

A PROPOSAL TO ESTABLISH CAPE SEARLE BIRD SANCTUARY

Habitat Conservation Section

CANADIAN WILDLIFE SERVICE
WESTERN AND NORTHERN REGION
YELLOWKNIFE, N.W.T.

December, 1985

RN 4006

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
1.0 INTRODUCTION.....	1
1.1 Background.....	1
1.2 Canadian Wildlife Service Mandate.....	1
1.3 Proposed Cape Searle Sanctuary.....	2
2.0 RATIONALE FOR ESTABLISHMENT.....	3
3.0 LOCATION.....	3
4.0 PROPOSED BOUNDARY.....	3
5.0 SIZE OF PROPOSED SANCTUARY.....	6
6.0 MIGRATORY BIRD RESOURCES.....	6
6.1 Northern Fulmar.....	6
6.2 Other Migratory Birds.....	7
7.0 MAMMALS.....	7
8.0 MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS.....	8
8.1 Multiple Land Use.....	8
8.2 Permits.....	8
8.3 Subsistence Hunting, Trapping, and Fishing.....	8
8.4 Recreational Hunting.....	9
8.5 Land Claims.....	9
9.0 PUBLIC CONSULTATION.....	9
10.0 CANADIAN WILDLIFE SERVICE OFFICES.....	10

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

In the autumn of 1983, the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development established a Task Force on Northern Conservation to provide advice and report on:

- 1) a framework for a comprehensive conservation policy for northern Canada;
- 2) a strategy and ongoing mechanism for implementing the policy;
- 3) specific actions that could be taken over the next two years.

The Task Force report, in December 1984, recommended the adoption of a strategy consisting of two mutually supportive components - a system of integrated resource management and a comprehensive network of areas that require measures of protection.

In May 1984, the Canadian Wildlife Service published a catalogue of the key migratory bird terrestrial habitat sites in the Northwest Territories. Sixty-one sites, which merit some form of protection, were identified. Each site supports at least one percent (much more in many cases) of the Canadian population of at least one migratory bird species. Many of the sites support significant concentrations of more than one bird species and include populations of other wildlife.

1.2 Canadian Wildlife Service Mandate

As a federal agency, the Canadian Wildlife Service administers the Migratory Birds convention Act (1917) which addresses the protection of migratory birds in Canada. Under this Act, the Canadian Wildlife Service

administers the Migratory Bird Regulations concerning the harvest and possession of migratory birds and the Migratory Bird Sanctuary Regulations, which address the establishment and management of bird sanctuaries.

The Canadian Wildlife Service also administers the Canada Wildlife Act (1973). Accordingly, the Canadian Wildlife Service may take measures necessary for the protection of any species of non-domesticated animal in danger of extinction or acquire lands for the purposes of wildlife research, conservation, or interpretation. The administration and management of such lands is governed by the Wildlife Area Regulations.

1.3 Proposed Cape Searle Bird Sanctuary

On August 7, 1985, the Minister of Environment, with the support of the Minister of Renewable Resources, Government of the Northwest Territories, announced a plan to establish three new migratory bird sanctuaries in the Northwest Territories. Cape Searle is one of these proposed sanctuaries.

This document is intended to describe the resources of the island, to outline the size and extent of the proposed sanctuary, and to highlight some of the implications of its being established. This document will be the focus for discussions regarding designation. Management options for the area, subsequent to designation, will be the subject of public consultations at a later date.

2.0 RATIONALE FOR ESTABLISHMENT

Seabirds are vulnerable to pollution of their foraging areas and disturbance or degradation of their nest sites. The Northern Fulmar colony at Cape Searle is the largest in Canada and may be the largest colony in existence. The area supports smaller populations of Glaucous Gulls, Black Guillemots, and Thick-billed Murres; large numbers of these birds forage in the waters surrounding the proposed sanctuary. Establishment of the sanctuary will afford protection to an area of international importance.

3.0 LOCATION

Cape Searle, at 67°14'N, 62°28'W, lies in the waters of Davis Strait - 34 km north of Reid Bay on eastern Baffin Island. It is situated on the northeastern tip of Qaualuit Island, 4.8 km off the northeastern cape of Padloping Island, Merchants Bay (Fig. 1).

The nearest communities are: Broughton Island which lies approximately 65 kilometres to the northwest, and Pangnirtung approximately 190 kilometres to the southwest, across the Cumberland Peninsula.

