Summary of Ice Fishing Hut Activity on Lakes in Parry Sound District from 2009 to 2011

File Report

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The number of ice fishing huts deployed on lakes may be a useful indicator of the amount and distribution of winter fishing effort. During the winters of 2009, 2010 and 2011 a concerted effort was made to collect information on the number of huts on as many lakes as possible in Parry sound District, in order to get a better understanding of the total number of huts deployed, annual variability and their distribution.

The target time period was mid-February to early March when traditionally the greatest numbers of huts are deployed. Counts were typically made opportunistically by field staff working on a variety of projects including ground-based or aerial enforcement checks, forest compliance flights, deer yard surveys, formal creel surveys and any other means available. Surveys of Lakes Muskoka, Rosseau and Joseph are done annually by the Muskoka Lakes Fisheries Assessment Unit. A small number of lakes were surveyed by volunteers

Over the three years, a total of 196 lakes were visited at least one time (Table 1); 54 were visited one time, 58 two times and 84 three times. Huts were observed on 90 different water bodies (Table 2). No huts were seen on 106 lakes (Table 3).

The average number of huts observed over the three year period was calculated for each lake. The sum of these was 696 huts. Annual totals could not be calculated as not all lakes were surveyed each year. A large proportion of huts were concentrated on a small number of large water bodies. Five lakes, Lake of Bays, Bernard, Muskoka, Rosseau and Joseph, collectively averaged 448 huts, or 64% of the total observed. Seven more lakes, Peninsula, Manitouwabing, Cecebe, Three Mile, Mary, Sand and Ahmic, accounted for a further 15% of the total.

In general, the number of huts varied with lake size and accessibility with some exceptions. For example, Kawagama, Skeleton and Wahwashkesh Lake are large lakes that had few, if any, huts due to restrictive angling regulations. In contrast, several small lakes had higher than expected numbers. For example Gull Lake and Bigwind Lake are stocked lakes which appear to be serving their purpose of absorbing fishing effort. Other exceptions were lakes that do not support fish species that are available to winter anglers or have access limitations.

This District-wide picture of the occurrence of ice fishing huts can now be used as a base line and context for ongoing surveys. A subset of the lakes with the most huts should be surveyed annually as an index of the amount of fishing effort on those lakes and, using the data from this summary, the District as a whole. Lakes with fewer huts can be surveyed less frequently:

- lakes with an average of at least ten huts should be high priority for being surveyed annually (12 lakes),

- lakes with an average of 4 to 9 huts should be surveyed annually if possible (12 lakes),

- remaining lakes with an average of at least one hut should be surveyed once every 4-5 years on a rotating basis (37 lakes; 7-10 lakes/year),

- lakes with less than an average of 1 hut observed should be surveyed on an opportunistic basis only,

- lakes with potential to have hut numbers change significantly due to changes in the fishery, regulations or other reasons should have their survey frequency adjusted accordingly (eg. Kawagama Lake).

To make the data more meaningful some additional information could be collected to help determine the relationship between the number of huts observed and actual fishing effort:

- a small number of indicator lakes could be visited more than once to try to define the duration of the fishing season. A lake trout and non-lake trout type lake at the north and south end of the District would provide a good indication of the time period when good ice conditions occurred. Suggested lakes that have high numbers of huts but are fairly easy to conduct counts on:

	South	North
Lake trout	Mary Lake	Bernard Lake
Non-lake trout	Three Mile Lake	Cecebe Lake

- spot checks could be done to determine the proportion of effort associated with hut and open ice anglers and which species were being sought,

For many of the larger lakes, the species being targeted and the proportion of effort expended by hut and open ice anglers can be obtained from creel surveys. For others, it can be inferred from knowledge of the fish community and the fishery in similar lakes. For priority lakes that have not had a regular creel survey relatively recently or the species targeted are uncertain, an effort should be made to obtain some lake-specific information.

Huts counts are low cost and require few skills to complete. Partners could be actively sought to become regular contributors of count data. Due to limitations of having volunteers work on ice, partners would be limited to conducting counts on lakes that could be surveyed from shoreline vantage points.

Table 1 Number of lakes on which huts were counted, categorized by the number of times each lake was visited and the number of times huts were present, Parry Sound District, 2009-2011.

