SPECIES AT RISK

in Nunavut

2021

Canada

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Cover photo: Short-eared Owl, Doug Dance

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SPECIES AT RISK IN NUNAVUT 2021

A guide to species in Nunavut currently listed, 2021, Species at Risk in Nunavut, Environment and Climate Change Canada, Iqaluit, Nunavut.

For more copies and for more information on terrestrial species, please contact:

Environment and Climate Change Canada

Canadian Wildlife Service
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Iqaluit, NU X0A 0H0
867–979–7045

For more information on aquatic species, please contact:

Fisheries and Oceans Canada

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204–983–5000

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Bowhead Whale Marc Gadoury

Birds

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Grizzly Bear Syd Cannings

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

Common Name English – Inuktitut

Subspecies or Population

Scientific Name

This table shows the assessment status of the species by the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC) and the legal status under the federal *Species at Risk Act*, with the year of assessment and listing.

COSEWIC Assessment	Status under SARA Schedule 1
Status as last assessed by COSEWIC	Status on the federal *Species at Risk Act* list (Schedule 1)

A physical description of the animal size, weight and colour, including distinguishing marks or behaviours.

Help identify and record species in Nunavut by reporting your sightings to the appropriate agency.

If you see a rare species or a species in an unusual area, write down all the information you can – species, gender, age or size, number of individuals and location. This could help monitor or plan research for that species.

Potential Threats in Nunavut

- Threats to a species can vary between regions in Canada. The information in this section describes threats to the species specific to Nunavut and in other parts of its range when applicable.

Rob Gau

Typical Habitat

- The information in this section describes the typical habitat of the species in Nunavut.

Range Map

The map shows the range of each species in Nunavut so that you can determine at a glance where they are expected to occur. Please note that the species range maps in this booklet are approximate and are not intended for legal use.

Population and Biology

- This section contains additional information about the species in Nunavut.

Did you know?

- The information in this section highlights interesting facts about the species.

Marianne Marcoux, DFO

Categories of species at risk

COSEWIC assesses the national status of wild species, subspecies, varieties, or other designatable units that are considered to be at risk in Canada. COSEWIC can assess species as:

- **Extinct:** A wildlife species that no longer exists.
- **Extirpated:** A wildlife species that no longer exists in the wild in Canada, but exists elsewhere.
- **Endangered:** A wildlife species facing imminent extirpation or extinction.
- **Threatened:** A wildlife species that is likely to become Endangered if nothing is done to reverse the factors leading to its extirpation or extinction.
- **Special Concern:** A wildlife species that may become Threatened or Endangered because of a combination of biological characteristics and identified threats.
- **Data deficient:** A category that applies when the available information is insufficient to resolve a wildlife species' eligibility for assessment or to permit an assessment of the wildlife species' risk of extinction.
- **Not at risk:** A wildlife species that has been evaluated and found to be not at risk of extinction given the current circumstances.

Species can be listed on the *Species at Risk Act* in one of four status categories: Extirpated, Endangered, Threatened or Special Concern.

Other terms used in the status table:

- **Under Consideration:** once a species is assessed by COSEWIC with a new status category, the federal department (Environment and Climate Change Canada or Fisheries and Oceans Canada) undergoes consultations before the species could be added to the list or its status changed.

- National Parks
- National Wildlife Areas
- National Marine Conservation Area
- Marine Protected Area
- Migratory Bird Sanctuaries
- Thelon Wildlife Sanctuary
- Nunavut Territorial Parks
- Nunavut

SPECIES AT RISK IN NUNAVUT

To help prevent species in Canada from becoming extinct because of human activity, every jurisdiction in Canada has signed the national *Accord for the Protection of Species at Risk*. In doing so, they have agreed to work towards a national approach for protecting species at risk.

The responsibility for the conservation of wildlife in Nunavut is shared by the federal and territorial governments, the Nunavut Wildlife Management Board (NWMB), the Regional Wildlife Organizations (RWO's), and community Hunters and Trappers Organizations (HTO's). The federal government is responsible for migratory birds, aquatic species and terrestrial species found on federal lands. The Government of Nunavut has primary responsibility for all other species. As set out in Article 5 of the *Nunavut Agreement*, the NWMB is the main instrument of wildlife management in the Nunavut Settlement Area. The primary functions of the NWMB most relevant to species at risk are in Sections 5.2.33 and 5.2.34 of the *Nunavut Agreement*. They include: approve designation of rare (Special Concern), Threatened and Endangered species, approve plans for the management and protection of wildlife (e.g. Recovery documents), approve the establishment, disestablishment, and changes to boundaries of Conservation Areas, and approve plans for the management and protection of particular wildlife habitats (Conservation Areas, Territorial Parks and National Parks). Other relevant functions include: participating in research, conducting the Nunavut Wildlife Harvest Study, establishing, modifying or removing levels of total allowable harvest (TAH), ascertaining and adjusting the basic needs level and setting trophy fees.

Harvesting by Inuit is also overseen by HTO's and RWO's. The primary functions of HTO's related to species at risk are in Section 5.7.3 of the *Nunavut Agreement* and include: the regulation of harvesting practices and techniques (including the use of non-quota limitations), and the management of harvest, among members (e.g. allocating TAH). HTO's also conduct community-based monitoring and research. There are three Regional Wildlife Organizations in Nunavut (one per each region: Kitikmeot, Kivalliq and Qikiqtaaluk). The primary functions of RWO's related to species at risk are in Section 5.7.6 of the *Nunavut Agreement* and include: the regulation of harvesting practices and techniques (including the use of non-quota limitations), and the management of harvest, among the members of HTO's in the region (e.g. allocating TAH).

Ringed Seal Stephen Petersen

 Rusty Blackbird Mark Peck

Federal Considerations

In 2003, the Government of Canada enacted the federal *Species at Risk Act* with the goal of protecting and helping the recovery of wildlife species and their habitats. The *Species at Risk Act* establishes a process for conducting assessments on the status of individual species, and a mechanism for listing species that are assessed as being at risk. The *Species at Risk Act* established the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC) which assesses species at risk of becoming extinct. COSEWIC identifies existing and potential threats and assesses species as Special Concern, Threatened, Endangered, Extirpated, Extinct, Data Deficient or Not at Risk. After assessment, the *Species at Risk Act* allows for a species to be listed in four different risk categories depending on the population trends and imminent threats: Special Concern, Threatened, Endangered or Extirpated (see page 7). A national Management Plan is developed for species listed as Special Concern, whereas species listed as Threatened, Endangered or Extirpated have a national Recovery Strategy developed and Critical Habitat identified[1]. Consultation with local communities and wildlife management authorities (HTO's) is required at every step of the process including pre-listing and recovery document development. The *Species at Risk Act* offers protection for individuals of listed wildlife species, and their critical habitats and residences.

