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SUMMARY OF DALL'S SHEEP SIGHTINGS IN THE
NORTHERN RICHARDSON MOUNTAINS
WINTER 1983 - 84

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This brief report is intended to document and review, in one location, all sightings of Dall's sheep in the northern Richardson Mountains during the late winter of 1983/84. Sightings include those made by Wildlife Service staff as well as those reported by Aklavik hunters to the Area Wildlife Officer.

During 20-22 March 1984 myself and Cliff Cook, Wildlife Officer - Aklavik, made a snowmobile patrol along the eastern flank of Mt. Goodenough south to Mt. Lang. Because of soft, deep snow we abandoned our initial plan of travelling into the high country west of Mt. Goodenough via one of the eastward flowing streams draining into the Delta. Instead, we confined our travel to the flats between the mountains and Delta from where the east flank of the mountains could be scanned effectively by means of a 15-16X spotting scope. On 21 March, however, we did penetrate into the mountains approximately 12 km via the unnamed stream originating near Mt. Lang (Loucheaux in the area refer to this as Mud Creek - English translation).

I counted three separate groups of sheep on Mt. Goodenough proper for a total of 21 sheep. One of these groups consisted of two older rams; the other two appeared to be mainly ewes and lambs although distance and light made precise classification difficult. On the mountain complex immediately south of Mt. Goodenough (Fig. 1) there were another three groups for a total of 20 sheep. These

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appeared to be mainly ewes and lambs. On a steep shoulder immediately above "Mud Creek: we observed four, full curl rams (Fig. 1).

E. McLeod Jr. reported to C. Cook that on 17 April he had observed 10 sheep on Mt. Lang and another 20 sheep near Longstick River (Fig. 1). He also saw fresh tracks on the ridge between the Sheep Creek and Longstick River drainages. Another Aklavik hunter, J. Archie, reported seeing approximately 50 sheep in mid-April in the vicinity of the "Fishhole" situated on Fish Creek, 40 km southwest of Mt. Goodenough. He also saw two ewes and three lambs in another valley nearby. Most recently, F. Elanik of Aklavik, observed 22 sheep on Mt. Goodenough on 25 April.

It is probable that the sheep observed by myself, McLeod and Archie are different individuals. Sheep would not be expected to move between the various locations within this short time period, especially in late winter.

The total for the three separate sets of observations is 130 sheep, a value considerably higher than the 68 seen in an aerial survey of the entire northern Richardson Mountains in April 1983 (see Latour 1983). On the basis of this past winter's Dall's sheep observations in a small fraction of the surveyed area in 1983 I believe that there are more sheep in the northern Richardson Mountains than observed in 1983.

Latour, P. 1984 A survey of the Mt. Goodenough Dall's sheep herd in 1983. N.W.T. Wildlife Service File report.

