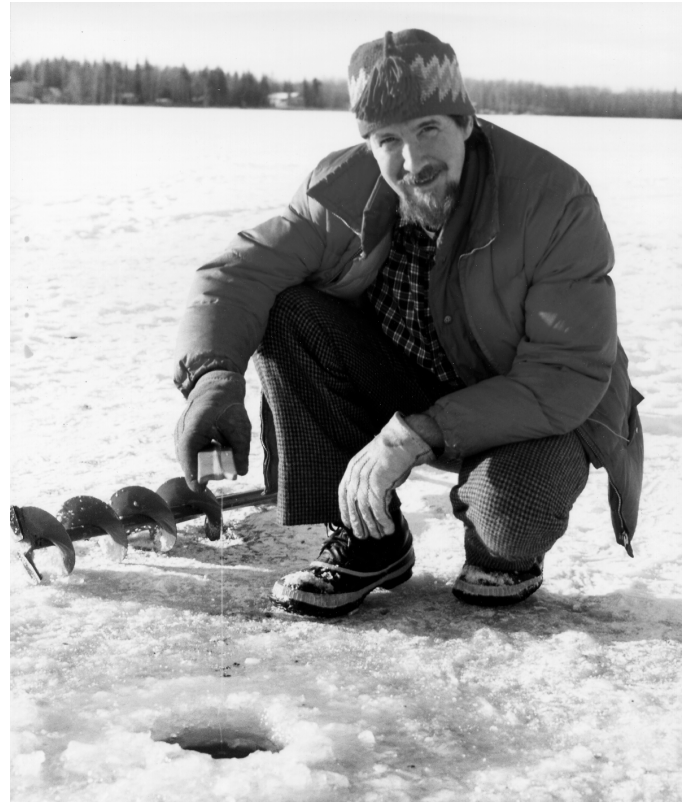


ANDREW HALL MACPHERSON (1932–2002)

Ptarmigan stew for breakfast, pilot biscuits for lunch, ‘catch-of-the-day’ stew for dinner—walking 10 miles or more a day, usually over rough terrain, often in snow or slush, sometimes wading knee- to waist-deep across frigid streams—shooting and trapping birds and mammals for specimens for the National Museum of Canada. Each day, cold, wet, and tired. Living and working with only two changes of clothing for several months. Sleeping on the ground in a small tent that seldom stops flapping in the brisk winds from the northern quadrants, in sleeping bags that get wetter by the day, and longing for a sunny day. Could life get any better?

As a teenager, Andrew was already living adventures that are the dreams of many teenage boys. From 1949 to 1957, before joining the Canadian Wildlife Service (CWS), he gained a lifetime of memories and valuable experience as a member of eight scientific expeditions to the Canadian Arctic. He served as a seasonal field assistant to scientists, working on contracts for the Department of Mines and Technical Surveys, the Defence Research Board, the Arctic Institute of North America, the Department of Northern Affairs, and the National Museum of Canada. He made most of his early trips to the Arctic in the company of his mentor and lifelong friend Thomas (Tom) Henry Manning, famed Arctic explorer and geographer-biologist. Andrew was learning from the best. Tom Manning finished a long, distinguished, and varied field career—without ever holding a “proper” full-time job! Over the years, Tom received the Gold Medal and the Massey Medal of the Royal Canadian Geographical Society and became an Officer of the Order of Canada.

The two friends had numerous stories of hardships and physical feats. Andrew had several narrow escapes from death, including falling off a cliff in a whiteout on western Melville Island and rowing a small dinghy in an Arctic gale back to a vessel lying at anchor out in the bay, and living to tell about it. While Andrew and Tom were attempting to circumnavigate Banks Island by canoe in August 1952, an early freeze-up forced them on 29 August to cache their canoe and gear on the north coast of Banks Island, about 12 miles upstream on the Thomsen River. Despite daily snowstorms and cold northerly winds, they had to walk the entire length of the island to Sachs Harbour (not yet a year-round settlement at the time) on the southwest tip of the island. They set off on 2 September in a southwesterly direction, pulling a sledge they had built with runners made from two canoe thwarts and shoeing made from barrel staves found in M’Clure’s cache at Mercy Bay. They arrived at Sachs Harbour on 15 September. The ‘Eskimo Schooner’ on which they wanted to travel to Tuktoyaktuk arrived four days late, on 22 September, and ran aground on Baillie Island on the return trip. This calamity, along with the weather turning bad, freeze-up starting at Aklavik, and the planes ‘running



Andrew Hall Macpherson.

south’ to switch their landing gear, resulted in a delay of nearly two months. It was 15 November before an aircraft could pick them up and take them to Aklavik. Another delay made it 24 November before they could travel on to Norman Wells, Edmonton (26 November), and finally Ottawa. The upside of their two-month delay in getting home was that they stayed on the payroll until they reported in at Ottawa on 1 December.