Territorial Considerations

The *Wildlife Act* (Nunavut) provides a comprehensive framework for the management of wildlife and habitat in Nunavut, including the conservation, protection and recovery of species at risk. The Act sets out a process for designating species at risk in the territory, including provisions for interim and emergency listings and for the recovery of listed species. To date no species have been listed under this Act.

1 Critical Habitat protection is only required for Extirpated species if a recovery strategy has recommended the reintroduction of the species into the wild in Canada.

ASSESSMENT AND LISTING OF SPECIES AT RISK

Species are given some protection under the *Species at Risk Act* when they are added to the List of Wildlife Species at Risk (Schedule 1). To date, this listing has followed the processes set out in the *Nunavut Agreement*.

Assessment: The Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC) is a national committee of wildlife experts tasked with assessing species' risk of extinction based on the best available scientific, community and Indigenous Traditional Knowledge (ITK). COSEWIC submits its assessments to the federal Minister of Environment and Climate Change for listing consideration. Species are usually re-assessed every 10 years.

Legal Listing: After receiving COSEWIC's assessment, the responsible federal department presents a proposed listing to the Nunavut Wildlife Management Board (NWMB) for approval. This proposal includes relevant background information on the species, an overview of the threats the species is facing, and a summary of information gathered during consultations with communities in regions where the species occurs. At the discretion of the NWMB, a public hearing may be held to ensure that all parties that may be affected by a proposed listing are given an opportunity to provide input on the subject and share their knowledge. The NWMB uses the best available information to make a decision on the listing, which is forwarded to the appropriate Federal Minister depending on if the species is aquatic or terrestrial (Federal Minister of Environment and Climate Change and the Federal Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard). The Federal Minister has the ability to vary the Board's decision by providing reasons within the prescribed time limit. If the proposed listing is approved, the Minister makes a recommendation on the listing to the Governor in Council. The decision is then made on whether to list or not list the species to Schedule 1 of the *Species at Risk Act* (SARA) or refer the matter back to COSEWIC for further consideration.

12 Ross's Gull Mark Mallory

Atlantic Cod David Hardie

For Current Information

This booklet contains the Nunavut species assessed by COSEWIC as Endangered, Threatened, Special Concern or Extirpated and are listed under SARA or are under consideration for listing or status change as of November 2020. As such, not all of the species in this booklet have been legally listed under SARA. COSEWIC national assessments of species are usually completed every six months. Because a species status can change, it is important to visit the federal Species at Risk Act Public Registry (www.sararegistry.gc.ca) or the COSEWIC website (www.cosewic.ca) regularly for the most recent national information.

Current information on wildlife research done by the Government of Nunavut is available from https://gov.nu.ca/environnement/information/wildlife-research-reports.

Barren-ground Caribou – Napaaqtuqangituqmiut Tutungit

Caribou (Barren-ground Population)

Rangifer tarandus

COSEWIC Assessment	Status under SARA Schedule 1
Threatened – 2016	**Under Consideration for addition**

Barren-ground Caribou are members of the deer family. In the fall, mature males have a striking white neck and mane and a distinct band along the flank separating the brown back from the white belly. Their colours are more faded during the winter. Both males and females have antlers, and the velvet covering their antlers is brown.

Weight: Males, 100 to 140 kg (220 to 309 lb)
Females, 85 to 135 kg (187 to 298 lb)

Report Barren-ground Caribou sightings to to this e-mail address Takuvunga@gov.nu.ca

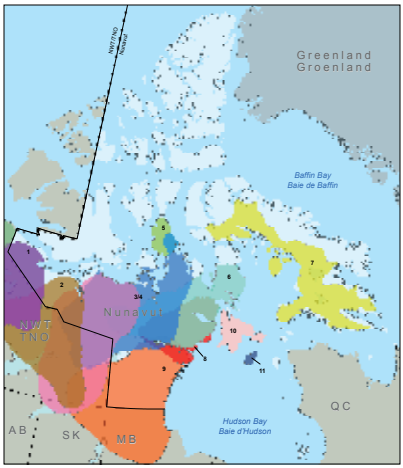
Potential Threats in Nunavut

- Climate change could impact the timing of seasonal activities such as calving and migration.
- Decreased food availability due to severe weather events exacerbated by climate change.
- Habitat loss and degradation from resource exploration and development.
- Increased road building could increase access for hunting and predation, and impact seasonal movements.
- Subsistence and sport harvesting can have a cumulative effect on the rate of population decline after the population size has been reduced.

Lisa Pirie-Dominix

Typical Habitat

- In summer, they seek areas with high-quality grasses, sedges, shrubs and mushrooms to eat, and try to avoid insect harassment.
- Caribou move around in winter to places where food – primarily lichen – is abundant and snow is shallow.
- Barren-ground Caribou come back to the same calving grounds every year. They give birth in places where they can minimize exposure to predators and maximize nutrition, such as open tundra and high, rocky areas.



- Bluenose East (1)
- Bathurst (2)
- Beverly (3)/Ahiak (4)
- Boothia Peninsula (5)
- Wager Bay (6)
- Baffin Island (7)
- Lorillard (8)
- Qamanirjuaq (9)
- Southampton Island (10)
- Coats Island (11)

Population and Biology

Barren-ground Caribou migrate long distances northwards in the spring to their traditional calving grounds and southwards in the fall to their winter range. They are highly social, often travelling in large groups of hundreds or thousands. They can first calve at three years of age and give birth to a single calf, potentially every year if conditions are favourable. Between 1986 and the mid-1990s, the overall trend was an increase to more than two million, followed by a decline, which has persisted through today. There are 15 herds across Canada, 11 of which are in Nunavut. For 70% of the population with sufficient data to quantify trends, the decline is estimated at 56% over the past three generations (since 1989). Several of the largest herds have declined by 80% from peak numbers. The current estimate of the population is about 800,000 individuals. Barren-ground Caribou populations naturally undergo large cycles likely driven by several factors: climate interacting with food availability, predation, parasites and carrying capacity. The population increases until it reaches carrying capacity, and then declines due to limited food resources until the habitat has a chance to recover. However, there are novel anthropogenic threats that are having cumulative impacts on Barren-ground Caribou, which are likely exacerbating the decline in the natural cycle.

Did you know?

- Since time immemorial, Barren-ground Caribou have had immense cultural, spviritual and economic importance to people in Nunavut.
- In some cases, these animals have such importance that families would follow their migration.
- Barren-ground Caribou is a keystwone species that plays a crucial role in northern ecosystems.
- Herds or subpopulations are identified mainly through fidelity to calving areas.

