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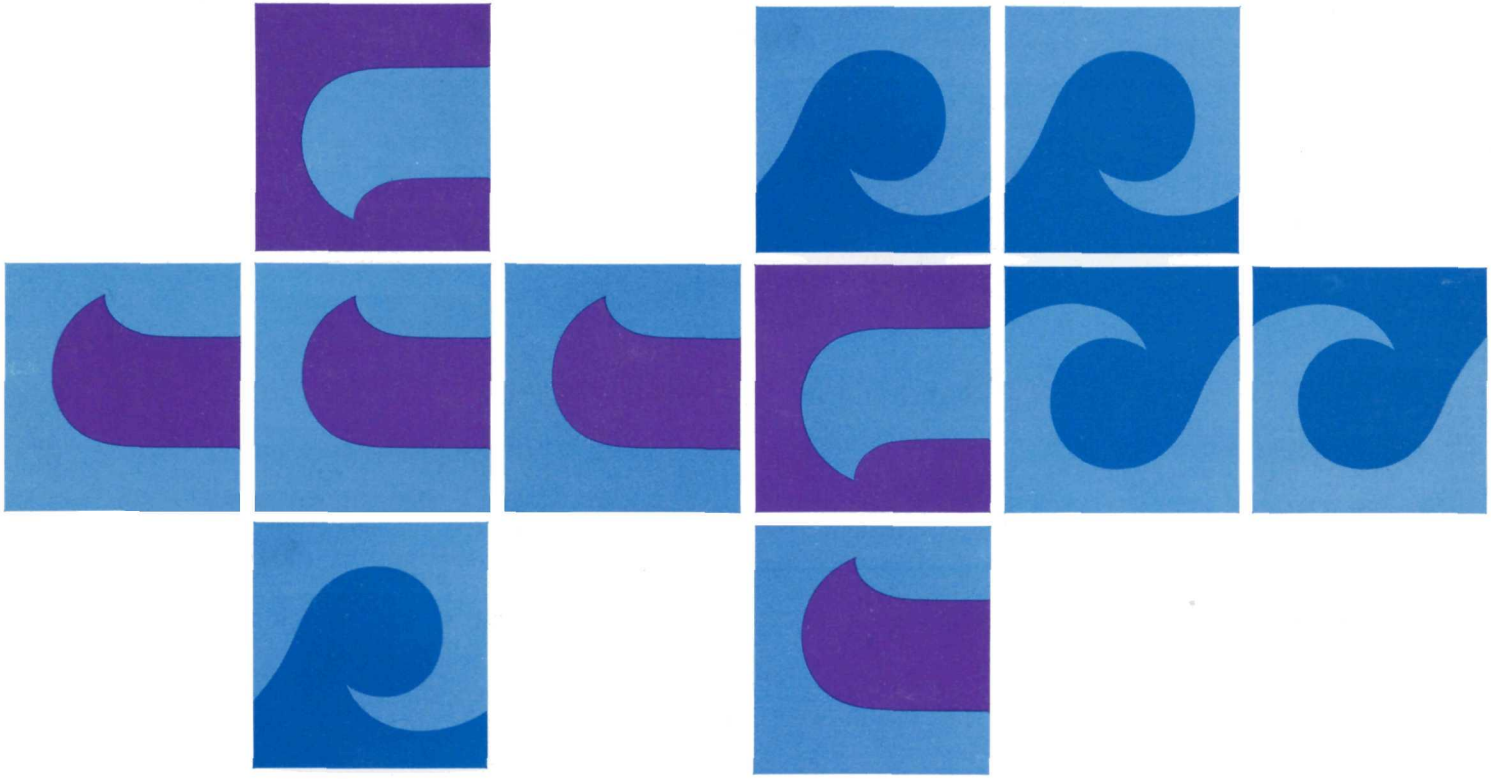
Wild Rivers:
James Bay and Hudson Bay



Published by Parks Canada under authority
of the Hon. Warren Allmand,
Minister of Indian and Northern Affairs,
Ottawa, 1977
QS-7042-000-EE-AI

Les relevés de la série «Les rivières sauvages» sont également publiés en français.

Canada Canada
metric métrique

Wild Rivers:
James Bay and Hudson Bay

Wild Rivers Survey,
Planning Division,
Parks Canada,
Ottawa, 1977

Casting a line in the Rupert River, Quebec.

"It is difficult to find in life any event which so effectually condenses intense nervous sensation into the shortest possible space of time as does the work of shooting, or running an immense rapid. There is no toil, no heart breaking labour about it, but as much coolness, dexterity, and skill as man can throw into the work of hand, eye and head; knowledge of when to strike and how to do it; knowledge of water and rock, and of the one hundred combinations which rock and water can assume – for these two things, rock and water, taken in the abstract, fail as completely to convey any idea of their fierce embracings in the throes of a rapid as the fire burning quietly in a drawing-room fireplace fails to convey the idea of a house wrapped and sheeted in flames."

Sir William Francis Butler (1872)

Available by mail from Printing and Publishing, Supply and Services Canada, Ottawa, K1A 0S9, or through your bookseller.

Catalogue No.: R62-82-1977-5
ISBN. 0-660-00782-7

Price Canada: $1.50
Price other countries: $1.80
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Metric symbols used in this book
mm–millimetre(s)
m–metre(s)
km–kilometre(s)
km/h–kilometres per hour
d–day(s)
°C–degree Celsius

Table of Contents

Foreword

Wild rivers are a priceless part of our natural heritage. Untouched by the march of man's technological progress, these waterways are the arteries of our land, and one of the main elements in its growth to nationhood.

Long before Europeans laid eyes on them, these rivers served the native peoples as sources of food and means of transportation. Later, the rivers were to carry the Europeans on voyages of exploration and exploitation throughout the vast interior of the continent. The settlers who followed travelled the same routes.

The waterways were the mainstay of the fur trade; they were the highways to the gold rushes. They did much to provide the economic nourishment through which Canada grew to its present stature.

With the advent of modern technology, some of our rivers were harnessed to serve our newfound needs. But thousands of kilometres of waterways, and the land they pass through, remain essentially untouched.

Today, Canadians are gradually rediscovering these fascinating wild rivers. They are recreating the adventures of the explorers; struggling over the same portages as the heavily-burdened "coureurs de bois"; running rapids which once hurtled "voyageurs" and their precious cargoes toward the markets of Montreal; gently floating down majestic rivers which once carried thousands of anxious prospectors toward the promise of gold.

Parks Canada is promoting these challenging voyages of discovery, which embrace both the past and the present.

However, a good deal of down-to-earth information about the rivers and their characteristics is needed before anyone attempts to navigate them. It is for this reason that Parks Canada decided to carry out surveys of wild rivers all across the country. The result is this series of booklets, designed to provide a practical guide for the modern "voyageur".

Although "wild" is used to describe rivers not yet harnessed to industry, it is an apt adjective, for many of the rivers should be challenged only by experienced and well-equipped canoeists.

The Wild Rivers of **James Bay and Hudson Bay**

The rivers flowing into James Bay and Hudson Bay are of two different kinds. The west shore rivers descend from the Precambrian Shield in a series of rapids becoming wide shallow rivers as they wind their way across the marine clay of the Hudson Bay Lowlands. For the final 160 km these rivers flow through extensive mud banks and flat terrain. The east shore rivers, in contrast, flow in a disorganized and complex pattern through lakes and bogs lying on top of the very old granite of northern Quebec.

Climate

The lakes and rivers in this area are ice-free from May until December. The average annual rainfall is above 500 mm, most of it falling in the summer. Therefore quality rain gear and waterproofing are essential on canoe trips. The average July temperature is 14°C and summer temperatures in the mid-twenties can be expected.

Planning the Trip

In planning a canoe trip, allow 25 to 30 km a day paddling. Allow extra time and food for such unforeseen events as being windbound or delayed by rain.

If egress is to be by plane, make sure arrangements are taken care of before the trip begins. Be sure to check out with some responsible agency, (the R.C.M.P. or the Ministry of Natural Resources), giving them a route and expected time of arrival. And don't forget to check in with them at the end of the trip!

