

Peter Davis
Senior Regional Wildlife Biologist
Northeast Region



Ministry of Natural Resources
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**Ministère des
Richesses naturelles**

Natural Resources

**Ontario Government Complex
Hwy #101 East
P.O. Bag 3020
South Porcupine, Ontario
P0N 1H0**

Friday, February 15, 2002

**Jeanne Theriault
Air Ivanhoe Limited
P.O. Box 99
Foleyet, Ontario
P0M 1T0**

Dear Mrs. Theriault:

SUBJECT: "In Search of the Albino" Videotape by Tom Sterling

Thank you very much for sending me your copy of the videotape (autographed!) for viewing. For your information, I have enclosed copies of articles relating to white moose sightings in Ontario. I will discuss your request for consideration of protective measures for white moose with MNR Chapleau District and MNR Wildlife Section.

Sincerely,



**Peter Davis
Sr. Regional Wildlife Biologist**

**Phone: (705) 235-1180
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E-mail: peter.davis@mnr.gov.on.ca**

c.c. Wayne Fiset, MNR Chapleau District
c.c. Wildlife Section, MNR, Peterborough

What is the issue?

A request was put forward by a local outfitter that the white moose in the Foleyet area be protected from hunting.

In the past members of the public have asked why we have not moved to protect this very interesting group of animals.

There are many reports and photos of white-morphs and albinos of various species:

white-morph: color variation

albino: lack of pigmentation/melanin

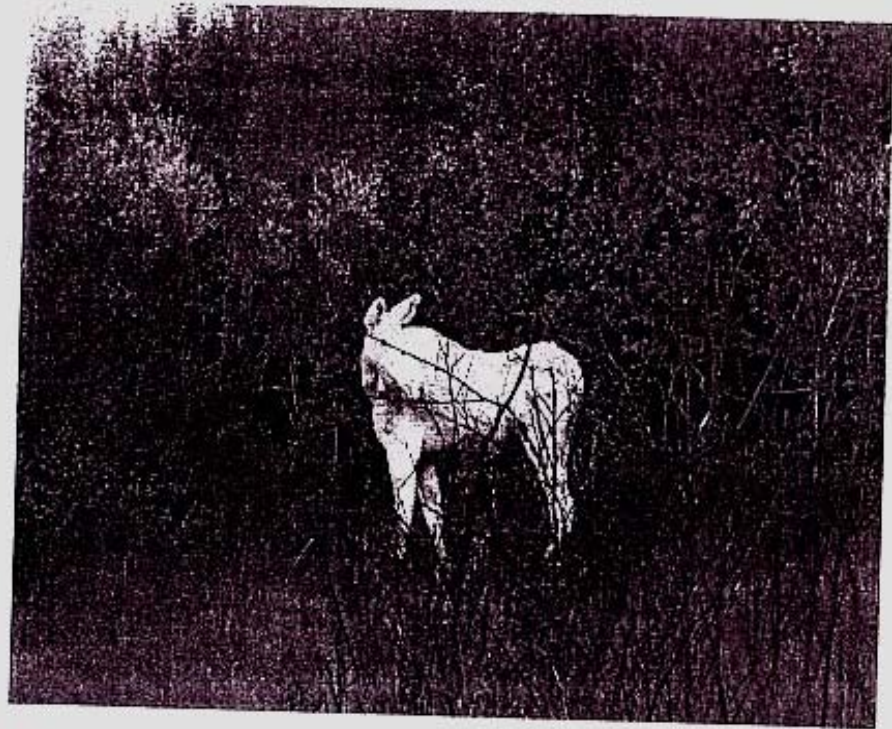
There are also often seen "piebald"
deer and moose = white and brown mix

White moose reported in several provinces, territories and states:

- Ontario
- BC
- NWT
- Alaska

More locally:

- Cochrane
- east of Kenora
- Foleyet

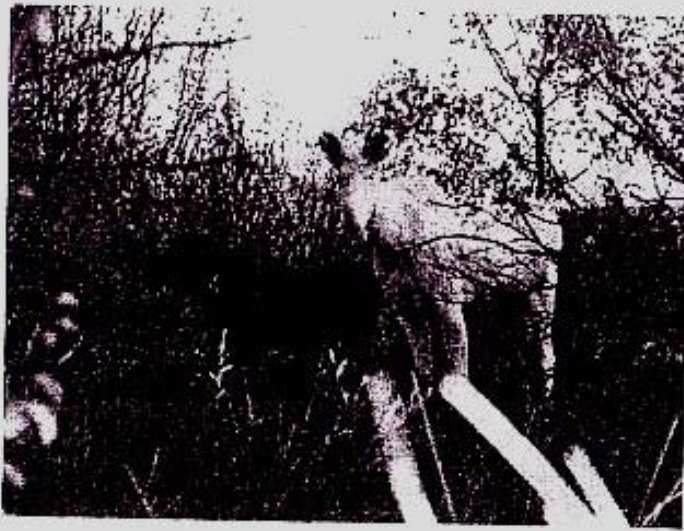


Distribution and Density?