Dolphin and Union Caribou – Qikitaqmiut Tutungit Tulvin Ammalu Junian

Caribou (Dolphin and Union population)

Rangifer tarandus

COSEWIC Assessment

Endangered – 2017

Status under SARA Schedule 1

Special Concern – 2011
Under consideration for status change

Dolphin and Union Caribou are members of the deer family; they are smaller than Barren-ground Caribou but larger than Peary Caribou. They have a white coat with a pale brown back in early winter, and are either slate-grey or brown in the summer with white legs and under-parts. Both males and females have antlers, and the velvet covering their antlers is grey. Dolphin and Union Caribou are slightly darker than Peary Caribou (p. 20).

Report Dolphin and Union Caribou sightings to this e-mail address Takuvunga@gov.nu.ca

Potential Threats in Nunavut

- Changes to sea ice formation or break-up because of increased shipping or climate change can threaten migration.
- Decreased food availability due to severe weather events exacerbated by climate change.
- Wolf predation and increasing levels of parasites and diseases.
- Overgrazing by geese in areas where caribou wait before migrating to the mainland for the winter.

Kim Poole, AWR

Typical Habitat

- Dolphin and Union Caribou summer on Victoria Island, commonly using beach ridges and river valley slopes.
- After breeding, most of the herd crosses to the mainland for the winter. They make use of windswept areas with shallow snow cover, primarily in the Bathurst Inlet area. They have also been found along the shoreline as far west as Tuktut Nogait National Park in the Northwest Territories.
- Sea ice is important for their migration between Victoria Island and the mainland.

Dolphin and Union Caribou

Population and Biology

Dolphin and Union Caribou migrate twice a year between Victoria Island and the mainland. They breed over a period of 12 years, first calving at three years old, two if the quality of forage is high. They were at very low numbers during the mid-20th century and had stopped migrating from Victoria Island to the Nunavut-Northwest Territories mainland. From the 1970s to the 1990s, numbers increased and Dolphin and Union Caribou resumed migrating across the sea ice. Population estimates from 1997, 2007, 2015 and 2018 show the population was above 30,000 in 1997, but since then, there has been a decline to about 4,105 as of 2018. Indigenous knowledge reports that the wolf population is increasing and consequently the risk of predation. All these factors contributed to COSEWIC's assessment of Endangered in 2017. Cambridge Bay initiated an agreement with Transport Canada (the Proactive Vessel Management initiative) aiming to mitigate impacts of shipping on caribou (migration) and people (safety) by addressing timing, speed and frequency of shipping activities in the area. A national Management Plan for Dolphin and Union Caribou is available at www.sararegistry.gc.ca. The goal is to maintain the long-term persistence of a healthy and viable Dolphin and Union Caribou population that moves freely across its current range and provides sustainable harvest opportunities for current and future generations.

Did you know?

- Dolphin and Union Caribou were once thought to be Peary Caribou; however, genetic studies have now shown that they are distinct.
- Dolphin and Union Caribou often gather in large numbers along the southern shore of Victoria Island in the fall, waiting for the sea ice to become thick enough to cross.
- The length of the Dolphin and Union Caribou's seasonal migration is between 300 and 500 km.
- Caribou continue to constitute an important resource for Inuit, supplying meat and fat for food, and pelts for clothing.

Grizzly Bear – Akłait

Grizzly Bear (Western population)

Ursus arctos

COSEWIC Assessment	Status under SARA Schedule 1
Special Concern – 2012	Special Concern – 2018

Grizzly Bears are larger than black bears and more heavily built. They can be recognized by their prominent shoulder hump, dish-shaped face, and long claws. Colour varies from light gold to almost black, with pale bears being the most common on the tundra.

Weight: Males, 150 to 250 kg (330 to 550 lb)
Females, 120 to 160 kg (260 to 350 lb)

Report Grizzly Bear sightings to this e-mail address Takuvunga@gov.nu.ca

Potential Threats in Nunavut

- Limited habitat productivity (abundance and seasonality of food).
- Climate change could affect seasonal food supply.
- Increased human-bear encounters in many areas of Nunavut.
- Increased industrial activities could result in displaced Grizzly Bears and increase access to harvesting.

Syd Cannings

Typical Habitat

- The species is a habitat generalist, using a wide variety of habitat types: coastal forests, alpine tundra, mountain slopes, boreal forest, grasslands, and the Arctic tundra.
- They are becoming more common in Nunavut and the Northwest Territories where they used to be rarely seen.

Grizzly Bear

Areas of Increased Presence

Population and Biology

Grizzly Bears are sensitive to population declines because they do not reproduce until they are between six and eight years of age. They have small litters (one to three cubs), and there are three to five years between litters. Since the 19th century, Grizzly Bear distribution has decreased by more than 50%. In recent years, the population has been fairly stable, although it continues to decline in areas with small isolated populations, and where habitat is severely fragmented. Nunavut is the current limit of their range, with populations moving further north and west into the territory resulting in the species increasing in the territory by about 3% annually. A national Management Plan for Grizzly Bear is being developed in cooperation with local communities, wildlife management boards, and federal/territorial governments.

Did you know?

- Grizzly Bears can travel long distances. One bear collared on the tundra travelled 471 km (292 mi) in 23 days.
- Grizzly Bears require large areas of habitat. The largest home ranges are found in the central barrens of Nunavut and the Northwest Territories where Grizzly Bears have home ranges of up to 6,700 km² for males and 2,100 km² for females.
- Blind, hairless, and helpless cubs are born mid-winter and are the size of a small squirrel, weighing as little as 350 g (0.8 lb).
- Grizzly Bear's characteristic shoulder hump is a result of powerful muscles used for digging.
- The increasing number of bears in Nunavut has led to a corresponding increase in the number of human-grizzly encounters, often resulting in the animal being killed in defence of life or property.

Peary Caribou – Qutiktuup Tutungit

Rangifer tarandus pearyi

COSEWIC Assessment

Threatened – 2015

Status under SARA Schedule 1

Endangered – 2011
Under consideration for status change

Peary Caribou are the smallest of all caribou subspecies. Like Dolphin and Union Caribou (p. 16), Peary Caribou have a mostly white coat in winter, and are slate-grey with white legs and under-parts in summer. Their legs are proportionately shorter than other Canadian caribou subspecies, hooves tend to be wider, and their faces tend to be shorter. Both males and females have antlers that are covered in silvery-grey velvet in the summer and bone-coloured when they lose their velvet in the fall.

Weight: Males, 70 kg (150 lb)
Length: 1.7 m (5.6 ft)

Report Peary Caribou sightings to this e-mail address Takuvunga@gov.nu.ca

Potential Threats in Nunavut

- Abnormalities in the sea ice formation or break-up due to climate change, and shipping/ icebreaking activities could disrupt their movements across islands.
- Severe winter and spring weather creates ice layers preventing Peary Caribou from reaching their food, sometimes causing starvation or inadequate fat reserves for females to reproduce.
- Low numbers and variable population size indicates Peary Caribou are vulnerable to random catastrophic events such as severe icing events.
- Muskoxen may influence Peary Caribou populations through competition, avoidance or interactions with predators or parasites.