His time in the Arctic convinced Andrew that he wanted to be an Arctic wildlife biologist. So, after completing a B.Sc. degree in Zoology (geology and geography) in 1954 at Carleton College, Ottawa, he went on to complete a M.Sc. in Zoology in 1957 at McGill University, Montreal. There he met Betty (Elizabeth Menzer, 1937–2001). They were married in 1957 and spent a “working honeymoon” on King William Island with Tom. In summer 1958, the trio went to Prince of Wales Island. Besides being a lovely companion, Betty was a valued member of the team. She was there on a grant from the Arctic Institute of North America to study blood parasites, and she collected plants for the National Museum of Canada, as well as assisting Andrew and Tom in their collecting activities. Betty began her career as a marine biologist, becoming an internationally recognized expert in Arctic malacology and publishing *The Marine Molluscs of Arctic Canada*. For variety, she ended up as a leading historian of the Alberta Metis

and authored *The Sun Traveller* and a fictional account, *Murder of a Horse Thief*.

Andrew developed a strong interest in birds. By his late teens, he was a member in good standing among old-school museum bird collectors (whose motto was “hot lead doesn’t lie!”), and by 1957, he had 1500–2000 skins to his credit. Thus, his first full-time position, a short stint as Assistant Curator of Birds at the National Museum of Canada in Ottawa, was a natural choice. In April 1958, he joined the CWS to work on Arctic wildlife problems. With glowing annual appraisals, he moved up through all the grades of biologists (I–IV) in only six years, probably setting a CWS record. In 1963, while still a Biologist III, he was appointed Supervisor of Research for the then Eastern Region of CWS (at that time CWS was divided into only two regions nationwide). He continued his studies at McGill and in 1967 received a Ph.D. for his seminal study, *The Dynamics of Canadian Arctic Fox Populations*.

I first met Andrew in the autumn of 1965, when I came to Ottawa for an interview with CWS. I had been told that, if I were hired, Andrew Macpherson, as Supervisor of Research, would be my immediate supervisor. I had expected an older individual. Instead, I was facing a slim, boyish-looking person in a well-worn Harris Tweed and white shirt with a snaked-up tie, holding a smoking pipe properly cradled in the palm of his hand. He spoke in a formal manner, but every once in a while he cracked a smile that appeared to indicate he was not taking himself so seriously. I soon learned that Andrew had a great talent for switching modes to suit the situation. He appeared as much at ease talking about specifics to the departmental minister as he did having a casual conversation with a truck driver. His social conduct was impeccable, and it remained the same whether he was at a formal social gathering or in a tent on the tundra.

I joined CWS, and Andrew and I soon became friends. He introduced me to Tom Manning, who lived in a large stone farm house in Burritt’s Rapids, Ontario, about 50 km southwest of Ottawa, where we spent many enjoyable weekends. Andrew and I hunted moose in northern Ontario, by canoe in October and on snowshoes in December. We had several hours each long, dark night to sit by the campfire, where we talked and talked, mostly about wildlife and conservation issues. However, exchanges about personal ambitions and philosophies gave me some early appreciation of Andrew’s goals in life. He had said that any occupation could be interesting, if it offered potential for achievement. I responded in disagreement, which he ignored! There was no doubt that his days as a technical person were for most purposes already behind him; he saw himself finishing well up in the ranks of administrators, likely in the minister’s office.

In August 1967, Andrew left the Canadian Wildlife Service for a temporary position on the staff of the Science Secretariat, Science Council of Canada, as a project officer for studies in Canadian biological science. Once again, he expressed his desire to be a moving force, or at

least a significant contributor to meaningful advances. When leaving for his new assignment, he wrote that from his limited knowledge of the work of the Secretariat, he was convinced of its importance to Canadian science and to the future quality of life in Canada. After serving well, Andrew returned to his supervisor’s role in the Eastern Region of CWS in 1969.