	Times Huts Present				
Counts	**0**	**1**	**2**	**3**	**Total**
1	51	3			54
2	39	10	9		58
3	16	22	8	38	84
Total	106	35	17	38	196

Table 2 Lakes on which huts were observed, sorted in descending order of average number of huts, Parry Sound District, 2009-2011.

Lake	Min	Max	Mean	n	Cumulative Proportion
Lake of Bays*	74	130	102.0	2	0.15
Bernard Lake	95	104	99.5	2	0.29
Lake Rosseau	87	104	95.7	3	0.43
Lake Muskoka	78	101	93.0	3	0.56
Lake Joseph	46	65	58.3	3	0.64
Peninsula Lake	17	26	20.3	3	0.67
Manitouwabing Lake	15	20	18.0	3	0.70
Cecebe Lake	15	20	17.3	3	0.72
Three Mile Lake (Watt)	13	17	14.7	3	0.75
Mary Lake	8	18	13.3	3	0.76
Sand Lake	9	11	10.0	3	0.78
Ahmic Lake	9	11	10.0	2	0.79
Bella Lake	6	8	6.7	3	0.80
Shebeshkong	6	6	6.0	1	0.81
Doe Lake	2	9	5.3	3	0.82
Mill Lake	2	8	5.3	3	0.83
Skeleton Lake	5	6	5.3	3	0.83
Harris Lake	1	7	4.7	3	0.84
Bigwind Lake	1	6	4.3	3	0.85
Lake Vernon	3	6	4.3	3	0.85
Leonard Lake	4	5	4.3	3	0.86
Horn Lake (Chapman)	3	5	4.0	3	0.87
Kahshe Lake	3	5	4.0	3	0.87
Magnetawan R, Poverty Bay	1	6	4.0	3	0.88
Portage Lake (McDougall)	3	4	3.5	2	0.88
Blackstone Lake	2	5	3.3	3	0.89
Maple Lake	1	5	3.3	3	0.89
Fish Lake	1	5	3.0	3	0.90
Gull Lake	0	9	3.0	3	0.90
Lorimer Lake	1	5	3.0	3	0.90
Rebecca Lake	2	5	3.0	3	0.91
Robinson Lake	3	3	3.0	1	0.91
Sucker Lake	2	4	3.0	2	0.92
Mutton Lake	2	4	2.7	3	0.92
Muldrew Lake	0	5	2.5	2	0.93
Whitestone Lake	2	3	2.5	2	0.93
Oxtongue Lake	0	5	2.3	3	0.93
Pickerel Lake	1	4	2.3	3	0.94
Whitefish Lake	2	3	2.3	3	0.94
McEwen Lake	2	2	2.0	2	0.94
Six Mile Lake (Baxter)	1	3	2.0	3	0.94
Taylor Lake	2	2	2.0	1	0.95
Bay Lake	1	3	1.7	3	0.95
Eagle Lake	1	3	1.7	3	0.95
Kawagama Lake	0	3	1.7	3	0.95
Loon Lake (Proudfoot)	1	2	1.7	3	0.96
Morrison Lake	0	4	1.7	3	0.96
Star Lake	1	3	1.7	3	0.96
Loxton Lake	1	2	1.5	2	0.96
Clear (Humphrey) Lake	1	2	1.3	3	0.97
Boy Lake	0	2	1.0	2	0.97
Clam Lake	0	2	1.0	2	0.97