Lisa Pirie-Dominix

Typical Habitat

- Peary Caribou are found in small groups on the Arctic islands of Nunavut and the Northwest Territories.
- The species travel long distances from one island to the next to maximize their use of the available habitat.
- Their summer habitat includes river valley slopes or other moist areas, and upland plains with abundant sedges, willows, grasses and herbs.
- Their winter habitat includes exposed areas like hilltops and raised beach ridges where the snow is thinner, and it is easier to find food.

Population and Biology

Peary Caribou move between and within islands to use different areas to complete their life stages – calving, rutting and seasonal foraging, and/or to escape extreme weather events or bad environmental conditions. Female Peary Caribou are able to produce at three years of age, and can calve every year when conditions are favourable. Peary Caribou populations in Nunavut may have declined steeply between the 1960s and the 1990s, likely due to a combination of factors, including several years of unusually severe winter and spring weather. The most recent surveys estimated the population at 13,700 animals with variability among regions (including 2,200 animals on Banks island in 2014; 7,300 on Western Queen Elizabeth Islands in 2012–13). A national recovery strategy for Peary Caribou is being developed in cooperation with local communities, wildlife management boards, and federal/territorial governments.

Did you know?

- In a good year, up to 88% of females three years and older produce calves. Following a harsh winter, this number can drop to zero.
- In summer their muzzles can turn red from focusing their foraging on the flowers of purple saxifrage.
- Caribou continue to constitute an important resource for Inuit, supplying meat and fat for food, and pelts for clothing.

Polar Bear – Nanuq

Ursus maritimus

COSEWIC Assessment	Status under SARA Schedule 1
Special Concern – 2018	Special Concern – 2011

The Polar Bear is the largest terrestrial carnivore in the world. Its white colour provides excellent camouflage for hunting on the ice and snow. Although the fur is white just after the moult, it may appear yellow or off-white during the summer months. Polar Bears have a smaller shoulder hump and they have shorter more curved claws and a longer neck than Grizzly Bears.

Weight: Males, up to 800 kg (1750 lb)
Females, less than 350 kg (770 lb)

Length: Males, 2.8 m (9.2 ft)
Females, 2.5 m (8.2 ft)

Report Polar Bear sightings to this e-mail address Takuvunga@gov.nu.ca

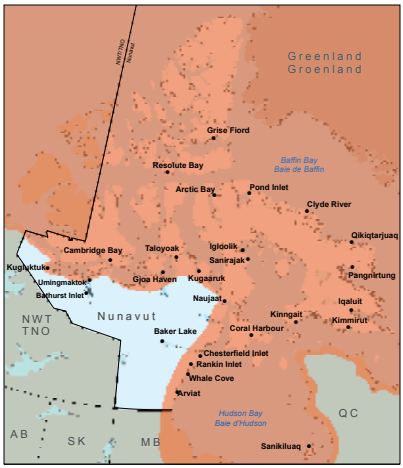
Potential Threats in Nunavut

- Climate change may reduce the amount of habitat available (multi-year sea ice).
- Increased exploration and development can disturb denning bears, impact travel and migration routes, alter habitat, and lead to an increase in human-Polar Bear encounters.
- Susceptible to accumulation of high levels of various environmental contaminants because they are a top predator.

Gordon Court

Typical Habitat

- The Polar Bear is an Arctic species with a circumpolar distribution. In the Canadian Arctic, Polar Bear habitat is closely associated with that of the Ringed Seal. Their habitat includes: pack ice areas, areas adjacent to pressure ridges between multi-year and first-year ice floes, and at the floe edge.
- In some areas, Polar Bears move onto the land for several months during the open water season while they wait for new ice to form.
- Maternal denning sites are usually located on land in snowdrifts near the coast but have also been found on sea ice.



Polar Bear

Population and Biology

Polar Bear females are first able to reproduce at four to five years of age while males are eight to ten years of age. Typical litters consist of one to two cubs who are weaned after two and a half years. The Canadian Polar Bear population is estimated between 14,000 and 16,000 individuals. In Nunavut, there are 12 subpopulations, and 8 of them are shared with other jurisdictions (Northwest Territories, Quebec, Manitoba or Greenland). The first harvest restrictions were imposed in the 1960s. Since then, the Polar Bear has been an iconic species at risk on a national and international scale, creating additional pressure to conserve the species. However, science and Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit (IQ) are now observing higher numbers of Polar Bears, and the management goals are more focused on maintaining or reducing numbers in communities and in sensitive areas (i.e. bird colonies). Inuit are concerned about the increasing number of encounters and property damages by Polar Bears; this may be due to a combination of factors, including rising population numbers in some areas and a reduction in sea-ice duration and extent. The Nunavut Polar Bear Co-Management Plan is available at www.nwmb.ca.

Did you know?

- The pads on a Polar Bear's paws are entirely furred, which may help insulate the feet and improve traction on ice and snow.
- Polar Bear skin is black, which improves absorption of heat from the sun.
- Canada invests approximately $1.7 million per year into monitoring its Polar Bear population to ensure that harvest levels are sustainable.
- Polar Bears were traditionally hunted using dog teams. Dogs could be cut loose to bring a bear to bay, or could sniff out a hibernating bear in a den.
- Through Inuit knowledge it is known that some Polar Bears live almost exclusively in open water and on sea ice.
- Family groups are protected from hunting, and all Polar Bear harvests are heavily regulated and monitored.
- Polar Bears are sensitive to population declines because they only breed every three years, have small litters, and take a long time to reach maturity.

Torngat Mountains Caribou – Tuungait Tuktungit

Caribou (Torngat Mountains population)

Rangifer tarandus

COSEWIC Assessment	Status under SARA Schedule 1
Endangered – 2016	**Under Consideration for addition**

Torngat Mountains Caribou are members of the deer family; they are almost white in winter and light to medium brown during summer. They belong to the mountain ecotype of the woodland caribou subspecies.

Report Torngat Mountains Caribou sightings to Takuvunga@gov.nu.ca

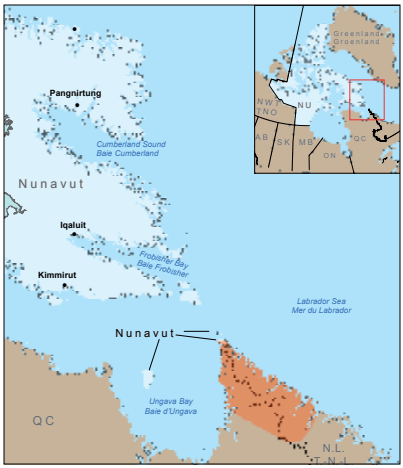
Potential Threats in Nunavut

- Overharvesting, both subsistence and sport.
- Predation, especially from wolves.
- Climate change altering the habitat quality and resource availability.
- Human activities such as noise, recreation and development.