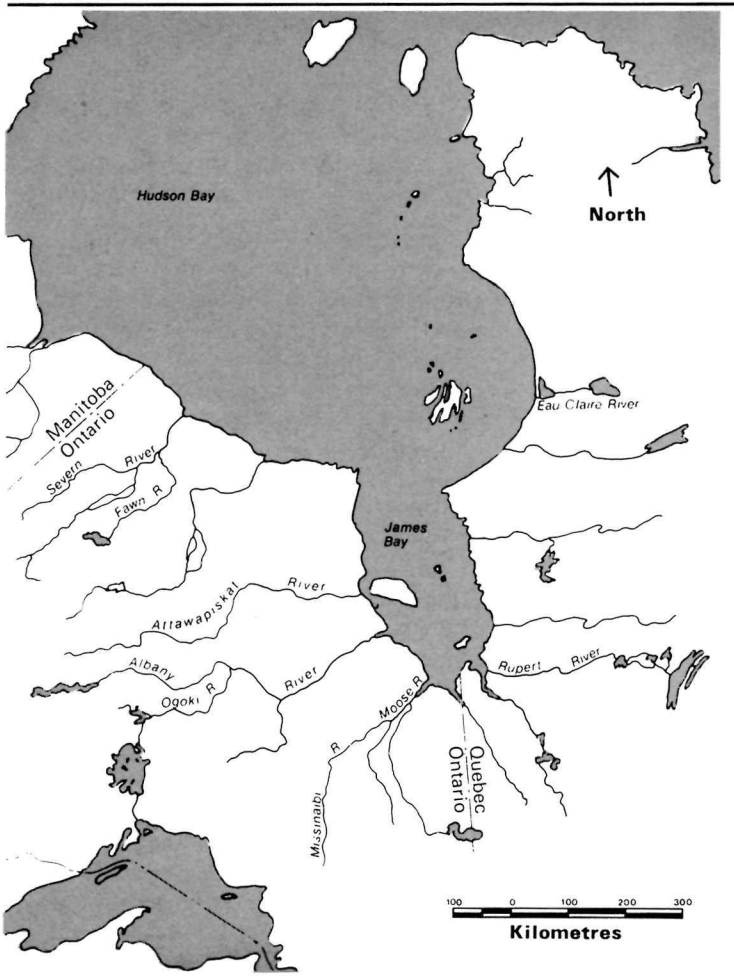
Permits for fires and fishing may be required. Extreme caution should be exercised in the use of fire. Campfires should be built only on rock or sand and extinguished completely. All garbage should be packed out with you.

A sturdy canoe capable of handling well in rapids, and equipment for its repair are essential. Aluminum canoes were used throughout the surveys and proved most practical. Since lining and hauling are often necessary, several pairs of high-cut running shoes or other sturdy footwear, which can take the abuse of rocks and being constantly wet, are needed.

In the more isolated regions carrying an emergency survival kit is advised. The kit should contain high energy food rations, waterproofed matches, fishhooks and line, and emergency rescue flares for signalling aircraft. These items should be well waterproofed; if the kit is small it could be worn on your belt.

Firearms are never necessary. Insect repellent and headnets are necessary in these areas and mosquito coils are useful. Tucking in pant cuffs and tying shirt cuffs closed can be very helpful.

The National Topographic Series of maps is available from:
Canada Map Office,
615 Booth Street,
Ottawa, Ontario,
K1A 0E9


Hudson Bay
North
Manitoba
Ontario
Severn River
Fawn R.
Eau Claire River
James Bay
Attawapiskat River
Albany River
Ogoki R.
Moose R.
Rupert River
Quebec
Ontario
Missinaibi R.
100 0 100 200 300
Kilometres

1 Fawn and Severn Rivers

Fawn and Severn Rivers

Angling Lake to Fort Severn

Length
7 to 14 d* (400 km)
6 portages

Date of survey
August, 1973

Access and egress

Angling Lake may be reached by a chartered float plane from Pickle Lake on Highway 599. Big Trout Lake, south of Angling Lake serves as an alternate starting point. A nursing station, a Hudson's Bay Company store and radio communications are available at Big Trout Lake. The only transport out of Fort Severn is chartered float plane. Flights from Big Trout Lake will lift canoeists to Moosonee where the Polar Bear Express train offers transportation to major settlements. Alternatively, one may fly to Pickle Lake and use highway 599 for a route home.

Maps required

(N.T.S. 1:250 000 scale)
53 H Ashewely River
53 I Fawn River
43 L Clendenning River
53 P Dickey River
43 M Fort Severn
54 A Black Duck River
44 D Black Duck River

** d is the metric symbol for day(s).*

About the river

Geography
The clear waters of the Fawn River flow 110 km from Angling Lake over Precambrian rock, dropping 10 m in elevation in this distance. The landscape is flat and poorly drained with only a few rocky knobs rising above the moss.

Beyond the Canadian Shield the river cuts banks up to 30 m deep through deep marine clays left by the recession of Hudson Bay. Shortly before entering the Severn River, the river cuts to the limestone bedrock. Beyond the river banks, one can see the vast expanses of muskeg that are typical of the Hudson Bay Lowlands. The rivers are quite shallow, with boulder and gravel fields occurring regularly. In the Severn River the shorelines vary from steep newly-formed cutbanks to gently sloping floodbanks with occasional boulder and cobble beaches.

Flora
The swamp is covered with moss and supports a small growth of black spruce and tamarack. The better timber is found growing on and around the hillsides. Alder and willow cover the river banks, Jackpine, balsam, white spruce, trembling aspen, and birch are present in the upper reaches but species change to stunted black spruce, balsam, poplar and tamarack, as one approaches the river's mouth.

Fauna
Fishing is not highly rewarding in these areas – speckled trout are the prime species in the upland areas. Pike and pickerel are available in the Severn. Moose, caribou, and wolves seem to be quite common as are lynx, bear, beaver and otter. Waterfowl, especially ducks and Canada geese, are commonly sighted. In the bay beyond Fort Severn polar bears and beluga whales are often seen.

History
Historically, the Fawn River is of no more than local interest but the Severn had some importance as a fur trade route. Its shallowness and the availability of better routes in the area have kept it from being a vital link.

The Hudson's Bay Company post at Fort Severn was established in 1680 and changed hands at least four times between the French and English traders.

The Canoe Trip

Big Trout Lake to Little Otter River (85 km)

From Big Trout Lake the Fawn River flows northeast along the Hudson Bay watershed. For the first 100 km the Fawn River traverses terrain characteristic of the Canadian Shield and most of central Northern Ontario. At Big Trout Lake Precambrian bedrock is exposed at the surface in large flat shelves at the side of the river, while below Angling Lake it lies below a thin moss and muskeg cover only a metre thick. Because of the thinness of this cover, the river, having cut down to the bedrock, has banks only one metre high. In this first 100 km there are 24 rapids and falls caused by ridges of gneiss crossing the river. Owing to the extreme flatness of the surrounding country (heights of more than five metres are rare) the river spreads at a bedrock ridge and flows in several shallow channels. In sections like this the width of the river increases from an average of 35 m to as much as 135 m.

A very dense willow and alder undergrowth along the river banks makes campsites difficult to find. Along the river, there is a series of cleared campsites made by Indians for winter trapline camps. There are the best campsites in terms of size and levelness but they harbour incredible numbers of black flies and mosquitoes.

At Angling Lake low banks and a dense coniferous covering dominate the topography. Angling Lake Village on the north side of the 13 km long lake is inhabited by 150 Indians. Here the Fawn River continues through a narrow channel.

For the next 85 km the Fawn River runs through dense, low lying muskeg territory. There are two campsites, indicated by granite outcroppings, on the left shore 10 km below Angling Lake. All the rapids of the Fawn River are in the first 85 km. One must navigate with caution here because the topographical maps do not present the rapids accurately.

Sixteen kilometres from Angling Lake is the first set of rapids. These are not marked on the topographical map. This set is easily run on the left.

From these rapids to the first rapids marked on the topographic maps, two campsites are available on the right shore. The first is 22 km below Angling Lake and is marked by a granite outcropping. The next is 8 km downstream from the first campsite and is indicated by a 150 cm sand bank on the right shore. Here one passes through a set of unmarked rapids.

The first marked rapid is actually a ledge which drops five metres. The 120 m portage is on the right and is in good condition. A grassy opening at two rock outcroppings marks the trail.

Three kilometres below the first marked rapids one encounters a ledge of 2.5 m which is also marked by a bar on the map. This ledge may be lined on the right or avoided by two trails on the left marked by grassy openings. The first trail, 490 m long, ends at the bottom of the rapids. The other trail is a 20 m carry which avoids the main ledge. After the carry one may shoot through the high standing waves.

Thirteen kilometres downstream from this ledge are the falls and rapids marked on the map. The portage around the falls begins at a grass opening on an island in the middle of the river channel. It extends for 20 m over broken ground. The 2.5 m drop is quite spectacular.

The rapids, 1.5 km below the falls, end in a wider section of river marked by a sand bank on the left.

The river between here and the rapids marked just above Ashaway Falls is wide with low dense banks of muskeg. The rapids above Ashaway Falls are formed by exposed rock and may be lined on the right.

Ashaway Falls is a four-metre drop. The trail begins on the right at a grass clearing. It stretches for 180 m over rock outcroppings and so is difficult to follow. It terminates in a small cove.

One point five kilometres below the falls there are two sets of unmarked rapids. The first of these may be run on the left, but the second is a 125 m ledge, and should be lined or portaged.

Above Ashaway Falls, upper Fawn River, Ontario.

Three kilometres below these rapids the river widens and a campsite is located on the left shore among a stand of tall black spruce.

Unmarked fast water continues for 13 km below Ashaway Falls to a drop marked as a falls on the map. The falls is actually a series of small ledges cutting the river into islands. They present a kilometre of challenging paddling. No trail was found.