Lake	Min	Max	Mean	n	Cumulative Proportion
Deer Lake (Lount)	0	2	1.0	3	0.97
Harp Lake	1	1	1.0	3	0.97
High Lake	0	3	1.0	3	0.97
Horseshoe Lake (Christie)	0	2	1.0	2	0.97
Moose Lake (Laurier)	1	1	1.0	2	0.98
Rainy Lake (Ryerson)	1	1	1.0	3	0.98
Rankin Lake	1	1	1.0	2	0.98
Shawanaga Lake	1	1	1.0	3	0.98
Trout Lake (McDougall)	0	2	1.0	2	0.98
Bell Lake	0	2	0.7	3	0.98
Brandy Lake	0	1	0.7	3	0.98
Clear (Schamerhorn)	0	1	0.7	3	0.98
Dotty Lake	0	2	0.7	3	0.99
Fairy Lake	0	1	0.7	3	0.99
Jacks Lake	0	1	0.7	3	0.99
Deer Lake (Armour)	0	1	0.5	2	0.99
Magnetawan R (Maple Island)	0	1	0.5	2	0.99
McKellar Lake	0	1	0.5	2	0.99
Simolea Lake	0	1	0.5	2	0.99
Strathdee Lake	0	1	0.5	2	0.99
Bear Lake (Livingstone)	0	1	0.3	3	0.99
Duck Lake	0	1	0.3	3	0.99
Emsdale lake	0	1	0.3	3	0.99
Fletcher Lake	0	1	0.3	3	0.99
Fox Lake	0	1	0.3	3	0.99
Grey Owl Lake	0	1	0.3	3	0.99
Hog lake	0	1	0.3	3	0.99
Isabella Lake	0	1	0.3	3	0.99
Livingstone Lake	0	1	0.3	3	1.00
Longline Lake	0	1	0.3	3	1.00
Lower Fletcher Lake	0	1	0.3	3	1.00
Oxbow Lake	0	1	0.3	3	1.00
Portage Lake (Humphrey)	0	1	0.3	3	1.00
Round Lake (McMurrich)	0	1	0.3	3	1.00
Silver Lake	0	1	0.3	3	1.00
Spring Lake	0	1	0.3	3	1.00
Verner Lake	0	1	0.3	3	1.00
Wood Lake	0	1	0.3	3	1.00
Total			696		

* the count on Lake of Bays in 2010 (74 huts) occurred late in the season after many huts had already been removed.

Table 3 Lakes on which no huts were observed and number of times each lake was surveyed, Parry Sound District, 2009-2011.

Lake	n
Axe Lake	1
Bass Lake	3
Bear Lake (Monteith)	2
Beaver Lake	1
Ben Lake	1
Birch Lake	1
Bird Lake	2
Black Lake (Ridout)	1
Black Lake (Wood)	2
Black Oak Lake	1
Blackwater Lake	1
Buck Lake (McCann)	1
Buck Lake (McMurrich)	3
Camp Lake	3
Clear (Oakley) Lake	2
Clearwater Lake	2
Clinto lake	2
Cochrane Lake	1
Cornick Lake	1
Cranberry Lake	1
Crane Lake	2
Crosson Lake	1
Darlington Lake	2
De Bois Lake	2
Dickie Lake	1
Dyson	2
Echo Lake	1
Fairholme Lake	2
Flaxman Lake	1
Foote Lake	1
Forget Lake	2
Fox Lake (Bethune)	1
Gibson Lake	1
Gordon Lake	1
Grandview Lake	3
Grass Lake	2
Hassard Lake	2
Healey Lake	2
Horn Lake (Monteith)	1
Horseshoe Lake (Harrison)	1
Island Lake	2
Kapikog Lake	1
Kawawaymog Lake	2
Kimball Lake	1
LaBrash Lake	2
Lake of Many Islands	1
Liebeck Lake	1
Little Tyne Lake	2
Little Whitefish Lake	2
Little Wilson Lake	1
Long Lake (Gartersnake)	1
Long Lake (Oliphant)	1
Loon Lake (Muskoka)	1

Lake	n
Louie Lake	3
Lower Raven	2
Lynch Lake	1
Maecik Lake	2
Manson Lake	2
Marsh Lake	1
Martin Lake	1
McNutt Lake	1
Moffat Lake (McKellar)	1
Nine Mile Lake (Ferguson)	2
Nine Mile Lake (Wood)	2
Oastler Lake	1
Otter Lake	2
Oudaze Lake	1
Paint Lake	3
Partridge Lake	2
Pine Lake	2
Pool Lake	1
Prospect Lake	3
Rainy Lake (Shawanaga)	1
Ridge Lake	1
Riley Lake	3
Rock Island Lake	1
Round Lake (Ferguson	1
Round Lake (McCraney)	2
Sausage Lake	2
Seguin Lake	1
Shoe Lake	3
Simmes Lake	1
Six Mile Lake (Harrison)	1
Smyth Lake	2
Snowshoe Lake	2
Solitaire Lake	2
Spence Lake	1
Tasso Lake	3
Three Mile Lake (Armour)	2
Torrance Lake (Clear)	3
Travis Lake	1
Trout Lake (East Burpee)	2
Troutspawn Lake	3
Turtle Lake (East Burpee)	2
Turtle Lake (Wood)	2
Tyne Lake	2
Upper Raft	1
Vowels Lake	1
Wahwashkesh Lake	1
Walker Lake	3
Wallace Lake	2
Waseosa Lake	3
West Ermine Lake	1
Wilson Lake (Harrison)	3
Wolf Lake	1
Young Lake	3