Charles Jutras, MFFP

Typical Habitat

- They select habitat largely based on food availability, especially "Caribou Moss" (*Cladina* sp. lichen).
- They use alpine areas on mountain plateaus and adjacent valleys in the Torngat Mountains and seashore areas. Caribou use hillsides, islands, and alpine plateaus for calving.
- Indigenous Traditional Knowledge (ITK) suggests they remain in treeless habitat most of the year but make an annual vertical migration, using alpine tundra areas in summer, and valleys and lower elevations in winter.



Torngat Mountains Caribou

Population and Biology

Torngat Mountains Caribou do not gather in large groups to calve, they show a more diffuse pattern. They use elevation to mitigate the effects of harsh snow conditions, avoid predators during their calving period and take advantage of stratified vegetation growth and emergence. Typical longevity in Caribou is under 10 years for males and under 15 years for females. Most females will give birth to a single calf annually after they have reached sexual maturity at three years old. The Torngat Mountains Caribou population occupies a large territory in upper Labrador, Quebec, and Nunavut (Killiniq and adjacent islands). Their range is smaller than other migratory caribou herds, and they undergo vertical migration. The population was estimated at around 5,000 in the 1980s, but declined to 930 in 2014, an estimated reduction of 80%. ITK also supports that a decline has occurred; the population is thought to be very scarce and may be associated with the population cycle. However new threats, and very low numbers, could be detrimental to their recovery.

Did you know?

- Annually, their movements average 4.5 km/day.
- There is considerable exchange between Torngat Mountains Caribou and Eastern Migratory Caribou, making their populations similar genetically. However, immigration is insufficient to mitigate the ongoing population decline in the Torngat Mountains population.
- Harvest restrictions on the George River Caribou Herd are believed to have increased the hunting pressure on Torngat Mountains Caribou.
- For more information, see this ITK report: Wilson KS, MW Basterfield, C Furgal, T Sheldon, E Allen, the Communities of Nain and Kangiqsualujjuaq, and the Co-operative Management Board for the Torngat Mountains National Park. (2014). Torngat Mountains Caribou Herd Inuit Knowledge, Culture, and Values Study. Final Report to the Nunatsiavut Government, Makivik Corporation, Parks Canada, and the Torngat Wildlife and Plants Co-Management Board. Nain, NL.

Wolverine – Qavvik

Gulo gulo

COSEWIC Assessment	Status under SARA Schedule 1
Special Concern – 2014	Special Concern – 2018

The Wolverine is the largest member of the weasel family. They range in colour from brown to black, often with a pale facial mask and lighter stripes running along its sides from the shoulders and crossing at the tail.

Weight: Males, 12 to 16 kg (26 to 35 lb)
Females, 7.5 to 11 kg (16 to 24 lb)

Report Wolverine sightings to this e-mail address Takuvunga@gov.nu.ca

Potential Threats in Nunavut

- Low reproductive rate, and requires vast areas to maintain viable populations.
- Increasingly fragmented habitat by industrial activity.
- Wolverine-human conflicts at mining camps.
- Disturbance of maternal den sites can result in abandonment of kits.

Rob Gau

Typical Habitat

- The Wolverine occupies a wide variety of habitat types, from the boreal forest to the tree line, and across the Arctic tundra.
- They can also be found along coastlines, on rocky outcrops, and on mountain slopes.
- Home ranges are large: 50–400km² for females and 230–1580 km² for males.

Wolverine

Areas of Increased Presence

Population and Biology

Wolverines reach sexual maturity at two years of age, and are thought to breed in the summer, with IK suggesting they breed in March and April. They give birth every other year with litters of up to four. The Canadian population is estimated to be at least 10,000 individuals. Numbers appear to be decreasing in the southern part of the range, but are increasing in Nunavut, the Northwest Territories, and in parts of Manitoba and Ontario. In the western portion of the Kitikmeot Region, a long-term monitoring program has been in place since 1985. It has recently been expanded to the eastern Kitikmeot and the Kivalliq Region. This program has found that local populations tend to cycle with local food availability.

Did you know?

- In the Kitikmeot Region, caribou remains were found in the stomachs of 62% of winter-trapped Wolverines, and Muskox were found in 11%.
- In the summer months, Wolverines will eat small mammals, eggs, roots, fish, and berries. They have strong jaws that allow them to crush bones and frozen food.
- The Wolverine is a solitary animal, only tolerating the presence of a member of the opposite sex during the mating season.
- Wolverines mate during the summer months, but the fertilized egg doesn't start developing until many months later.
- Wolverine fur is resistant to frosting and is often used for the hoods, cuffs, and collars on parkas and the wristlets on mittens.

Atlantic Walrus – Aiviq

Central/Low Arctic and High Arctic Populations

Odobenus rosmarus rosmarus

Population	COSEWIC Assessment	Status under SARA Schedule 1
Central/ Low Arctic	Special Concern – 2017	Under consideration for addition
High Arctic	Special Concern – 2017	Under consideration for addition

The Walrus is a large sociable marine mammal with a head that is much narrower than its neck. It has rough, silver-coloured skin and sparse red-brown hair and the upper canine teeth grow into long tusks. The Walrus also has a moustache of stiff whiskers that can be up to a foot in length. The large front flippers support the body in an upright position, while the smaller hind flippers resemble those of a seal.

Weight: Males, 760 kg (1,650 lb)
Females, 570 kg (1,250 lb)

Report Atlantic Walrus sightings to this e-mail address Takuvunga@gov.nu.ca

Potential Threats in Nunavut

- Noise and disturbance from human activities, shipping lanes and flight paths may cause walruses to abandon their haul-out sites or to stampede, which can result in calf mortality.
- Harvesting (both sport and subsistence).
- Climate change impacting habitat quality.

Dr. Becky Sjare

Typical Habitat

- Atlantic Walrus need large areas of shallow, open water and spend much of their time near moving pack-ice where they will 'haul out.'
- In the summer and fall, they congregate in large groups on low, rocky shores with steep subtidal zones, known as "uglit".

Atlantic Walrus – High Arctic Population

Atlantic Walrus – Central/Low Arctic Population

Population and Biology

In Nunavut, the two Atlantic Walrus populations (High Arctic and the Central-Low Arctic) don't have deep genetic differentiation, but they reside in different ecological settings, which could give rise to local adaptations. Their habitat differs particularly in the quality, extent and duration of sea-ice cover, which could influence their responses to climate change. Walruses are gregarious and polygynous, and mature males compete intensely for females. Females become sexually active at four to eleven years of age and can give birth to a single calf every three years. There is currently little information available on the size, trend, or structure of Walrus populations, but the current estimate for the High Arctic population is 2,500 individuals and the Central-Low Arctic population is 18,900 individuals. Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) have developed an Integrated Fisheries Management Plan for Atlantic Walrus in the Nunavut Settlement Area, which aims to guide the conservation and management of sustainable fisheries, as well as combine science and traditional knowledge on marine species.