In 1970, a promotion to Director, Western & Northern Region, of the Canadian Wildlife Service brought Andrew to Edmonton, Alberta. Shortly afterwards, he was invited to let his name stand for chairman in the Department of Zoology, College of Biological Sciences, University of Guelph, Ontario. He replied that while he would stand for the position, he would require assurance that the challenge, the scope, and satisfaction it offered would be comparable to those of his present position. He opted to stay with the government and remained regional director of CWS until 1974.

When the department reorganized into five regions, Andrew took a significant promotion to Regional Director General, Environment Management Service, Environment Canada, Western & Northern Region, where he remained until 1986. Always looking for new challenges, he took a temporary posting between April and August 1985 as Acting Assistant Deputy Minister, Corporate Planning, Environment Canada, in Hull, Quebec. Finally in 1986, apparently sensing the approaching end to his career as a public servant and ever willing to accept one more formidable task, Andrew became Director General, Northwest Territories Region, Northern Affairs Program, Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, in Yellowknife, Northwest Territories. At the time, he said that he was still interested in innovative management challenges, implementing change, and redirecting programs into promising new avenues. In his Yellowknife position, he helped prepare for the creation of Nunavut, remaining in that position until his retirement in 1988. Once retired, he devoted himself to geopolitical and environmental causes. Andrew had a particularly strong concern about the growth of human population, its toll on natural habitats, and the ever-spiraling rates of consumption of resources. This concern led him to help found the Sustainable Population Society.

Andrew was trilingual, having worked very hard in the 1950s and 1960s to learn Inuktitut. He made a point of trying to speak mostly Inuktitut with his field assistants during field trips of several weeks’ duration. His primary teacher was Barnabas Piryaq of Baker Lake, who traveled with Andrew on his arctic fox studies and, I believe, with every other CWS biologist who worked out of Baker Lake in the 1960s and 1970s.

Andrew could even add ‘patron of the arts’ to his accomplishments. In 1958, he was responsible for getting Jessie Oonark of Baker Lake started at the age of 54 on her art career. The story goes that one day when she took her children to school, she saw the students drawing pictures. This prompted her to declare that she could do better than that, if she had the supplies. Andrew either overheard or

heard about her comment. He took it upon himself to give Jessie paper and pencils and helped her market her first drawings. After the release of her first prints in 1960, she went on to become a prolific artist, member of the Royal Canadian Academy of Arts, and Officer of the Order of Canada. Whether Andrew had an eye for talent or simply wanted to help someone realize a dream, he had promoted a great contribution to northern Canadiana.

At Tom Manning's memorial service, Andrew described Tom as quiet, knowledgeable, well suited for working in the Arctic, being vigorous and confident, patient and painstaking, imaginative and resilient. I believe that Andrew shared all of those attributes. Andrew demonstrated his skill as an administrator and his ongoing willingness to take on new challenges, making hard and unpopular decisions when necessary. However, he had another side that reflected his whole being: he was loyal to his friends. I myself was the beneficiary of his allegiance at two pivotal points nearly a decade apart in my deciding whether to stay with or leave CWS. One of the best examples of this loyalty to his friends was his rescue of Tom Manning when Tom went missing in James Bay in late March 1969. Tom's party had landed their helicopter on an ice floe to immobilize a polar bear. Murphy's Law, ever present in the Arctic, kicked in: the helicopter engine cooled down too much and refused to restart. The ice floe cracked right under the helicopter, and they had what M'Clure would have called a perilous moment in the Arctic! After they were overdue back at Fort George, the Canadian Forces Search and Rescue Hercules looked for them without success, though it had unknowingly flown right over them. When Andrew heard that Tom was missing, he immediately flew up to Fort George to join the search. In Fort George, Andrew searched the room where Tom and the pilot had been staying, because he could not believe Tom would not have left word of their destination. He found a note indicating that they planned to work near Bare Island. Then Andrew flew out, together with Beaver pilot Derry Tozier of Fort George, and found the stranded party on the shrinking ice floe. The Beaver pilot made a skillful and dangerous landing on the floe and taxied near the helicopter. It is said that when Andrew got out of the plane and Tom saw who it was, he said, "Hello, Andrew," as though they had just dropped in unannounced for tea!

Andrew's publications deal with a wide range of subjects, from conservation, ecology, population dynamics, wildlife management, taxonomy, zoogeography, social and environmental issues, and Inuktitut names for birds and mammals, to popular hunting and fishing articles. Perhaps his personal favorite was his book, *The Canadian Ice Angler's Guide*, published in 1985 by Lone Pine Publications.