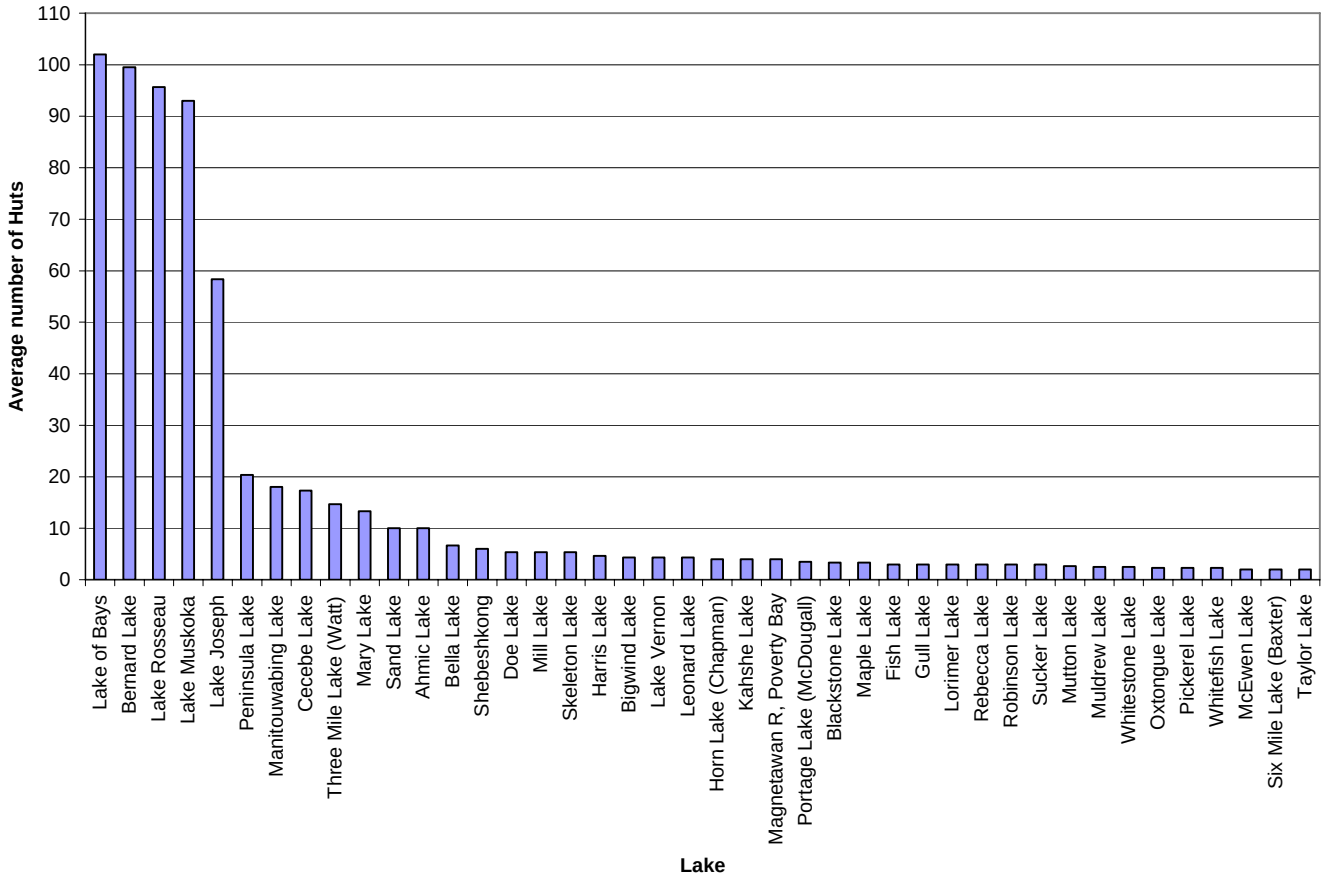


Figure 1 Average number of huts observed, 2009-2011. Includes only lakes with an average of at least 2 huts.