4.0 PROPOSED BOUNDARY

The proposed boundary includes all lands and waters within a five kilometre radius of Cape Searle (Fig. 2). This boundary delineates the minimum area which would adequately protect the migratory bird resources on the island and in its immediate vicinity.

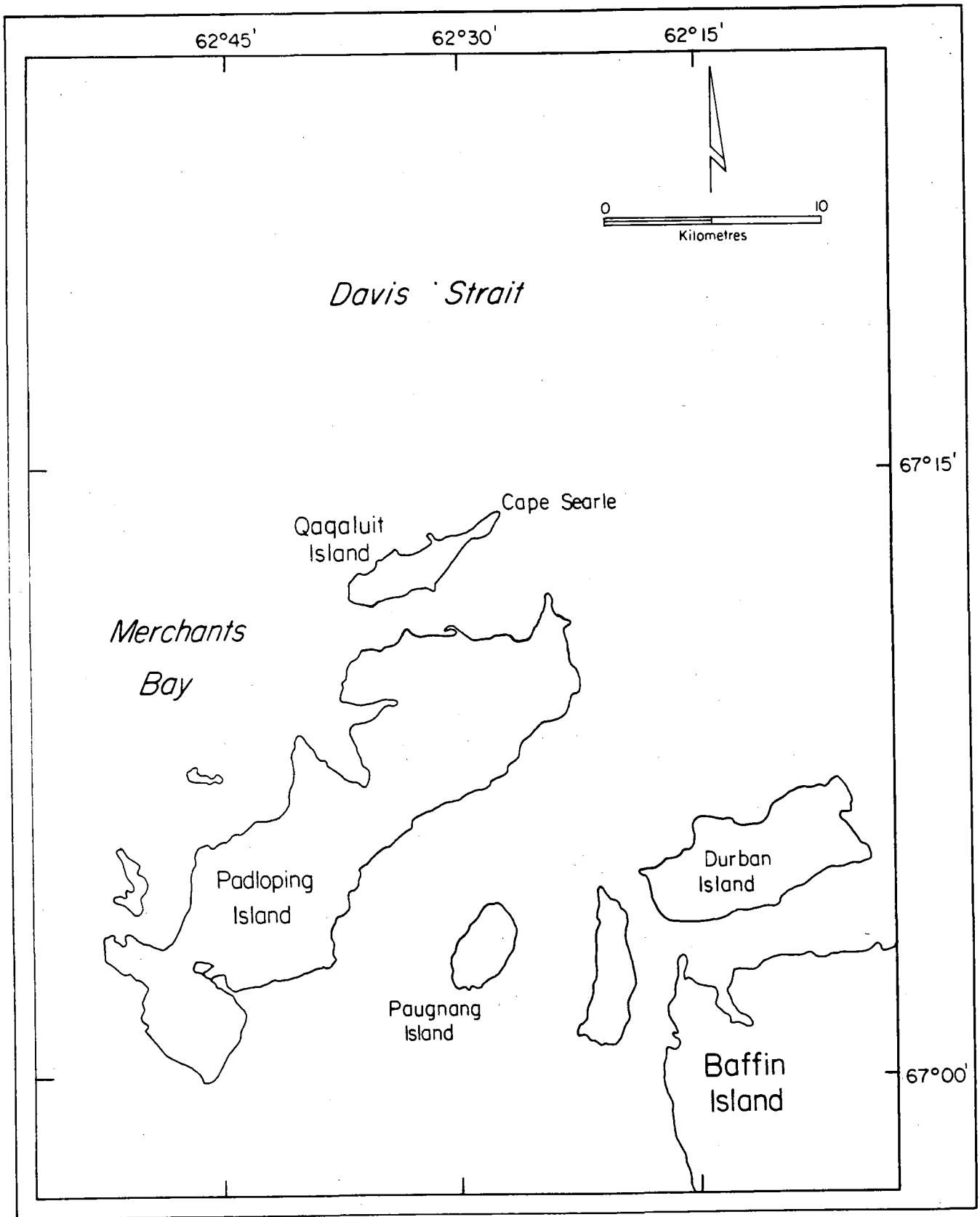


Figure 1. Location of Cape Searle.