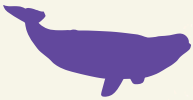
Did you know?

- Walrus feed by combing through the seabed, using their tusks as rakes, and then identifying molluscs using their whiskers. They suck clams out of their shells by creating a vacuum with their tongues.
- It has been reported that Walrus spend much less time on land than they did historically, likely because they have become more wary of human interference.
- A mature male will sometimes turn "rogue" and eat seals, Narwhals and Belugas.
- Walrus have been reported to travel 24–32 km (15–20 mi) across land.
- The bellows of male Walrus can be heard up to a mile away.

Beluga Whale – Qauluqtaq Qillalugaq

Cumberland Sound Population

Delphinapterus leucas



COSEWIC Assessment	Status under SARA Schedule 1
Endangered – 2020	**Threatened – 2017**

The Beluga Whale is a medium-sized toothed whale, with adult males reaching lengths of 4.5 m (15 ft), while females are generally smaller, up to about 3.5 m in length (11.5 ft). Individuals in the eastern Arctic tend to be smaller than those found in Pacific waters. The young are born a dark grey and gradually become paler as they mature, becoming completely white between five and seven years of age. Belugas do not have dorsal fins, and their pectoral fins are relatively short and round.

Weight: up to 1,900 kg (4,200 lb)

Length: Males, up to 4.5 m (15 ft)
Females, up to 3.5 m (11.5 ft)

Report Beluga Whale sightings to this e-mail address Takuvunga@gov.nu.ca

Potential Threats in Nunavut

- Predation by Killer Whales and Polar Bears contributes to Beluga mortality in all populations.
- Increased vulnerability to hunting due to the predictability of their migration.
- Increased boat traffic noise.
- Ice-entrapments causing mass mortality among individuals that are unable to reach the surface to breathe.

Dr. Jack Lawson

Typical Habitat

- Belugas inhabit cold Arctic waters, although the habitat use differs by season. As the land-fast ice breaks up in late spring, Beluga Whales move along the ice edges and penetrate the leads. Belugas often appear in ice-free river estuaries several weeks before the large areas of sea ice have completely broken up.
- During the summer, Belugas are found along the coastlines in shallow waters and river estuaries. In late-August, Belugas move to their wintering areas, spending time in leads and polynyas.
- The Cumberland Sound population mostly aggregates in the Clearwater Fiord area, where they occupy the estuary of the Ranger River for the summer.

Beluga Whale
– Cumberland Sound Population

Population and Biology

Belugas in the Cumberland population usually travel in pods of two to 10 whales. Females become sexually mature around four to seven years of age and breed about every three years, birthing one single calf. The species feeds on nearly 50 different invertebrate and fish species, including squid, tubeworms, capelin, Greenland and Atlantic Cod. There are eight distinct populations of Beluga in Canada. The Cumberland Sound population is currently estimated at about 1,100 animals. The current abundance represents a decrease since 1960 when the population was estimated at 2,900 Belugas. There were intensive commercial harvest activities on Belugas in Cumberland sound from the 1860s to 1940s which left the population depleted. The other Beluga populations in Nunavut are not listed but two others were assessed as At Risk by COSEWIC in 2020 (but are not under consideration currently): Eastern High Arctic-Baffin Bay population (Special Concern), and Eastern Hudson Bay population (Threatened).

Did you know?

- More than 160 Belugas per mile have been reported near the mouth of the Churchill River during the summer.
- The species is very vocal, making a variety of puffs, whistles, squeals, and bugles. In early European whaling literature, it is referred to as the "sea canary."
- The Beluga was one of the first cetaceans to be kept in aquaria, as it was found to adapt easily, survive well, and breed successfully.
- Belugas can follow rivers far inland: one was reportedly harvested 1,100 km (700 miles) upstream in a Yukon river.
- The Beluga is one of the most important marine resources of the Arctic: the skin is eaten as muktuk, can be used in boots and laces, and was traditionally used to cover whale boats ("umiaaq").
- Belugas have strong philopatry, which means they always return to the same site on a seasonal basis.

Bowhead Whale – Arvik

Balaena mysticetus

Population	COSEWIC Assessment	Status under SARA Schedule 1
Eastern Canada-West Greenland population	Special Concern – 2009	Under consideration for addition
Bering-Chukchi-Beaufort Population	Special Concern – 2009	Special Concern – 2007

The Bowhead is a baleen whale that is mainly blue-black in colour, with cream-coloured blotches on the chin and belly, and a pale grey area on the tail. The baleen is a flexible material found in long, thin plates along the jaw, which act to filter small food particles, rather than using regular teeth. The flippers are broad in the middle and tapered at the tip. These whales have no dorsal fin. The Bowhead gets its name from its large head, which makes up about a third of the whale's total body length.

Weight: 68,000 to 91,000 kg (150,000 to 200,000 lb)
Length: Males, 14 to 17 m (46 to 56 ft)
Females, 16 to 18 m (53 to 59 ft)

Report Bowhead Whale sightings to this e-mail address Takuvunga@gov.nu.ca

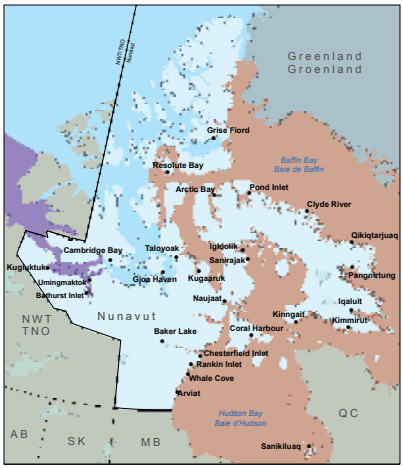
Potential Threats in Nunavut

- Small population size due to historic commercial whaling.
- Climatic factors influencing ice conditions and prey availability.
- Shipping traffic and noise associated with offshore developments.

Marc Gadoury

Typical Habitat

- The Bowhead Whale inhabits Arctic and sub-Arctic marine waters, frequenting bays, straits and estuaries.
- The species is often found near the ice edge, migrating north and south as the ice retreats or expands.
- During the winter months, the whales are found in areas with a combination of open water a nd broken pack ice.
- The Niginganiq National Wildlife Area, on the east coast of Baffin Island, is protecting an important summering habitat of the Bowhead Whale.