There is no doubt that Andrew Macpherson was by anyone's standards a highly intelligent, successful, personable, humorous, and inquisitive person. However, an additional measure of success in life, which is hard to obtain and especially difficult to retain regardless of one's personal ability, is managing to keep one's perspective,

ordering priorities for the greatest enjoyment of life. Andrew appeared to be quite successful at keeping his priorities right! Perhaps his greatest demonstration of this was staying in the west, where he believed his family had the greatest quality of life. Had he been willing to sacrifice that for a coveted position in the minister's office, I have no doubt he would have made it there. A small, more specific example occurred in the late 1970s. The Minister's Office had sent out one of its urgent demands to all of the regions for the compilation of statistics from each of the agencies under Environment's umbrella. It required the involvement of many people, and each regional director had ordered his underlings to comply. As the Director General of the Western & Northern Region, Andrew was responsible for seeing that all of his service directors produced their compilations and had them to his office in time for a synthesis of their collective efforts to reach Ottawa by the following week. When I reached his office for a prearranged lunch date, Andrew asked me to wait, as he had a matter to deal with before we left. Just then, one of his lieutenants walked in.

Andrew said to him, "I am putting you in charge of synthesizing the data sets from the regional directors and seeing that the consolidated package gets to the Minister's Office on time."

The lieutenant looked surprised, but said yes without hesitation or questions. Andrew continued, "I won't be here next week and I can't be reached by phone—I'll be hunting sheep in the mountains!" On hearing this, his lieutenant looked as though he certainly had some questions!

I couldn't help a short laugh. Andrew turned and looked at me disapprovingly, then smiled and said, "We are late for lunch." The matter was closed.

I would like to think that Andrew Macpherson is perched on a high prominence overlooking a game-choked valley and a fish-laden stream—his eternal "happy hunting grounds"!

Andrew Macpherson was born in Hampstead, London, England, on 2 June 1932, to Dorothy Hall Macpherson of Swansea, Wales, and Hamish (James Ewan) Macpherson of Edinburgh, Scotland. His father was in the British Army during World War I, then stationed in India, where he became an administrator in the Indian Forest Service. When civil service jobs were reorganized, he decided he would have better prospects in Britain for both work and eventual family life, and he became a small manufacturer in London. When Andrew, his mother, and his sister left Britain in 1940, his father elected to stay behind. Andrew's mother, Dorothy Hall Macpherson, had a long and distinguished career with the National Film Board in Ottawa, later founding the Canadian Centre for Films on Art, where she was the liaison officer between the National Film Board and the National Art Gallery. Her promotion of the use of films in art education earned this lively and witty woman admission to the Order of Canada. Andrew's sister, (Jean) Jay Macpherson, published two books of poetry (Governor General's Award, 1957), and taught English for 40 years at Victoria College, University of Toronto.

Andrew left Britain in 1940, like a great number of other English children sent or brought to North America to escape the German Blitzkrieg and the threat of invasion. He first arrived in St. John's, Newfoundland, with his mother and sister, and remained there for a year with family friends, attending Bishop Feild Collegiate. He then officially "came to Canada," sailing with his mother most appropriately aboard the M.S. *Cariboo* from St. John's to Montreal. They took up residence in Westmount, Quebec, where he attended Roslyn Public School until 1943. In 1944, his mother arranged a year on a farm in rural Quebec. Then, in 1945 he joined his mother and sister, already reunited in Ottawa. He graduated from Glebe Collegiate Institute in 1950, becoming a Canadian citizen the next year. As a teenager, he joined the American Ornithological Union and the Canadian Field-Naturalist Club. Early on, he became a Fellow and Governor of the Arctic Institute of North America and a Councilor of the Society for

Systematic Zoology. He was awarded the Centennial Medal in 1967. Andrew was a member and Chairman of the I.U.C.N. International Polar Bear Committee; member of the Scientific Advisory Committee, World Wildlife Fund Canada; Western Vice-President, Trout Unlimited Canada; President, True North Strong and Free Inquiry Society; and Honorary Secretary, Sustainable Population Society.

After a lengthy illness, Andrew Hall Macpherson died on April 23, 2002. Predeceased in May 2001 by his wife Betty, Andrew is survived by his sister Jay of Toronto, his sons David and Peter of Edmonton, and his daughter Diana of Toronto.

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