Crandall Falls is avoided by a portage of 70 m on the left.

The marked sets of rapids below Crandall Falls are small ledges and boulder fields. Proceed with caution here because the rapids are not noticeable and navigation may become confused. There are no points of reference to aid in the navigation and identification of the area.

The rapid marked on the map just downstream of the 500 foot (152.4 m) contour is a ledge which may be run or lined on the left side. The channel winds around a corner to the left. Trails were not found in this area.

The last set of rapids in this section of the Fawn River is marked on the maps and is a 75 cm drop over a ledge. It may be lined through the middle or walked around on a 20 m trail marked by a grass clearing on the left.

Ten kilometres downriver one reaches the confluence of the Fawn and Little Otter Rivers. A large clearing on the right side upstream from the Little Otter River provides excellent camping.

Little Otter River to confluence with Severn River (234 km)

Below the last rapid, 8 km upstream from the Little Otter River, the geological and physiographic features change rapidly. The last rapid marks the final step from Canadian Shield and its Precambrian bedrock into the Hudson Bay Lowlands. Once off the Shield one finds sedimentary limestone covered with deep marine clays. The same glacial activity that levelled and scoured the shield left vast areas of tills and boulder pavement. This, along with the marine clays, form an overburden of over 30 m through which the river has cut, exposing wide flood banks and high steep cliffs which are constantly being eroded.

The river flows 5 to 6 km/h over a cobble bed. With the exception of shallow shoals, there are no rapids until Caribou Rapids near the confluence with the Severn River. Here the river has cut right down to the limestone floor, leaving the impression that the river bed has been paved. Because of the muskeg terrain and vegetation, campsites are few and far between. It is important to note that while everywhere in this region, the mosquitoes and black flies were bothersome, on this section of the Fawn River they were particularly bad. Head nets were necessary even while canoeing and once on shore it was impossible to sit outside the tents.

It is recommended that anyone with any reaction to insect bites avoid this river.

Confluence of Fawn and Severn Rivers to Fort Severn (100 km)

From the junction of the Fawn and Severn Rivers to Fort Severn the character of the river does not change except for the magnitude. While the Fawn River was a uniform 50 m wide, the Severn widened to 500 m increasing to 8 km at Fort Severn.

In this last section there are two sets of rapids. What is marked 'Limestone Rapids' on the map was a fast stretch of very deep water near the right bank. The last set (not marked on the maps) is 56 km from the mouth of the Fawn River, and is marked by spectacular limestone islands. Large fossils were found imbedded in the flat rock. The rapids are about 1.5 km long and very difficult because of their size. Very fast water, six-metre ledges, waves over two metres high and the 1 km wide river made this a dangerous rapid.

In the last 80 km, weather is a noticeable factor. At high tide a heavy fog, caused by cold air from the ice pack meeting the relatively warm water of the river, moves in along the coastal area. This results in very chilly and uncomfortable canoeing conditions and also plays an important factor in flying arrangements at Fort Severn.

After the limestone sections the Severn reverts to sand banks as far as Fort Severn. Here radio communications are available at the Hudson's Bay Company store. 185 Indians make up the population of Fort Severn.

2 Attawapiskat River

Attawapiskat River

Missisa River to Attawapiskat Village

Length
4 to 8 d (205 km)
2 portages

Date of survey
Late August, 1973, at low water level

Access and egress

The access point on the river is the site of three abandoned buildings at the confluence of the Attawapiskat and Missisa Rivers. The only way one can reach this point is by chartered aircraft from Moosonee, or Nakina. From Attawapiskat there are twice weekly scheduled flights back to Moosonee.

Maps required

(N.T.S. 1:250 000 scale)
43 F Matateto River
43 C Missisa Lake
43 B Kapikau River

About the river

The Attawapiskat has been documented by Doctor Robert Bell of the Geological Survey of Canada in 1886 and in an unpublished report written for the Water Resources Division, Ontario Water Resources Commission in 1966. These reports are quite complete and useful.

Geography
The Attawapiskat River begins in the Precambrian Shield and then flows through the James Bay Lowland, a poorly drained area of extensive muskeg and bog.

In the Lowlands the banks are generally composed of boulder clay, and slope gently down to the water level. The topography of the country is low and level.

In a number of places, the river crosses large exposures of limestone. This material has been deposited in strata under an ancient sea which now remains as Hudson Bay. The banks and bed of the river at these points consist of limestone debris. The river has cut through the strata carving sheer cliffs and overhangs. The result is probably the most beguiling scenery in the James Bay Lowland for the river drops over limestone ledges and rushes between myriads of islands. At places the river is often over a kilometre wide and only 25 to 50 cm deep.

Flora
On the well drained soils, black spruce, tamarack, balsam, aspen, and white birch are common, but on wet level tracts it is principally black spruce. Poplar occurs near the streams but is seldom seen inland. Alders and willows line the bank in most areas, but grasses and reeds occur in the shallows.

Fauna
This area is generally uninhabited by man and canoeing through it provides an excellent opportunity to see many undisturbed animals at close range. Bears wander among flowers and berries on the banks all along the route. Beavers also find good feeding along the banks. White fish, suckers, pike and others are found here and sturgeon is abundant further up the river.

History
Because of the difficulty involved in navigating this river, it never became an important artery of trade. The village of Attawapiskat, with a population of 500, is not historically significant.

The Canoe Trip

Missisa River to 52°55′N lat. 83°56′W long.
At the confluence of the Missisa and Attawapiskat Rivers lies an abandoned Hudson's Bay Company post. Three buildings still stand. From the Missisa to 52°55′N 83°56′W only one section of limestone rock was observed. This limestone area stretched for 6.5 km from 84°31′W 53°05′N. The river is bounded by six-metre walls of limestone. The current passes swiftly over a shallow rock channel dotted by limestone islands. Numerous fossils lie in the limestone.

The geography of the remainder of this section of the river is uniform. The banks of alluvial till are consistently low. The river flows through a wide shallow channel over numerous gravel bars. Campsites are not abundant. The openess of the river coupled with a strong head wind may make paddling laborious.

Limestone cliffs along the Attawapiskat River, Ontario.

52°55'N 83°56'W to 52°56'N 83°09'W

At 83°56'W one encounters the first substantial section of limestone, stretching 6.5 km. The current here although swift, does not create any rapids. The left channel of the river has the more interesting geological formations. A number of caverns may be explored which could yield discoveries of fossils or perhaps animal dens. Below the limestone area the river flows for 13 km through regions of islands and banks made up of alluvial material. The vegetation of the banks exhibits signs of ice scarring.

At 83°49'W lies the next area of limestone, stretching for 8 km and forming another labyrinth of channels and rapids. Rock faces rise 20 m vertically, and the scenery is unique and magnificent. The rapids in this section are not difficult.

For 10 km below the limestone area, the river resumes a sluggish pace characteristic of rivers of the James Bay Lowlands. At 83°36'W, limestone outcrops again form a ledge rapid. This rapid, which is marked on the topographic maps may be run in the centre, or be lined along the right shore.

Five kilometres downstream there is another area of limestone and fast water. Campsites are readily available.

Three kilometres downstream, be careful to avoid the Lawashi Channel, and stay in the main channel of the Attawapiskat. By running the three sets of rapids on the left side one will be assured of the correct channel. The first of these rapids is shallow and not difficult to run. The final rapid in the left channel is a three-metre drop over a series of ledges, and it may be necessary to line if the water level is low. The middle seems to be best for running these drops. The river quickly approaches James Bay after the last set of rapids.

52°56'N 85°09'W to Attawapiskat Village

In this section of the river, the channel widens and becomes shallower. Gravel shoals under the water result in a fast current and produce many opportunities for running aground. The banks of alluvial till are about six metres high, and in places there has been severe bank slumping. Campsites are not abundant in this area.

At the village of Attawapiskat scheduled flights are available twice a week to Moosonee. Canoes may be shipped through the Hudson's Bay Company by barge to Moosonee and from there via Ontario Northland Railroad to southern destinations.

3 Ogoki and Albany Rivers

Ogoki and Albany Rivers

Kayedon Lake to Ghost River

Length
10 to 16 d (453 km)
8 to 12 portages

Date of survey
July, 1973, at medium water level

Access and egress

The Ogoki River may be reached by chartered plane from Nakina. Nakina is located at the end of the road 65 km north of Geraldton on Highway 534. This town is on the route of all CN trains west from Capreol, North Bay and Cochrane. In Nakina there is a hospital clinic, telephones, post office, hotels, a restaurant, a Ministry of Natural Resources office, a Hudson's Bay Company post, outfitters and three airline companies.

Egress is by float plane only. Arrangements may be made in Nakina to fly from Ogoki Post, Fort Albany or other points on the river to Moosonee or Nakina. There are also a few scheduled flights from Ogoki Post.