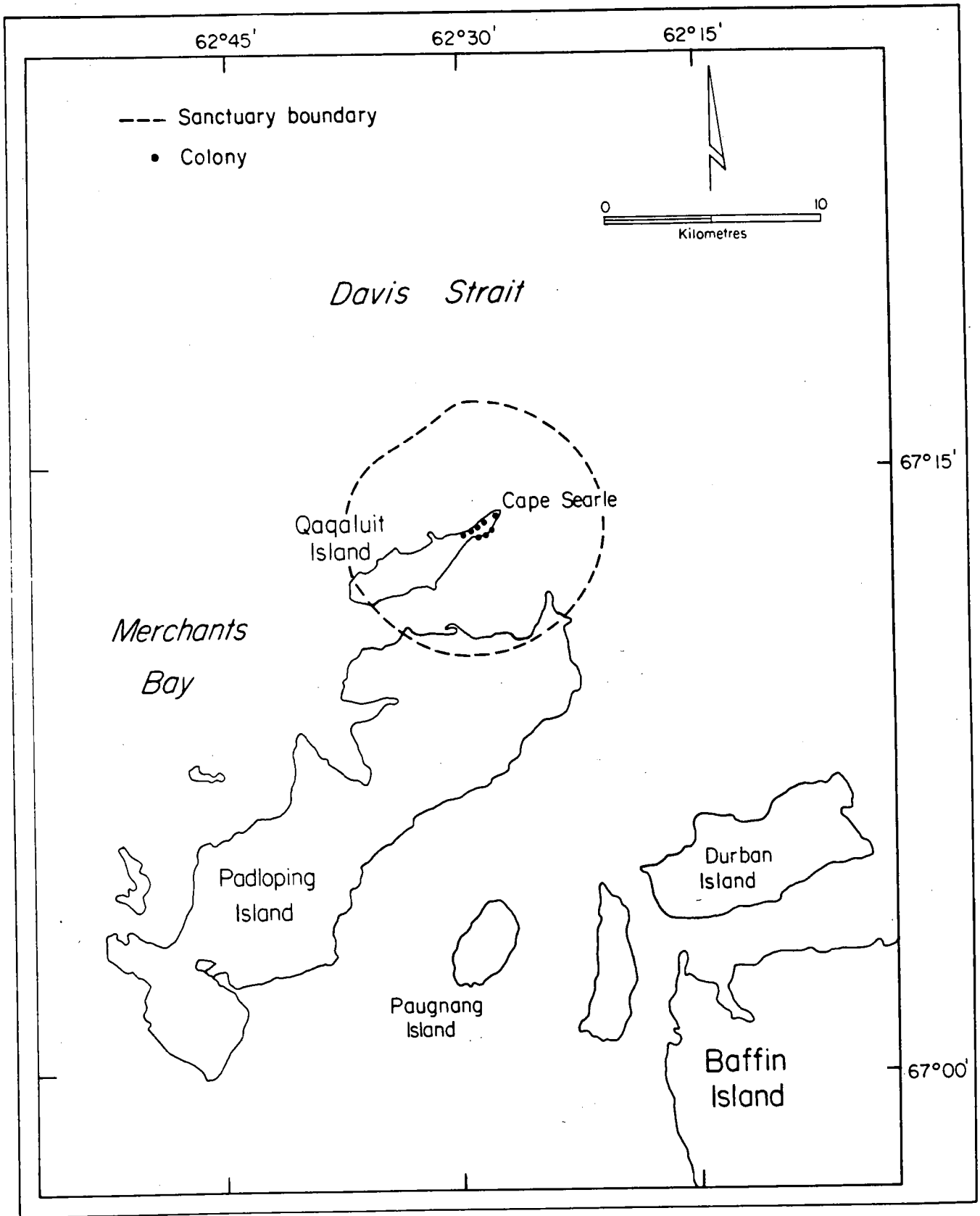


Figure 2. Proposed boundary of Cape Searle Bird Sanctuary.

5.0 SIZE OF PROPOSED SANCTUARY

The proposed sanctuary covers approximately 106 square kilometres including 13 square kilometres of land and 93 square kilometres of water.

6.0 MIGRATORY BIRD RESOURCES

Throughout the summer, large numbers of seabirds are dependent upon the biological productivity of Davis Strait to meet their energy requirements for growth, reproduction, and maintenance. Seabirds concentrate during the breeding season where both oceanographic conditions support a suitable food supply and cliffs provide suitable breeding sites. The large Fulmar colony at Cape Searle is unique in Canada and, perhaps, the world.

6.1 Northern Fulmar

Northern Fulmars at Cape Searle nest on two huge towers of volcanic and sedimentary rocks about 430 metres high. These towers are characterized by rugged steep cliffs with numerous indentations, crevices, and jagged pinnacles. Breeding birds occur on every suitable cliff at all heights, down almost to the cliff base. Density is highest at the top of the cliffs with large numbers nesting on the grassy, flat summits.

