	Species	Length (in)		Weight (lbs)		Fish/ Net hr.
			Range	Mean	Range	Mean	
8-20-75	3	NP	5.1-20.5	13.0	No Data		0.13

Only three northern pike were caught during 24 hours of gill netting in this very scenic lake while sport fishing gear produced no fish. Access is by float plane only. The lake has two islands and a sculptured shoreline. It is recommended more work be done on this lake due to its scenic value.

Name of Lake: #27
 Latitude: 64° 00' Longitude: 150° 51'
 Surface acres: 192

River System: Bearpaw R.
 Elevation: 498'
 Maximum depth: shallow

Fish sampling summary:

Aerial observation indicated that lake was too shallow to warrant further investigation.

Name of Lake: #28
 Latitude: 64° 01' Longitude: 150° 49'
 Surface acres: 35

River System: Bearpaw R.
 Elevation: Approx. 498'

Fish sampling summary:

Aerial observation indicated that lake was too shallow to warrant further investigation.

Name of Lake: #29
 Latitude: 64° 01' Longitude: 150° 49'
 Surface acres: 60

River System: Bearpaw R.
 Elevation: Approx. 498'

Fish sampling summary:

Aerial observation indicated that lake was too shallow to warrant further investigation.

Name of Lake: #30
Latitude: 64° 01' Longitude: 150° 53'
Surface acres: 100

River System: Bearpaw R.
Elevation: Approx. 498'

Fish sampling summary:

Aerial observation indicated that lake was too shallow to warrant further investigation.

Name of Lake: #31
Latitude: 64° 01' Longitude: 150° 55'
Surface acres: 50

River System: Bearpaw R.
Elevation: 512'

Fish sampling summary:

Aerial observation indicated that lake was too shallow to warrant further investigation.

Name of Lake: #32
Latitude: 64° 00' Longitude: 150° 54'
Surface acres: 60

River System: Bearpaw R.
Elevation: Approx. 498'

Fish sampling summary:

Aerial observation indicated that lake was too shallow to warrant further investigation.

Name of Lake: #33
Latitude: 64° 08' Longitude: 151° 27'
Surface acres: 320

River System: Kantishna R.
Elevation: 669'
Maximum depth: 18'

Water Chemistry:

Date: 8-12-75
pH: 8.0
M.O. Alkalinity ppm: 86
Total Hardness ppm: 103

Fish sampling summary:

Date	No.	Species	Length (in)		Weight (lbs)		Fish/ Net hr.
			Range	Mean	Range	Mean	
8-12-75	8	NP	5.9-20.9	9.8	No Data	0.33	

No fish were taken with sport fishing gear during the survey. Access is by float plane only.

Name of Lake: #32
Latitude: 64°00' Longitude: 150° 54'
Surface acres: 60

River System: Bearpaw R.
Elevation: Approx. 498'

Fish sampling summary:

Aerial observation indicated that lake was too shallow to warrant further investigation.

Name of Lake: #33
Latitude: 64° 08' Longitude: 151° 27'
Surface acres: 320
Water Chemistry:

River System: Kantishna R.
Elevation: 669'
Maximum depth: 18'

Date: 8-12-75
pH: 8.0
M.O. Alkalinity ppm: 86
Total Hardness ppm: 103

Fish sampling summary:

Date	No.	Species	Length (in)		Weight (lbs)		Fish/ Net hr
			Range	Mean	Range	Mean	
8-12-75	8	NP	5.9-20.9	9.8	No Data		0.33

No fish were taken with sport fishing gear during the survey. Access is by float plane only.

Name of Lake: #34
Latitude: 64° 08' Longitude: 151° 25'
Surface acres: 90

River System: Kantishna R.
Elevation: Approx. 669'

Fish sampling summary:

Aerial observation indicated that lake was too shallow to warrant further investigation.

Name of Lake: #35
Latitude: 64° 06' Longitude: 151° 28'
Surface acres: 140

River System: Kantishna R.
Elevation: 659'

Fish sampling summary:

Aerial observation indicated that lake was too shallow to warrant further investigation.

Name of Lake: #34
Latitude: 64° 08' Longitude: 151° 25'
Surface acres: 90

River System: Kantishna R.
Elevation: Approx. 669'

Fish sampling summary:

Aerial observation indicated that lake was too shallow to warrant further investigation.

Name of Lake: #35
Latitude: 64° 06' Longitude: 151° 28'
Surface acres: 140

River System: Kantishna R.
Elevation: 659'

Fish sampling summary:

Aerial observation indicated that lake was too shallow to warrant further investigation.

Stream Surveys

Name of Stream: Clear Creek
Latitude: 64° 25' Longitude: 150° 22'
Water Chemistry:

River System: Kantishna R.

Date: 9-09-75
Water Temp: 40°F
pH: 9.0
M.O. Alkalinity ppm: 171
Total Hardness ppm: 205

Fish sampling summary:

Date	No.	Species	Length (in)	
			Range	Mean
9-09-75	10	GR	10.6-13.6	11.9

Sport fishing for grayling was excellent, yielding a grayling on every cast. Northern pike and round whitefish were also present. Ages of grayling collected ranged from 4 to 6 with an average of 4.8. Some sport fishing occurs at the mouth of Clear Creek by people traveling up the Kantishna River. The creek had a sand and gravel bottom and very clear water.

Twenty-two streams tributary to the Chatanika River along the Steese Highway, two streams tributary to Crooked Creek along the Central to Circle Hot Springs road, and Crooked Creek itself were initially surveyed to gather baseline data. The survey forms are on file in the Fairbanks Sport Fish Office.

Grayling were sampled from Crooked Creek using hook and line. Eight 1 year olds were captured ranging from 3.7" to 5.1" with an average of 4.4". Seven 2 year olds ranged from 4.7" to 7.1" with an average of 6.0". Ten 3 year olds ranged from 7.3" to 10.0" and had an average of 8.2", and three 4 year olds ranged from 7.9" to 9.1" with an average length of 8.7". The grayling fishing in Crooked Creek was excellent and more studies should be made on this stream in light of recent prospecting activities by oil companies in that region.

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