Maps required

(N.T.S. 1:250 000 scale)
42 L Nakina
42 M Ft. Hope
42 N Ogoki
42 O Ghost River

A note of caution –
the Ogoki River is made up of 42 rapids, chutes and boulder fields. Whitewater canoeing experience is essential for the navigation of this river.

About the river

Geography
The river begins in a rock-ringed lake and gradually descends towards the edge of the Canadian Shield. Rock ridges appear throughout this area, creating waterfalls, rapids and chutes. At Eby Falls the river makes one last large drop and leaves the rocky ledges of the Shield behind.

The river cuts a much wider channel through the clay and stones of the Hudson Bay Lowland area. This region is flat and low with little more topography than the high river banks. At Kayedon Lake, the Ogoki River is 12 m wide. At the confluence of the Ogoki and Albany Rivers, the river is 34 m wide. This gradually widens to 1 km at Ghost River. Flow rates and seasonal variations are controlled by a dam at the Ogoki Reservoir and one on the Albany River. The variation is no more than one point five metres.

Flora
The forest cover, seen from the air, seems to exist solely along the banks of the major rivers. In the upper Ogoki, deciduous trees such as birch, poplar and aspen dominate. Below Eby Falls, this balance changes in favour of the conifers; black spruce and balsam dominate with some poplar, birch and aspen. On the Albany, this balance stays about the same, with a few concentrations of poplar.

Fauna
Northern fauna abound. Moose, mink, fox, squirrel, chipmunk, and muskrat were observed during the survey, and local people told of hunting caribou near Ogoki.

Fish are plentiful. The Albany supports pike, pickerel and sturgeon, as well as trout in deep pools near the outlets of the cooler tributaries.

A variety of ducks, geese, loons, osprey and bald eagles, ravens, terns and gulls can be seen on larger lakes. Small shorebirds are plentiful.

History
The Ogoki River is too difficult to navigate to ever have been a trade route. However, the lower Albany River is part of a major fur trade route to the coast. The Hudson's Bay post at Ogoki, and the names of many abandoned towns are evidence of this. On the whole there are few portage trails, indicating that history has passed by without leaving its mark.

The Canoe Trip

Kayedon Lake to Eby Falls

Seventy-four kilometres to the west of Kayedon Lake on the Ogoki River is the Ogoki reservoir, where a control dam diverts a substantial portion of the waterflow south to Lake Nipigon. Ogoki Lake acts to stabilize the water level to the east of this point so the effects of this diversion are kept at a minimum.

Between Kayedon Lake and Eby Falls there is little soil cover over the Precambrian rock of the Canadian Shield. Smooth rock out-croppings take up a quarter of the surface area around the river providing outstanding scenery and excellent campsites. The flats up to 15 m wide to each side of the river are due partly to the lowering of the water level affected by the dam and partly to the natural seasonal fluctuations of the water level. In the upper part of this section the rapids are mainly boulder fields. In the lower parts the rapids are often chutes through gaps in horizontal ridges. Often portaging or lining is necessary. The river in this section varies from 10 to 30 m in width.

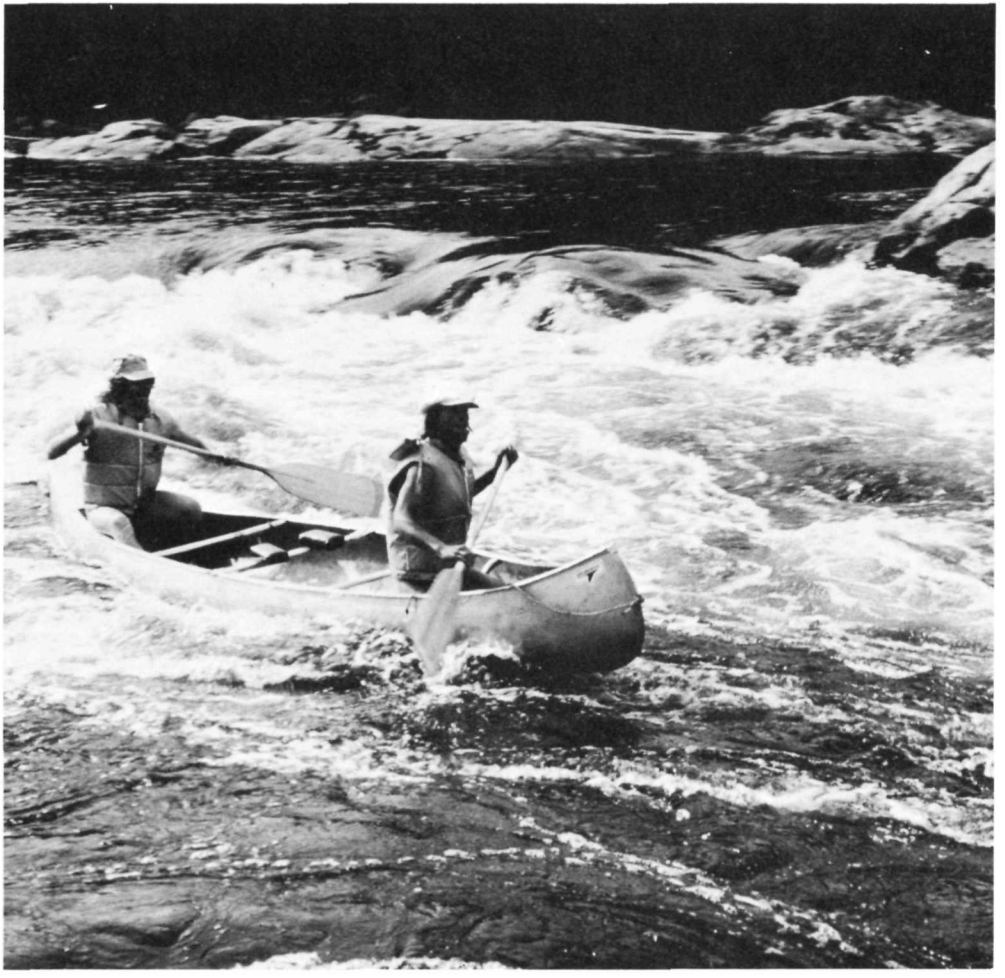
Speckled Trout Rapids are the first rapids encountered one point five kilometres below Kayedon Lake. The rapids are 1.5 km long, consisting of ledges and boulder fields. There does not seem to be a portage trail.

At Patience Lake the river splits into two channels, with the south channel being the easier route. Two rapids are encountered upon entering the south channel. The first set is best run on the right side. The second is an easily run boulder field.

The next difficult section is 1.5 km below Esser Lake. The rapids are best run on the right side just above the falls. A portage of 140 m on the left side leads around the falls. It begins just above the first ledge at a rock outcrop. Campsites are readily available, with good speckled trout and walleye fishing.

The next set of rapids indicated on topographical maps lies 2.5 km below the falls. This ledge is best lined on the right side. One kilometre downstream, boulder fields not marked on the maps may be run on the right side of two islands.

The next section of rapids is indicated on the map by the word 'rapid' occurring twice. These ledges may be run or portaged as the rapids range from easy to difficult. No trails exist, but carries over rock surfaces are not difficult; the longest carry is 20 m. An island three kilometres downstream divides the next set of rapids.



Running a rapid on the Ogoki River, Ontario.

The left side seems to be the best to run. The channel forms a dogleg to the right so care must be taken.

Boulder fields occur in five groups further downstream. Manoeuvring in this water is enjoyable, and carries over the rock are optional.

Eight kilometres downstream the river meanders through swampy territory, an interesting contrast to the earlier rock shores. Drops over ledges are the last changes in the river conditions before the union of the north and south channels of the Ogoki River. Lining and carrying are necessary for the descent. The first ledge may be portaged for 20 m on the left, while the next two are best lined on the right. Good campsites are available here. At the convergence of the two channels a waterfall on the north channel is

visible. The paddle to the foot of the 10 m vertical falls is worth the effort.

One point five kilometres below the union of the two channels, the river splits around an island. The left channel seems the easier of the two routes. The right channel involves a carry over a ledge.

The next five sets of rapids marked on the maps are formed by ledges of varying difficulty. These may be avoided by lining on the sides.

Five point five kilometres below the confluence with a large river on the left side one encounters five sets of rapids formed by boulder fields. Running these involves careful manoeuvring. The next rapid is a ledge split by an island. At the head, it may be run on the left of the island while the rest must be lined. No trail exists.

Eby Falls offers a spectacular scene. The portage is in two parts on the left side. The first part, 20 m long, begins in a cover after a short run through heavy waves. The other trail, 30 m long, begins at a log pile opposite the first. One should plan to camp at the falls since it is the last area of rock outcrop. Eby Falls is the last area of white water on the trip.

The rapids below Eby Falls are a very shallow boulder field. A winter cabin is located 13 km below the falls above Calbert Creek on the left.

Eby Falls to Ogoki Post

Below Eby Falls, rock of the Precambrian Shield becomes submerged under a thick marine deposit and consequently the river character changes. There are no serious rapids and the river widens to 30 m. Shallows are often encountered, forcing the canoeist to do a lot of manoeuvring. The surrounding terrain becomes much flatter and is wetter as a result of the poor drainage. The river banks are wet and muddy, thus good campsites become rare. Islands, though not abundant, are present and provide better campsites.

