

OWL SURVEY RESULTS FOR WRANGELL-ST ELIAS NATIONAL PARK
(McCarthy Road West) 4 April 1991
Karin Kozie

An owl survey was conducted along the west end of the McCarthy Road on 4 April 1991. Methodology is described in the breeding bird inventory and monitoring plan. Thirteen stops were surveyed in daylight hours and twentyfive at night. The daylight survey began at stop 1 at 1745 hours and ended at stop 27 at 2035 hours, and took a total of 2 hours and 50 minutes. A boreal owl was heard at stop 19 and 21 (same owl) at 1930 and a great grey owl was heard at stop 23 at about 1950 hours. The great grey called both before and after the tape was played and did not shift its location during the sampling period. No hawk owls were seen along the survey route. Ten great horned and 6 boreal owls were heard on the night survey which began at stop 29 at 2048 hours and ended at stop 5 at 0153 hours. This total includes the 1 boreal owl which was also heard during the daylight survey. The night survey took a total of 5 hours and 8 minutes.

The distance owls were heard from varied with topography, vegetation, and volume of species calling. Weather may also be a variable in some years but was optimal, calm and clear, throughout most of this survey. Boreal owls were generally heard at greater distances than great horned owls. One boreal was heard as far away as 1.5 miles. The distance from the owl to the surveyor was difficult at first to estimate and was usually under- rather than over-estimated until the surveyors gained experience. Distance and compass bearing were important in deciding whether the same or different owls were present.

Total owls heard on survey: 1 Great Grey
 6 Boreal
 10 Great Horned Owls

Total survey time: 7 hours 58 minutes

Observers: Karin Kozie/Danny Rosenkrans

This survey will be expanded in 1992, to include stops along the Nabesna Road. An additional route (stops) will also be surveyed along McCarthy Road East depending on road accessibility, personnel, and funding. The length of the route along McCarthy Road West will be shortened to 20 stops. Owls usually call more consistently either just before or just after dark, depending on the species. The length of the route was too long to complete it during optimal calling times.