Bowhead Whale – Eastern Canada – West Greenland Population

Bowhead Whale – Bering-Chukchi-Beaufort Population

Population and Biology

Bowhead Whales are slow swimmers and can dive for 30 minutes when feeding. They become sexually mature around 25 years of age and give birth every three years to one calf. In the early 1800s, there were about 11,000 Bowhead Whales in the eastern Arctic. By 1991 this number was below 1,000 individuals. Commercial whaling was banned in Canada in 1915. Both Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit (IQ) and aerial surveys suggest that the population is currently increasing in size. Today, the species is harvested for subsistence in Alaska, Russia, Greenland, and Nunavut. A national Management Plan for Bowhead Whale (Bering-Chukchi-Beaufort population) is available at www.sararegistry.gc.ca. The main goals are to maintain a healthy population by protecting Bowhead Whales and their habitat and to provide information and strategies to assist Government, the Inuvialuit Environmental Impact Screening and Review Process and the Inuvialuit Lands Administration in their evaluation of development proposals.

Did you know?

- Bowhead Whales can live over 150 years of age.
- They have been documented using their heads to break ice >20 cm (8 in) thick, and Inuit reports indicate that they can surface through ice three times this thick (60 cm / 2 ft).
- This species has the longest baleen of any whale: up to 4 m (13 ft) in length.
- Groups of whales scattered over an area of 10–20 square km (3.9 to 7.8 square mi) maintain acoustic contact with one another during migration.

Map reference: Cooke, J.G. & Reeves, R. 2018. *Balaena mysticetus*. The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species 2018: e.T2467A50347659. https://dx.doi.org/10.2305/IUCN.UK.2018-1.RLTS.T2467A50347659.en. Downloaded on 27 January 2021.

Killer Whale – Aarluk/Aarluq

Northwest Atlantic / Eastern Arctic population

Orcinus orca

COSEWIC Assessment

Special Concern – 2008

Status under SARA Schedule 1

Under Consideration for addition

Killer Whales are easily identified by their tall, triangular dorsal fin and distinctive black and white colouring. At the base of the dorsal fin is a grey-white area known as the saddle patch. They are sexually dimorphic: males are considerably bigger and have a longer dorsal fin reaching up to 1.8 m, whereas those of the females reach 0.9 m or less. The flippers and tail flukes are also longer in males than in females.

Weight: Males, 6,600 kg (14,550 lb)
Females, 4,700 kg (10,362 lb)

Length: Males, 9 m (30 ft)
Females, 7.7 m (25 ft)

Report Killer Whale sightings to this e-mail address Takuvunga@gov.nu.ca or online at www.naturenorth.com/OCA/data/email_form.php

Potential Threats in Nunavut

- Shipping traffic causing acoustical and physical disturbance.
- Contaminants in the water.
- A reduction in sea ice and entrapment in sea ice or shallow waters.
- Unknown level of harvesting activities in Greenland of the Northwest Atlantic/Eastern Arctic population.
- Increased vulnerability due to small population size and the low reproductive rate of the species.

Dr. Jack Lawson

Typical Habitat

- Specific habitat requirements of Killer Whales in Atlantic/eastern Canadian Arctic waters are not known. In other areas, Killer Whales inhabit a wide range of nearshore and offshore habitats and tolerate a broad range of temperatures. Their basic requirements include sufficient high-quality food, and a quiet environment for communication.

Killer Whale

Population and Biology

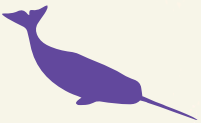
Killer Whales are long-lived animals with females living up to 80 years of age. Females give birth at 12 to 17 years of age and breed every five years producing one calf. The distribution of Killer Whales in the northwestern Atlantic and eastern Arctic is not well documented, and no information on trends in population size is available. Local knowledge suggests that sightings are increasing in the eastern Canadian Arctic. A reduction in the amount of summer sea ice appears to be allowing Killer Whales to expand their range northwards. They have been observed with increasing frequency in Hudson Bay and further northwest near Kugaaruk.

Did you know?

- Each Killer Whale is individually recognizable based on the unique shape of its dorsal fin and its saddle patch, as well as nicks and scars on its dorsal fin and saddle.
- Pods of Killer Whales are largely made up of closely related individuals: calves tend to stay in the same pods as their mothers even in adulthood.
- Killer Whales avoid mating with close kin. Most mating is between individuals that have few to no calls in common, meaning they are from different pods.
- Killer Whales carry the highest concentrations of contaminants known in marine mammals.
- Different populations of Killer Whales have different diets and hunting patterns. Some Pacific populations feed mainly on fish, while those in the northwest Atlantic/eastern Arctic target marine mammals.

Narwhal – Tugaalik

Monodon monoceros



COSEWIC Assessment

Special Concern – 2004

Status under SARA Schedule 1

Under Consideration for addition

Narwhals have a small head, a stocky body and short, round flippers. Males average 4.7 m (15 ft) in length. They do not have a dorsal fin. They have a mottled black, grey, or brown back, with a white underside. Male Narwhals have a single tusk that grows out of the upper jaw and can measure up to 3 m (10 ft) in length. On occasion, females may develop a tusk, and some males have been observed with two tusks.

Weight: Males, up to 1,935 kg (4,265 lb)
Females, up to 1,552 kg (3,420 lb)

Report Narwhal sightings to this e-mail address Takuvunga@gov.nu.ca

Potential Threats in Nunavut

- Elevated concentrations of contaminants (particularly cadmium and mercury).
- Decreased prey availability due to commercial turbot fishing efforts.
- Change to the distribution, duration, and quality of seasonal ice cover due to climate change.
- Increased shipping may negatively impact the population.
- Harvesting activities in Greenland and the Canadian Eastern Arctic.

Marianne Marcoux, DFO

Typical Habitat

- Narwhals inhabit a vast area, but little is known of their specific habitat requirements. In summer, they show a preference for coastal areas with deep water and shelter from the wind. Some individuals summer in sounds, bays, channels, and inlets, particularly along the coast of northern Baffin Island. During their fall migrations, Narwhals show preference for deep fjords and the continental slope. Narwhals spend their winters in deep, ice-covered water in Baffin Bay and Davis Strait. The quality of the ice appears to be a key aspect of their habitat selection.

Narwhal*

Population and Biology

Narwhals have a distinct seasonal migratory cycle and travel in pods of ten or more animals. The Baffin Bay population moves northward along the ice edge off of the east coast of Baffin Island in April and May and then moves westward into the sounds of eastern Baffin Island and into Lancaster Sound following cracks and leads, typically during June and July. Females are thought to produce their first young at seven to 13 years of age with females producing a single calf every three years until 23 years of age. Two populations of Narwhal are currently recognized in Canada: the northern Hudson Bay population and the Baffin Bay population. In 2000, the Northern Hudson Bay population was estimated at 5,053 whales. Whereas the Baffin Bay population was much larger, a series of surveys conducted between 1996 and 2010 estimated that the population contained more than 90,000 individuals. In 2013 an Integrated Fisheries Management Plan for Narwhal in the Nunavut Settlement Area was adopted. The main goals include maintaining vital and healthy populations, protecting habitat and continuing to document Inuit traditional knowledge of Narwhal.

Did you know?