Ogoki Post lies at the confluence of the Ogoki and Albany Rivers. On the left shore of the Albany is a Hudson's Bay post with a post office and a radio-telephone.

Ogoki Post to the Albany Forks
In the first 50 km of this section the river depth varies considerably. Shallow gravel shoals often not more than 7 cm below the surface force the canoeist to traverse and retraverse the river. Occasionally, the canoes must be walked across the flats. Other parts of the river, however, were two metres or more in depth. In low water this section would be difficult and tedious canoeing. Fifty kilometres below Ogoki Post the river becomes a more constant 2 to 2.5 m deep and many islands dot the river. Here, canoeing is similar to lake canoeing.

Confluence of Ghost and Albany Rivers, Ontario.

Albany Forks to Ghost River
In this section the Albany River is crossing the James Bay Lowlands and the terrain is typical of all rivers in this area. The width increases from 150 m at the Forks to over 1 km at Ghost River. The banks are low and very wet, so campsites are hard to find. There are no hills and high banks to provide diversity of scenery.

Canoeing in this section is very monotonous as the river is straight and progress seems tediously slow. Large islands divide the river into two and sometimes three channels.

Ghost River itself was a trading post during the winter months but is now uninhabited. All that remains is a flat field offering a very good campsite. It must be noted that few flights are made over the river and the canoeist is quite isolated. It is advised that the proper authorities be given a copy of your itinerary and estimated time of arrival when canoeing any rivers in this area.

4 Missinaibi and Moose Rivers

Missinaibi and Moose Rivers

Peterbell to Moosonee

Length
12 to 21 d (493 km)

Date of survey
July, 1973, at high water

Access and egress

Access by air to Missinaibi Lake at the head of the Missinaibi River can best be arranged through one of the charter companies in Timmins. By land there are three available points of departure. (1) A Canadian National Railway line runs northwest from Capreol crossing the Missinaibi River at Peterbell. (2) 112 km north of this a gravel road meets the river. This road runs from Kapuskasing to The Spruce Falls Power and Paper Company main camp on the Missinaibi River. (3) The last available starting point is Mattice, 167 km down river from Peterbell on the Trans-Canada Highway.

At Moosonee, two hotels provide accommodations, though reservations are advisable during the summer months. The Ontario Northland Railway runs daily train service from Moosonee to Cochrane.

Maps required

(N.T.S. 1:250 000 scale)
42 B Foleyet
42 G Kapuskasing
42 J Smokey Falls
42 I Moose River
42 P Moosonee

About the river

Geography

The Missinaibi River flows out of Lake Missinaibi which is located 325 m above sea level in the Canadian Shield. In the southern portion of the river, vegetation on the sides is thick, blocking the shoreline almost entirely with overhanging cedar trees and bushes. Only at rapids or waterfalls does the Precambrian rock become exposed in the form of ledges and massive square rock outcrops.

Near Mattice, the silt and soil river banks become increasingly higher, and reach 10 m in some places. At this stage, one begins to encounter boulder fields in the river.

There is another distinct change in the character of the geology beginning at the Thunderhouse and Conjuring House Falls area. Here is an edge of the Tyrell Sea, an inland ocean which 8 000 years ago occupied Hudson Bay. There is a series of spectacular waterfalls and chutes occurring in the breaks in the Precambrian rocks; gorges where the entire volume of the Missinaibi rushes through passages as narrow as 2.5 m. Erosion and faulting has left steep rock walls up to 50 m high in some places.

Beyond this drop of 30 m/5 km, one encounters the James Bay Lowlands. Here, the Palaeozoic and more recent ocean bottom sediments lie on top of the Precambrian base. Fossils are in evidence almost everywhere, attesting to the now withdrawn Tyrell Sea. Banks of sand and gravel remain on hillsides which were once beaches and spits. The river bottom becomes clay as one approaches James Bay.

Flora

In the southern extremities of the Missinaibi, swamp and pine forests on the higher rocky points constitute the predominant vegetation. This soon gives way to a mixed forest of spruce, poplar, birch and trembling aspen rising up behind a dense overhanging bank of cedar growing, in or near, the water. Occasionally there are localized stands of mature poplar with very little coniferous growth.

In the lowlands area, large white spruce stand on the high ground, while black spruce and larch grow in the bogs. The size of the spruce decreases in the northern areas.

Fauna

There was little evidence of animal life on the Missinaibi and Moose River trip. Five moose were encountered in the swamp area below Peterbell, however after this only tracks were seen on the trails. Beaver cuttings and lodges are common sights. Pickerel, pike, walleye and sturgeon inhabit the river.

Many swallows dwell in the steep and sandy river banks and American mergansers and teal are commonly seen leading their broods.

Depending on the time of year, insects can be the most abundant form of animal life. Mosquitos are thickest at the beginning of the trip, while black flies are especially numerous in the regions of fast flowing water, their natural spawning grounds.

History

The Missinaibi and the Moose Rivers are integral to the history of James Bay and the fur trade. Originally, it was one of the Indian routes for transporting furs from the rich beaver country in the heart of Ontario down to the Hudson's Bay Company post at Moose Factory. This post was established in 1673 and from it the furs were shipped directly to London via Hudson Strait.

The Missinaibi River became the main voyageur route on the west side of James Bay for transporting furs and trading wares from Montreal. The voyageurs travelled by the Michipicoten River from Lake Superior into Missinaibi Lake where Brunswick House, a trading post, was established. Some of the voyageurs went down the Missinaibi River to Moose Factory. Today, well-cut portage trails follow the voyageurs' route.

The Missinaibi River is now designated as a Wild River Park under the Provincial Parks Classification System.

The Canoe Trip

Peterbell to Mattice

This 180 km section of river consists mostly of clay banks covered with alder and willow brush. Precambrian Shield rock is exposed only at the rapids and waterfalls.

Swamp Portage Rapids, the first set of rapids, are 10 km below Peterbell. They are in three sets beginning at a cabin on the right shore. The portage trails for the three sets of rapids are marked and in excellent condition. The first portage is 285 m and the second portage of 80 m begins just above the second set of rapids on the right side. The third trail, 40 m long, is on the left and begins in a cove marked by blazes on the trees.

Deadwood Rapids lie 1.5 km downstream from the Swamp Portage Rapids. The 80 m-long trail begins in a grassy inlet on the right side.

Running rapids on the Missinaibi River, Ontario.

A bend in the river marks the beginning of Wavy Rapids. One may take a route to either side of a large island. The rapids on the left are easier. The 100-m trail is marked on the left side and is quite wet. The third set of Wavy Rapids is below the island. The 100 m portage, in good condition, is marked on the right side.

Five kilometres downstream, the Greenhill Rapids provide exciting twists and turns through Precambrian rock. The rapids are 1.5 km long and there are good campsites along the way. The portage of 990 m is marked on the left side and is very swampy. The rapids end at the bottom of a hill at a grassy clearing.

Approximately 1.5 km downstream one encounters the first set of the Calf Rapids. The portage is marked on the right side and is 400 m long. The very easy St. Peter Rapids occur in two sets, 1.5 km below Calf Rapids. The portage trail is in good shape and marked on the right shore. The second set has a trail marked on the left shore. One kilometre downstream on the left side is a cabin with five bunks.

Split Rock Falls, 2 km downstream, is a spectacular 10 m drop between two rocks. The portage of 340 m begins at a bend before the falls and is marked by blazed trees.

Thunder Falls is 13 km downstream and is preceded by an easy set of rapids. The rapids may be avoided by a 30 m portage on the left side. The 150 m portage around the falls begins at a muddy bank on the right and is in excellent shape. There is a good campsite at the end of the trail.

Thirty-two kilometres below Thunder Falls, one encounters Two Portage Falls. There is excellent camping at the end of the 25 m portage. This trail is marked on the right side. Just below the falls is another section of heavy water. The portage of 30 m is opposite the preceding one at the end of a bay. It is marked with signs and red tapes.

Further downstream is Pond Falls. The portage of 70 m is marked on the right side and is in good shape.

Below Pond Falls is Devil Cap Falls. It has a trail of 60 m marked on the right side.

Devil Rapids consists of four ledges. The first has a trail of 120 m, marked on the right side. The second, 60 m long, is also marked on the right. The latter two ledges did not have portages. All four may be run in high water.

One point five kilometres above Wilson Bend is the Spruce Falls Power and Paper camp. There is a 113 km road to Kapuskasing near the river on the right side.

Wilson Bend indicates the occurrence of the next set of easy rapids. These are followed by the Albany Rapids, a series of four boulder fields. The first is avoided by a 120-m portage marked on the right. The other three do not have trails but are not difficult to run.

Beaver Rapids, 7.25 km downstream, must be avoided by a 325-m foot trail marked on the left. Below this trail there is another short portage around a small ledge. It is marked on the left side.