Accurate population figures are difficult to achieve due to the nature of the terrain. However, the number of Fulmars at Cape Searle has been estimated to be in excess of 100,000 breeding pairs. This number represents approximately 28% of the total Canadian population.

The birds arrive in late April and remain in the area until late September or early October. Eggs are laid in early June and hatch around the third week of July. Northern fulmars are strong flyers and may forage at distances up to 200 km from the nest site.

6.5 Other Migratory Birds

A total of forty-one species, including twenty-three breeding species have been recorded in the vicinity of Cape Searle. Glaucous Gulls and Black Guillemots nest on the cliffs and Thick-billed Murres are abundant. Other species breeding in the area include: Peregrine Falcon, Gyrfalcon, Northern Wheatear, Water Pipit, Lapland Longspur, and Snow Bunting. Dovekie and Ringed Plover have also been recorded here.

7.0 MAMMALS

As many as nine land mammals may occur in the area surrounding Cape Searle. They include: Arctic Hare, Brown Lemming, Collared Lemming, Wolf, and Arctic Fox. Polar Bears are common in the area and may use the seaward tips of peninsulas for maternity dens.

The waters adjacent to Cape Searle may attract a variety of marine mammals including: Beluga, Narwhal, Bowhead Whale, Minke Whale, Blue Whale, Killer Whale, Bearded Seal, Ringed Seal, Harbour Seal, and Hooded Seal. Walrus and Harp Seal are considered common.

8.0 MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS

The designation of Cape Searle Bird Sanctuary will result in little change to the present use of the area. The following Canadian Wildlife Service policies are noteworthy.

8.1 Multiple Land Use

The Canadian Wildlife Service accepts multiple land use within its sanctuaries. Wildlife conservation is the primary use, rather than the only use, of a sanctuary. Virtually any land use activity is acceptable provided that there are no significant negative impacts upon the birds or their habitats.

8.2 Permits

As stated in the Migratory Bird Sanctuary Regulations (Section 10(1).) "no person shall, in a migratory bird sanctuary, carry on any activity that is harmful to migratory birds or their eggs, nest, or habitat of migratory birds, except under authority of a permit". Accordingly, the Canadian Wildlife Service reserves the right to evaluate the impact of a proposed activity. All proponents, therefore, must contact the Canadian Wildlife Service when contemplating any activity within a sanctuary.

8.3 Subsistence, Hunting, Trapping and Fishing

As stated in the Migratory Bird Sanctuary Regulations (Section 11(d).), any person who is the holder of, or eligible for, a General

Hunting Licence (GHL), for the Northwest Territories may take fur bearing animals, big game, or sea mammals within a sanctuary in accordance with that licence. Individuals who do not hold a GHL are subject to the terms and conditions of the Territorial Wildlife Act and the Fisheries Act, respectively.

8.4 Recreational Hunting

The Canadian Wildlife Service recognizes that the guiding of sport hunters for the purpose of taking marine or terrestrial mammals may be a significant source of income for local communities. Such activities are acceptable provided that there are no negative impacts on the avian resources or their habitats. However, subject to Section 4(1)a of the Migratory bird Sanctuary Regulations, all hunters, except GHL holders, require a permit from the Canadian Wildlife Service.

8.5 Land Claims

The Canadian Wildlife Service recognizes that the designation of the proposed sanctuary will be subject to the conditions of the final Land Claim Agreement effecting this area.

9.0 PUBLIC CONSULTATION

The Canadian Wildlife Service is committed to public consultation regarding the establishment of Prince Leopold Island as a migratory bird sanctuary. Comments or observations on this initiative, or requests for information, may be directed to the nearest Canadian Wildlife Service office.

10.0 **CANADIAN WILDLIFE SERVICE OFFICES**

Mr. Kevin McCormick
Canadian Wildlife Service
Box 637
Yellowknife, N.W.T.
X1A 2N5
Tel: 403-920-8531

Mr. Gerald McKeating
Canadian Wildlife Service
2nd Floor, 4999-98 Avenue
Edmonton, Alberta
T6B 2X3
Tel. 403-420-2525

Mr. Doug Gillespie
Canadian Wildlife Service
Environment Canada
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0E7
Tel. 819-997-1362

DATE DUE

DATE DUE	

BRODARI

Cat. No. 23-221