

B. CLIMATIC CONDITIONS

1. Summary

January weather was relatively warm and wet, and included new records for both maximum and minimum temperatures, and total snowfall. Deep snow, followed by rain and then extreme cold (-53 degrees on the 22nd) resulted in tough conditions for wildlife. Total snowfall for the month was 42.4 inches. February was similar with temperatures that ranged from +35 degrees to -60 degrees. Total seasonal snowfall at the end of February was 132.8".

The increasing day length, along with moderating temperatures in March, provided an improvement in temperament for people and dog teams alike. Temperatures in March were mild, ranging from -16 degrees on the 15th, to +48 degrees on the 31st. Climatic conditions continued to moderate through April with "break-up" on the Kuskokwim River at McGrath occurring on April 30th. Subsequent ice jams caused minor flooding in the townsite but no major property damage was reported.



Spring flooding turned the refuge into an inland lake. (PS 5/93)

In May, ice jams on the Yukon River, below the village of Holy Cross, resulted in Yukon water backing into the Refuge at the same time the Innoko and Iditarod River systems were at peak flow. This combination caused an extreme high water event which persisted into mid-May. All lands between the Yukon and Innoko Rivers, and the entire Iditarod River floodplain were inundated.