Sharp Rock Rapids is a ledge which can be avoided by a 30-m-long trail marked on the left. The last portage before Mattice is a 5-m drop called Glassy Falls. The portage is a short carry over the rocks on the right side.

Mattice to Long Rapids

Below Mattice, the first rapid encountered is Rock Island Rapids. The portage of 300 m is on the right side at a burn site. It is in good shape and ends in a bay.

Black Feather Rapids runs over a series of limestone ridges and washes on granite boulders. These rapids offer exciting canoeing and excellent campsites. A rough portage on the right side is unmarked. This 50-m portage is required due to a 2.5-m ledge at the base of the rapids.

Twenty-nine kilometres downstream lies the climax of the trip. The spectacular Thunder House Falls must be avoided on the left side by an unmarked trail of 1.5 km. At the half-way point during the portage one may view the beauty of the rock formations from the campsite. These falls are the first in a set of three. The second set of falls is through a 2.5-m-wide gorge. Conjuring House is the highest of the three falls with water dropping six metres. Many kettles have been formed in the rock by the water.

The Stone Rapids are 1.25 km long and are very scenic. The trail, 2.5 km from Thunder House, indicates an 11-km portage around the unnavigable Stone Rapids, Hells Gate and Long Rapids. However, individual trails for each section may be used. The Stone trail, 690 m long, is marked on the right. Soon one enters Hell's Gate Rapids formed by a 30-m canyon. The 1 800-m portage on the right may be interrupted at a former Hydro Camp on the trail. At this point a 50-m cliff falls vertically to the river below. Long Rapids is a series of six rapids and boulder fields which may be run in high water. These may be avoided on the right side by a 6.75-km portage into Moose Bay.

Long Rapids to the confluence with the Moose River

Below Long Rapids, the river character changes abruptly. The final step down to the James Bay Lowlands had been made and thus there are no more falls or rapids. This region once was the bottom of the Tyrell Sea as is evident by the flatness of the area and the 30 m clay and sand banks. Erosion by the river gives the banks a slashed appearance. Owing to poor drainage, the banks are muddy and campsites are scarce. A steady drop of 1 m/km gives the river a current of approximately 1.1 km/h. The width of the river increases from 30 m below Long Rapids to 100 m at the Moose River. Many rivers converge with the main artery.

Moose River to Moosonee

From the confluence with the Moose River to Moosonee the sand banks seen previously are replaced by low grassy banks rising gently for 15 m. Campsites are more comfortable as these banks are dry and driftwood for fires is abundant.

The river in this section is very muddy due to the clay in suspension in the water brought down by the Moose River. The width varies from 150 m at the confluence to 5 km at Moosonee. The tidal effect is noticeable at Moosonee.

5 Rupert River

Rupert River

Baie-du-Poste to Rupert House

Length
28 to 30 d (605 km)
25 portages

Date of survey
July, 1973

Access and egress

Baie-du-Poste can be reached via Route 167 from Chibougamau or St-Félicien, Quebec. Egress takes place at Rupert House on James Bay. Scheduled flights from Rupert House to Moosonee are available, and from Moosonee, flights and the Polar Bear Express train can take one south to Cochrane, Ontario.

Maps required

(N.T.S. 1:250 000 scale)
32 I Mistassini River
32 P Lac Baudeau
32 O Lac Mesgouez
32 N Lac Némiscau
32 M Rupert

(N.T.S. 1:50 000 scale)
32 I/12 Lac Deleuze
32 I/13 Ile Guillaume-Couture
32 P/4 Ile Peuvereau
32 P/5 Woollett Lake
32 O/8 Lac Bellinger
32 O/7 Lac Labardelière
32 O/6 Lac Mesgouez
32 O/11 Lac Goulde
32 O/12 Lac des Montagnes
32 W/8 Untitled
32 N/6 Lac Mezières
32 N/5 Ruisseau Goulet
32 M/8 Untitled
32 M/7 Rupert

About the river

Geography
The water in Lake Mistassini where the Rupert River trip begins is crystal clear, with a bottom of smooth round stones and large granite boulders that protrude above the surface. The lake is nestled in a low valley of Precambrian rock surrounded by mountains with denuded summits and has many gravel and rock islands.

The river flows through a valley 1 500 m wide, bordered by hills 50 m high. Eskers, sand bars and various other post-glacial phenomena stretch along the river. Lake Labardelière fills a Precambrian valley 300 m wide with surrounding hills 200 m high. Many lakes through the central portion of the river have sandy bottoms. Below Némiscau the river bottom consists of clay and silt, and as a result, the water is often cloudy.

Rupert House is built on a sand hill in marshy terrain, on the barren shores of James Bay.

Flora
In the Precambrian highlands of Lake Mistassini, black spruce is the predominant vegetation, with an understorey of caribou moss and Labrador tea. Along the river aquatic plants are abundant in the bays. The valley of the river is covered with black spruce and muskeg, a typical northern vegetation pattern. In the early stages of the trip, black spruce accounts for 95 per cent of the tree growth. The occurrence of jack pine, birch, and poplar increases toward the west. Through the middle section of the trip, fires have burned much of the forest cover. At Lake Némiscau the silty conditions of the water foster the growth of reeds and willow. Tamarack, larch and aspen are predominant in open spaces.

Fauna
The Rupert River has a well-deserved reputation as a fishing river. Sturgeon are most plentiful, but walleye and pike are also present. Loons, gulls, geese and a host of other birds frequent the area. Moose, beaver and otter are present.

History
In 1668 English traders directed by Des Groseilliers, who had been unable to win support from the French, sent the *Nonsuch* to trade for furs in James Bay. Des Groseilliers and his crew wintered near the present site of Rupert House and became friendly with the Cree Indians. The little ketch returned to England with a rich cargo of furs in 1669 and resulted in the founding of the Hudson's Bay Company in 1670. Des Groseilliers purchased the Rupert River from the Indians and named it in honour of the brother of the reigning English King, Charles II.

In response, the French realized the importance of a physical presence in establishing the land rights of this abundant fur preserve. Père Albanel departed from Quebec on a voyage of reconnaissance to the Bay and in the summer of 1672, arrived in Rupert's Bay, being the first European to journey overland to James Bay. Albanel undertook one more mission in 1674 to Christianize the Indians along the Némiscau or Rupert River.

The Rupert River was the freight route of the Hudson's Bay Company to the Mistassini and Némiscau Posts. The Broadback River was used on the return voyage to Rupert House.

Lake Mistassini to the outlet of the Rupert River
Length 80 km *(2 portages)*
Mistassini Post is the departure point for the paddle north along Lake Mistassini to the outlet of the Rupert River. The first portage is in the west bay of Baie-du-Poste. This swampy portage trail is difficult to locate. The first 250 m cross a bay, and the land rises for the last 750 m.

A 72 km paddle north along the western shore of Lake Mistassini brings one to Baie du Portage where a 150 m portage joins the Rupert River. This portage route bypasses the outlet of the Rupert River further north.

Baie du Portage to Lake Capichinatoune

Length 35 km *(1 portage)*

The first reach of the Rupert consists of a disorganized system of lakes and rivers. Eskers resembling large golf greens line the river. In the first 16 km of the river, there are three sets of rapids, all of which can be run. Then a set of rapids begins and ends with a two-metre waterfall. Portaging along the right bank bypasses this obstacle. There is one more rapid before Lake Capichinatoune.

Lake Capichinatoune on the Rupert River, Quebec.

Lake Capichinatoune to Lake Mesgouez

Length 138 km *(4 portages)*

At the discharge of Lake Capichinatoune, a waterfall of five metres flows into a 150 m long rapid. The 750 m portage trail has a campsite for two tents at the head of the trail. Sixteen kilometres of tranquil water is followed by four sets of rapids. The first three sets can be navigated but the last rapids end with a 3 m waterfall. A 250 m portage trail follows the right shore. A campsite is situated at the base of this portage. Two more sets of runnable rapids follow.

Forest fires have scorched the scenery of this section. Campsites are rare and muskeg must be cleared to pitch tents. Woollett Lake offers a picturesque setting with 200 m high mountains lining the lake shore.

Two rapids precede Lake Bellinger. Five kilometres to the west, at the discharge of this short lake, is a 1.5 km waterfall which must be portaged on the left bank for 300 m. A camping spot for two tents exists along the portage trail. In the next 43 km of the Rupert River, there are nine sets of rapids. All can be navigated except the eighth rapid which has a 150 m portage on the left. The trail is invisible from the river and it is difficult to follow. A few kilometres downstream beyond a few simple rapids is Lake Bardelière. Moraines and eskers line the shore.

Large open muskeg flats with stunted spruce offer the only camping spots. There is a set of short rapids before Lake Mesgouez. A 200 m high mountain range lines the south of this beautiful sandy lake.