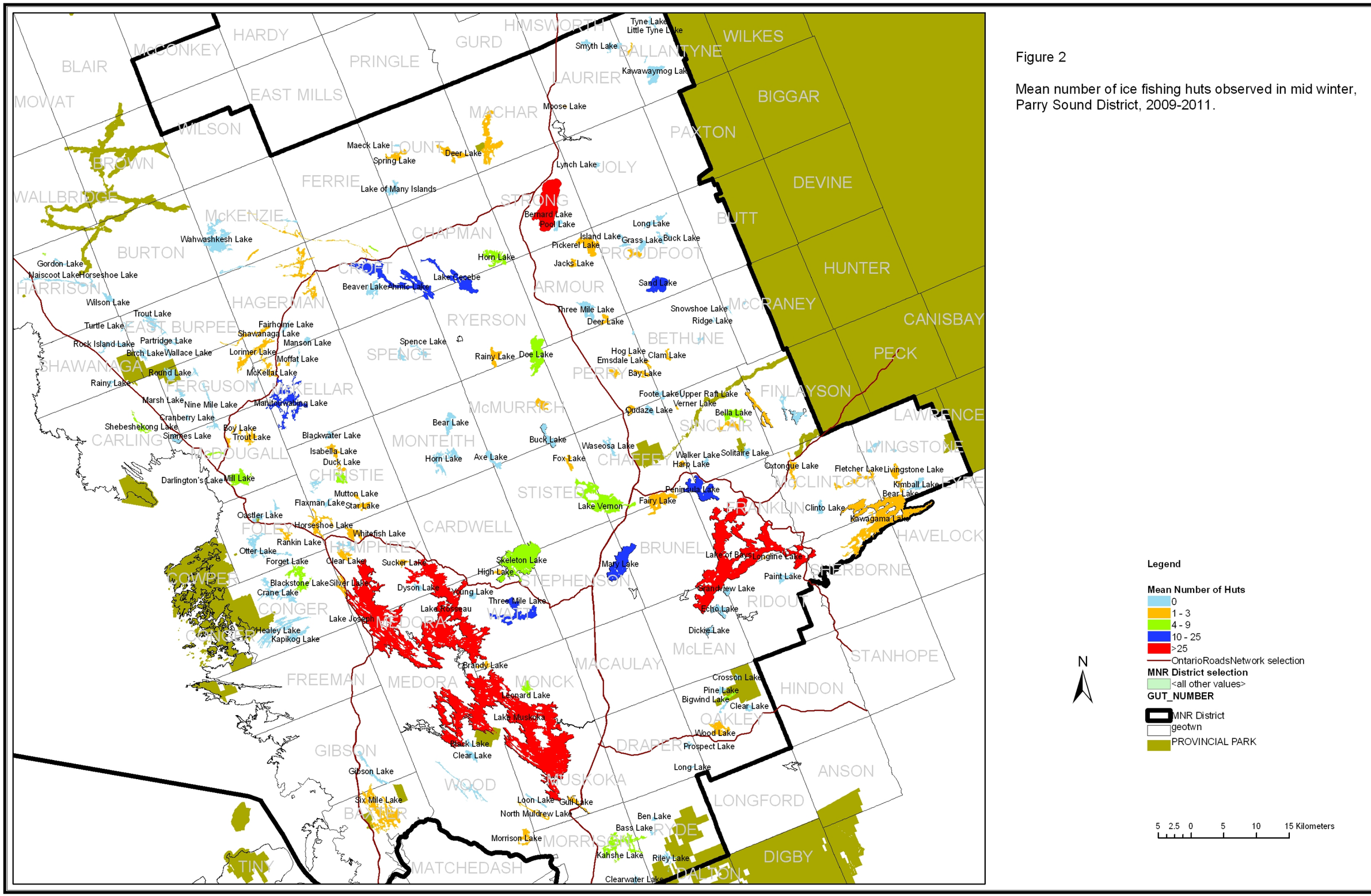


Figure 2

Mean number of ice fishing huts observed in mid winter, Parry Sound District, 2009-2011.