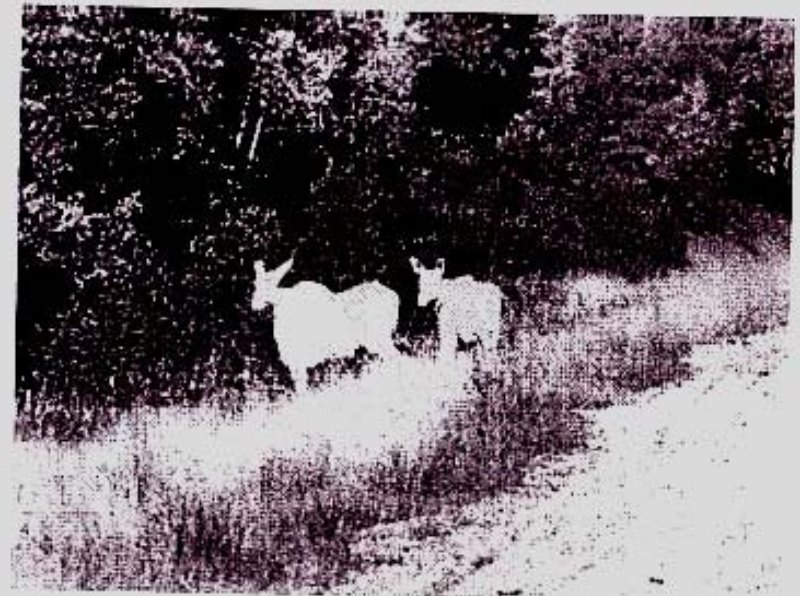
- east of Foleyet generally with one 20km west of Foleyet
- in moose survey only seen white moose very near Foleyet
- reports very rough and rarely first hand



Reproduction ?



Most often
white cow with
brown calf...



but some white calves

- MNR Chapleau has no photos of bulls
(but two killed in Cochrane)

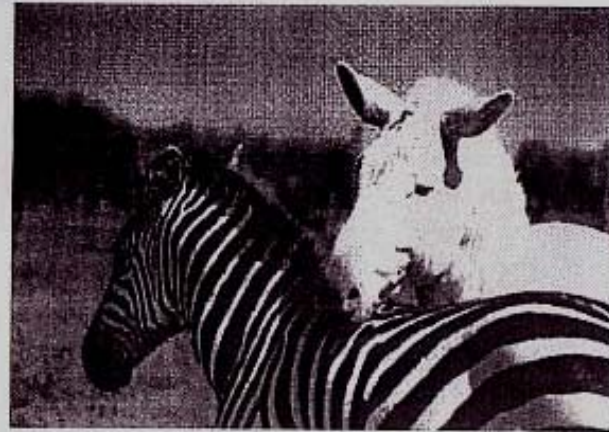
Survival ?



- albinos have problems with eye sight
- white horses are more likely to develop skin cancer
- stay cooler in warm weather but not as warm in cool weather
- less of an attractant for flies?
- no camouflage coloring as a calf
- hard to see in the snow
- very low survival on white deer fawns

Legal protection

Although there is not any protection offered to any unusually colored wildlife in Ontario there are some states (not many) that protect white deer and/or albino wildlife from hunting



MNR will not be proposing a regulation change to protect the white moose from hunting



Why?

**1) little know about fitness of white moose
so no desire to increase the proportion in
the population**

**2) no information on the number of white
moose so they cannot be removed from the
allocation**

3) white moose is not unique to this area

**4) they are still present and often seen despite
our lack of protection**



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October 27, 2003

Jane Armstrong
General Delivery
Foleyet, ON
P0M 1T0

SUBJECT: White moose

Dear Ms. Armstrong,

I would like to apologize for responding to your request for the disposition of the orphaned white calf to a zoo via CBC radio prior to responding to you in writing. Unfortunately MNR needed a spokesperson to discuss white moose on CBC radio after your interview and I was chosen to reply.

As per the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act (FWCA, s. 40 (4)), authorization from the Minister is required to capture game wildlife for the purpose of keeping it in captivity. This authorization is only given in rare circumstances. An example of a "rare circumstance" would be the capture of endangered wildlife for a captive breeding program. We often allow very young wildlife to be captured and transferred to a rehabilitation facility where it is held until the animal is old enough to be released. In this case the animal is kept away from people to ensure it can be released, it is not on display for the public. The orphaned white calf that you have concerns with does not fit in either of the categories above.

live capture moose, for research purposes, by netting them from the air in mid-winter to avoid drugging them. The strength of drugs necessary to quickly immobilize a moose are very dangerous to both the animal and the person handling them. Assuming that we could safely capture this specific moose and transport it to the zoo, we then have no idea how it will adapt to being held in captivity. At this stage in its life it is easily large enough to do some serious damage to itself and the enclosure if it attempted to escape. The risk to both the animal and MNR personnel that would be required to handle the drugs and the animal is not reasonable.

With respect to our discussion on the sale of light colored horses for meat, particularly human consumption. I had a brief discussion with a meat inspector with the Ministry of Agriculture and Food on this topic. The concern centers around the high proportion of light colored horses with melanoma. Although they can be sold for meat, those showing signs of melanoma are not used for human consumption, hence many people don't bother sending them to slaughter houses or get lower prices for them. I have found some information on fibroma and skin tumours in cervids (deer, moose, etc.) and have attached an exert from the "Manual of Common Parasites, Diseases and Anomalies of Wildlife in Ontario", 1979. It states that "Since skin turnouts of cervids are benign and localized, they do not affect the edibility of the meat".

Hopefully you are still interested in mapping know historical white moose locations. I have attached two maps that should cover the area in which these moose have been seen. If you need maps to cover more area do not hesitate to give me a call. Gathering the information using the same method makes it much easier to manage the data later so I have attached a small table for you to fill in the information for your sightings. Simply

Then in the table put in the location number and fill in the info. Please use a separate line

won't know which location number is for which map. Once you have all the historical stuff on there just give me a call and I will organize to have it made into a digital map that we can send back to you for further updates.

Thank you again for your interest in the white moose, we should be able to put together a great map of known locations. If you need any further assistance do not hesitate to give me a call (705-864-1710 ext. 259.).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Lynn J. Landriault', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Lynn J. Landriault, M.Sc.
Area West Biologist
Chapleau District