Lake Mesgouez to Lake Némiscau

Length 168 km *(7 portages)*

There is a 60 m rapid at the discharge of Lake Mesgouez. This reach marks the beginning of the Rupert River as a main river system. Along the upper part of the reach, there are hills bordering both banks. The river averages 72 m in width and flows at five point five kilometres an hour.

The first large rapid of the section can be bypassed by running to the right of an island along the right shoreline. One point five kilometres downstream the left branch of the river enters a 60 m rapid which can be run. A 2.5 m

Portage along the Rupert River, Quebec.

waterfall introduces two rapids followed by yet another 2.5 m waterfall. The 150 m portage trail is invisible from the river. One point two five kilometres downstream there are cascading falls which drop seven metres. A branch of the river flows to the right and the canoes may be lined along this reach. Three rapids follow; the first two can be navigated and the third can be portaged on the left side over the granite outcrops.

The next major obstacle is a 1.5 km canyon where the Rupert River flows through a 30 m gorge. The poorly-maintained portage trail is in two sections on the right. Two rapids follow the canyon. The first rapid is 200 m and can be portaged on the right. The second rapid can be run. Three sets of rapids follow within the next 8 km.

The portages are difficult to find but exist on the left shore. Four more rapids occur before the junction with the Marten River. All four sets of rapids can be run. The river along the last reach before Némiscau Lake has low-lying relief. Large sand banks and aquatic plants are a predominant feature. Two sets of rapids occur before Lake Némiscau. The first rapid has a portage at the end of a stream on the right and the second rapid can be run.

Lake Némiscau to Oatmeal Falls
Length 61 km *(1 portage)*
This majestic lake is lined with beautiful sand beaches and it is famous for its abundance of sturgeon. The abandoned village of Némiscau offers an ideal stop-over for a view of an historic Cree Indian settlement. North of Némiscau Post is a small river branch which was used as a short cut by Indians *en route* to James Bay. This short cut joins with the main arm of the Rupert River bypassing an extra 24 km along the lake. One major waterfall can be portaged on the left, 15 m above the foot of the rapids. A small rapid is then run and the freshly cut trail can be seen from the basin. This 500 m portage trail has camping space for two tents.

The main stream of the Rupert River is about 220 m wide. There is little relief and the shoreline is swampy. There are no rapids between the short cut and Oatmeal Falls.

Oatmeal Falls to the end of Quatre Chutes
Length 107 km *(10 portages)*
The portage for Oatmeal Falls is along a small stream on the right. The portage trail is 1 200 m and ends abruptly at a bridge crossing for the new road from Matagami to Fort George. Oatmeal Falls has a drop of 25 m. These beautiful falls can be seen from the roadside.

Chutes à l'Ours is the next barrier. A 300 m trail on the right is cleared. A few short rapids may be run before four sets of waterfalls. The first drop is bypassed by a gravel road for 1 km. The canoes can be put in next to a large construction camp. To reach the second portage trail one must cross the river to the right shore. A 550 m

portage begins 100 m above the waterfall. The trail leads through a recently burned forest.

Across the river basin is the portage route for the last of the series of waterfalls. The trail is 2 200 m long and ends on a gravel road. A large gravel pit down the road to the right must be traversed. A freshly-cut survey line brings the canoeist to the base of the rapids.

Only one major rapid occurs before Checach Rapids. Checach Rapids drops 25 m over a 1-km stretch. The portage trail is divided into sections. The first is 250 m long. The canoes can be floated for a short distance. The second section measures about three kilometres.

Portage du Chat is 16 km downstream. The river divides with a narrow channel branching to the left. This

White water on the Rupert River, Quebec.

narrow river channel leads to a portage on the left bank, before the waterfall.

Sixteen kilometres of tranquil water ends at Plum Pudding Rapids. Like the former rapid, the river branches to the left. One must follow this stream to a set of rapids. A good camping spot exists on the 600 m portage trail. At the base of this portage there is a small bay to the left. In the base of the bay is the second section of the Plum Pudding Rapids portage trail. The trail is 3 km long.

Two point five kilometres downsteam is Rapide de la Côte Enfumée. The portage on the right begins 60 m upstream from the rapid. The 2.5 km trail ends abruptly at a swampy pond. Across the pond the trail continues for another one point five kilometres.

The last rapid of the Rupert River must be partially lined and run on the right. Shallow waters and large boulders make manoeuvring difficult. Rupert House can be seen from the base of the rapids.

6 L'Eau Claire River

L'Eau Claire River

L'Eau Claire Lake to Lake Guillaume-Delisle

Length
6 to 8 d (208 km)
17 portages

Date of survey
August 1973

Access and egress

L'Eau Claire Lake can only be reached by chartered float-equipped aircraft. Planes can be chartered from Poste de la Baleine or Fort George, Quebec. Egress from Lake Guillaume-Delisle must be made by float plane also, or by freighter canoe from Poste de la Baleine.

Maps required

(N.T.S. 1:250 000 scale)
provisional maps
34 B Clearwater Lake
(L'Eau Claire Lake)
34 C Richmond Gulf
(Lake Guillaume-Delisle)

About the river

Geography
L'Eau Claire Lake consists of two flooded craters, 30 km and 25 km in diameter. These inactive volcanic depressions are bounded by steep cliffs. A concentric ring of islands 16 km in diameter and a low broad central reef lie in the west lake. The islands consist of gentle rolling highlands bordered by 120 m cliffs of volcanic breccia. The land mass has experienced intense erosion since retreat of the last glacier. L'Eau Claire River, the only river which drains L'Eau Claire Lake into Lake Guillaume-Delisle, is bounded by high rolling hills.

Flora
The L'Eau Claire region is in the transition zone between sub-arctic forest and tundra. In the lowlands, the tree cover consists of white and black spruce and tamarack. Willow and alder grow higher up on the slopes. Small shrubs and lichen cover most of the Precambrian Shield. Common species include juniper, blueberry and black cowberry. Lake Guillaume-Delisle is affected by harsh arctic and marine climates. The tree species known as 'krummholz', display their stunted, asymmetrical formations here and the salt water favours the growth of sea lime grass and associated species.

Fauna
The most common animals are caribou, black bear, arctic fox, hare, otter, ground hog, squirrel and lemming. The waterfowl include Canada geese, eider ducks, red-breasted mergansers, goldeneyes and guillemots. Some of the bird species present are willow ptarmigan, spruce grouse, osprey, herring gull, woodcock, gray jay, snowy owl, great horned owl, and sandpiper. Marine mammals in Lake Guillaume-Delisle include beluga whales, ring-necked seals and bearded seals. Arctic char spawn in the rivers which flow into the lake. These rivers also abound with large speckled trout and grey trout.

History
Pre-Dorset Eskimo settlements have been discovered along the goulet to Lake Guillaume-Delisle. L'Eau Claire River was used as a route by Indians on hunting trips between Lake Guillaume-Delisle and Ungava Bay. A trading post, trading with the inland Indians and seafaring Eskimos, was established on the lake in 1750.

The Canoe Trip

A canoe trip on the L'Eau Claire River is a short but exhilirating experience. The water is extremely clear and brilliant blue. Most of the rapids on the first reach can be run. Portage routes are almost always on the left side, over open rolling tundra of granite rock and caribou moss.

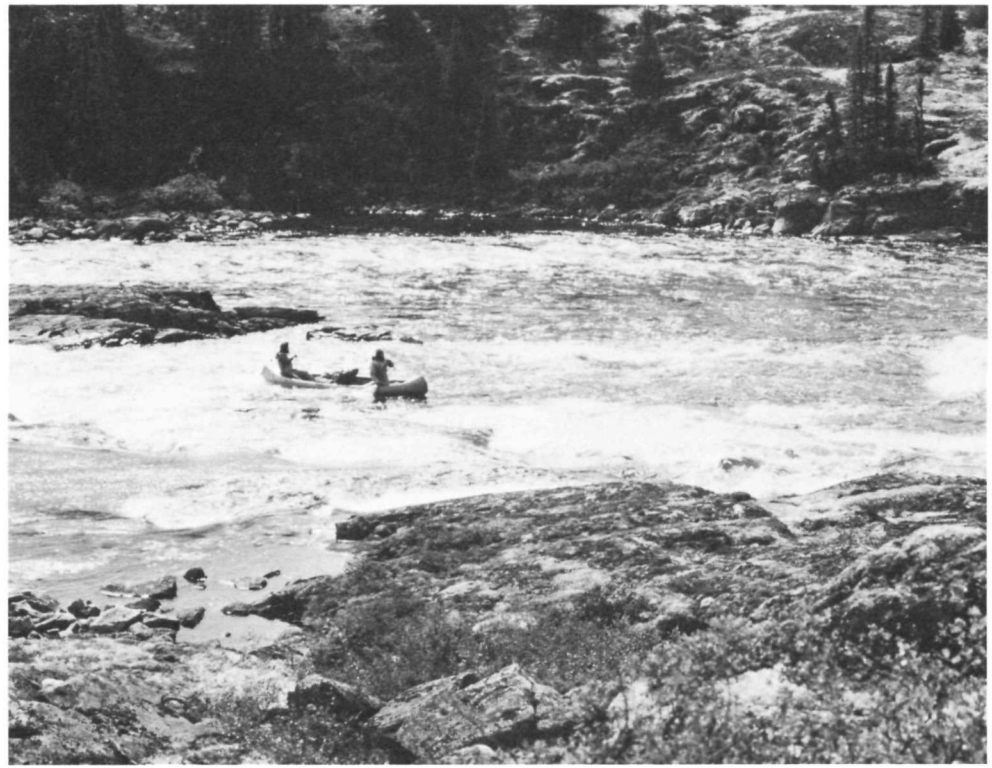
Volcano Island to L'Eau Claire River

Length 30 km *(no portages)*

The trip begins at Volcano Island, the largest of a circle of islands in the western crater of L'Eau Claire Lake. The island is 15 km long and a paddle along the cliffs brings one to the west end of the island. Sixteen kilometres across L'Eau Claire Lake is the outlet of the L'Eau Claire River. It is hidden in a multitude of islands and careful navigation is essential.

Gorge along L'Eau Claire River, Quebec.

L'Eau Claire River to the low-marshland
Length 56 km *(4 portages)*
The first reach of the river flows through rolling Precambrian rock up to 120 m high. The average width of the river is 110 m and the current is 6 km/h. The first three sets of rapids can be run but the fourth requires a portage of 75 m on the right bank. The river then flows into a series of lakes with abundant campsites. At the outlet of the lake system are two sets of rapids which can be run without difficulty. Thirteen kilometres of tranquil waters follow, culminating in a short rapid and a one-metre waterfall. This should be portaged on the left bank.



Rapids on the L'Eau Claire River, Quebec.

Five sets of waterfalls and short rapids follow. Portaging is best on the left in each case. Campsites on sand beaches are available in many small bays. After 10 km of smooth water a two-metre waterfall and a 150 km rapid require a portage over rock on the left. Next, a rapid with an island in the centre can be run on the right side. An eight metre waterfall follows immediately after the rapid. At the end of the portage on the left, there is a difficult steep drop to the basin below. A climb up the surrounding 200 m cliffs permits an excellent view in all directions.

Portage around a high waterfall on the L'Eau Claire River, Quebec.

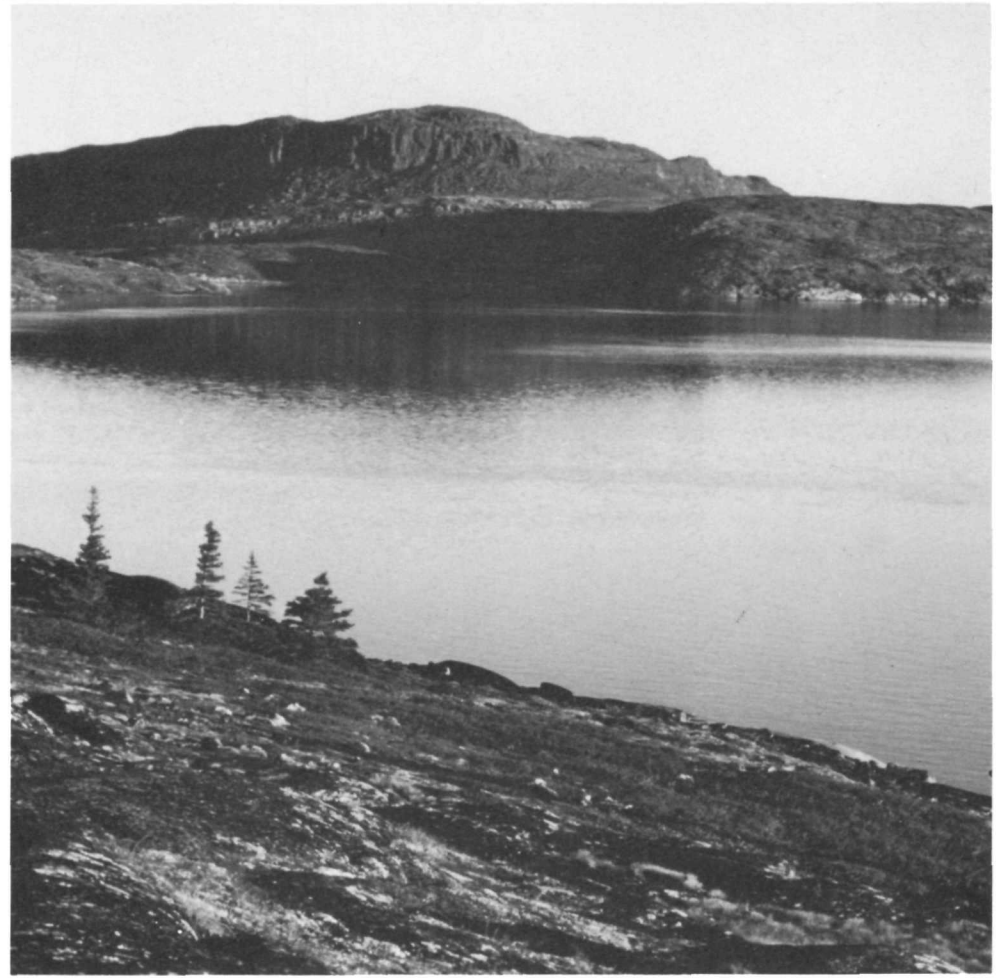
Low marshland
Length 8 km *(no portages)*
The topography of the L'Eau Claire River changes in this short section and it widens to 80 m while the valley extends to about 1 200 m. The river is shallow with an abundance of aquatic plants. Canada geese breed in the marsh, there are no rapids and the water flows at 5 km/h. The mountains are low, the highest point being one hundred metres.

Canyon section
Length 114 km *(13 portages)*
After 8 km of marsh, the river narrows to 50 m. Vertical cliffs rise to 200 m. Two short rapids, both of which can be run, introduce this section. Six sets of waterfalls, 1.5 to 3 m high follow at short intervals. These may be portaged on the left bank.

A 10 m waterfall follows with a 750 m portage bypassing it on the left. Then two 1.5 m waterfalls precede a 20 m waterfall carved through the Precambrian rock. Below this are two rapids, the first of which may be run and the second portaged for 120 m on the left bank. Here the river narrows to 11 m. Spruce and willow become dense making portages difficult though tundra prevails above the tree line.

The next 3 km section is the most spectacular part of the L'Eau Claire River. A two-metre drop introduces a 50 m vertical waterfall which plunges into a narrow gorge. The river is a series of rapids and falls through the 2.5 km gorge. A portage along the left bank passes through thick willow growth. The canoeist must carry over a 200 m rise but is rewarded by a beautiful view of Lake Guillaume-Delisle and the deep canyon below. The final

descent is down a steep slope through thick spruce, poplar and willow. Below, the river widens and 12 m clay banks line the shore. The velocity of the water increases and the forest is dense along the valley. A 3 km stretch of rapids flows into Lake Guillaume-Delisle. To bypass these rapids, one must climb the vertical rise on the right, over the tundra hills to the lake's sandy bay. The portage is 2.5 km long.



The Goulet, Lake Guillaume-Delisle, Quebec.

Lake Guillaume-Delisle
The lake is really a triangular body of salt water. The most spectacular scenery is at the southwest end. The Goulet, a narrow outlet which joins the lake to Hudson Bay, resembles a flooded Grand Canyon with sedimentary cliffs rising 435 m above the water. A canoe trip along the south of the lake brings the canoeist to the site of an abandoned Hudson's Bay post. The settlement is situated in a sandy cove southeast of Cairn Island. A few uninhabited buildings are situated here. As wood and drinking water are available only in certain areas, a recommended base camp for observing The Goulet is at the foot of the cliff in the south bay of The Goulet. The canoeist may continue along Castle Peninsula but caution must be exercised because of the strong tidal currents in The Goulet.

Further Reading

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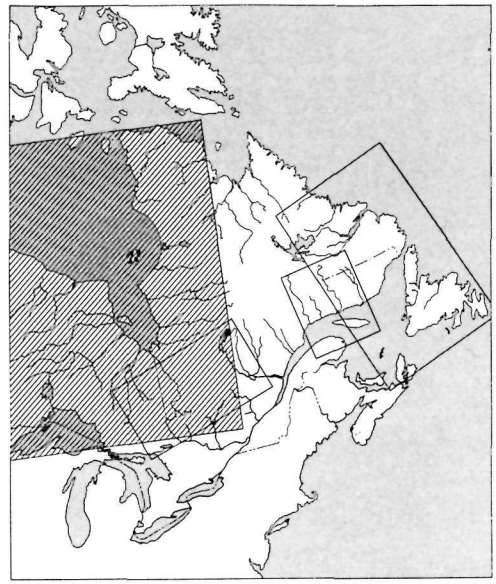
Eastern Canada

Areas covered by reports in the Wild Rivers series are outlined on the map. Shaded area is covered by this report.



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