- Narwhal calves are born pale grey, developing darker colouring at about four years old. They become progressively paler again with age, giving hunters and researchers an idea about how old an individual is.
- The species has been known to dive 1,500 m (4,900 ft) deep.
- Narwhal tusks were sold as unicorn horns in the Middle Ages and were thought to be able to magically cure all illnesses.
- Narwhals are hunted while resting near the surface. Traditionally, hunters got close in kayaks, with an attached sealskin float, before harpooning the whale.

*Lowry, L., Laidre, K. & Reeves, R. 2017. Monodon monoceros. The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species 2017: e.T13704A50367651. https://dx.doi.org/10.2305/IUCN.UK.2017-3.RLTS.T13704A50367651.en. Downloaded on 20 October 2020

Ringed Seal – Natiq/Natsiq

Pusa hispida

COSEWIC Assessment

Special Concern – 2019

Status under SARA Schedule 1

Under Consideration for addition

The Ringed Seal is the smallest species in the seal family. They have a small head and a short snout. Ringed Seals get their name from the pattern of light rings against a dark background that is visible on its coat. Ringed seals are the most abundant seals in Arctic waters.

Weight: 50 to 70 kg (110 to 154 lb)

Length: Average 1.5 m (5 ft)

Report Ringed Seal sightings to this e-mail address Takuvunga@gov.nu.ca

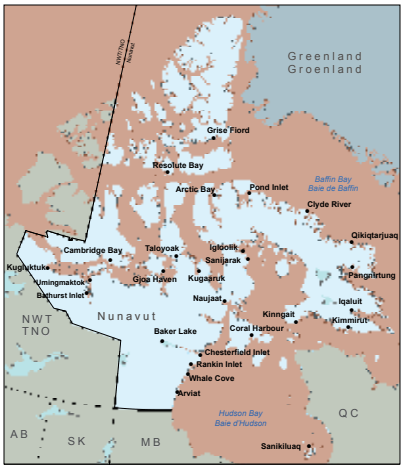
Potential Threats in Nunavut

- Climate change causing habitat change (reduction in sea-ice extent, duration and thickness).
- Human activities like shipping, tourism and industrial development, can lead to disturbance, habitat change and pollution.

Stephen Petersen

Typical Habitat

- Ringed Seals live in Arctic waters and use sea ice as a platform to raise pups, rest and moult.
- In winter and spring, breeding adults prefer stable, landfast ice with good snow coverage, such as pressure ridges, bays and coastlines. Snow cover is important because females give birth in snow lairs.
- During the open-water season, seals move around through areas where they can find food.



Ringed Seal

Population and Biology

Ringed Seals are found in ocean waters around the North Pole, including all seas of the Arctic Ocean. Their habitat is strongly linked to the sea ice. They eat a wide variety of small prey, including Arctic Cod, shrimp, and other fish and crustaceans. Female Ringed Seals reach sexual maturity at six years of age and can give birth to a single pup per year in March or April. Pups are born in a snow lair that protects them from the environment and predators. It is difficult to determine population trends for Ringed Seals because there isn't a viable way to survey them. They are still abundant, and there are estimated to be about 2.3 million Ringed Seals in Canada and nearby waters. However, their Arctic sea-ice habitat has changed a lot since the 1970s. The extent and amount of sea ice and snow cover are declining, and the open-water season is getting longer.

Did you know?

- Ringed Seals create breathing holes in the ice. They use the claws on their flippers to scrape away ice to keep breathing holes open.
- In the spring, Ringed Seals haul themselves out onto the sea ice to moult and bask in the sun.
- Ringed Seals are an important traditional source of food, fuel, and pelts (furs) for Inuit.
- Ringed Seals are the main prey for Polar Bears and their pups are prey for Arctic Foxes.

Buff-breasted Sandpiper – Qursuqtaq Sigjariarjuk or Qursuqtaq Sigjariaq or Sikjariaq

Tryngites subruficollis

COSEWIC Assessment	Status under SARA Schedule 1
Special Concern – 2012	Special Concern – 2017

The Buff-breasted Sandpiper is a medium-sized shorebird. Its head appears small relative to its body, and it has a short black bill and bright yellow-ochre (yellow-brown) or yellow-orange legs. Its neck appears long because of the buff edges on the dark brown feathers. It has a “buff” (pale peach or yellow-tan) coloured breast and a mottled, dark brown and buff back that looks "scaly" because of the strong tone variation between these two colours.

Weight: Male, 51 to 117 g (1.8 to 4.1 oz)
Female, 46 to 87 g (1.6 to 3.1 oz)
Length: 18 to 20 cm (7.1 to 7.8 in)

Report Buff-breasted Sandpiper sightings to this e-mail address NWT_NUChecklist.TNO_NUReleve@canada.ca or online at www.ebird.org

Potential Threats in Nunavut

- Breeding habitat degradation from threats like climate change and industrial development.
- Direct disturbance at nest sites from resource exploration and development.

Lisa Pirie-Dominix

Typical Habitat

- Buff-breasted Sandpiper habitat use varies throughout the breeding season on the tundra.
- Breeding displays usually start on dry, unvegetated, snow-free areas and move to moister grass and sedge meadows as the season progresses.
- Nests are typically in sedge patches near dry display areas and close to water sources, or in wetlands near large water bodies or rivers.
- Foraging is usually on sparsely vegetated areas, especially along the banks of streams and rivers.

Buff-breasted Sandpiper

Population and Biology

The Buff-breasted Sandpiper currently has a relatively small population size (compared to other species of shorebirds in the Arctic) and is suspected to be in further population decline because of changes to its migration stopover sites (from native grassland to agricultural land). It winters in the pampas (grassland plains) of South America. Males and females arrive simultaneously to the breeding grounds from late May to mid-June and lay a clutch of four eggs. Their diet consists of terrestrial insects and spiders, aquatic invertebrates and plant seeds. The Canadian Arctic supports about 87% of the North American breeding range of this shorebird and about 75% of its global population. The species was once common, but it suffered severe declines from commercial hunting in the 1800s and early 1900s. By the 1920s, the Buff-breasted Sandpiper was at the brink of extinction. Its population has grown since hunting was banned in North America, but numbers remain much lower than those before hunting began.

Did you know?

- Buff-breasted Sandpipers cover a distance of about 26,000 km (16,155 mi) on their annual migrations.
- When the birds arrive on their Arctic breeding grounds, the males group up in the first areas to be snow-free.
- Buff-breasted Sandpipers are known to be extremely tame and will return to wounded flock members, which makes them particularly vulnerable to hunting.
- This species is polygamous. This means one male courts and breeds with several females.
- The Buff-breasted Sandpiper is the only North American shorebird with a lek mating system. A lek is when several males gather to perform competitive displays that entice females to come watch and check out potential mates.

Eskimo Curlew – Akpingak

Numenius borealis

COSEWIC Assessment	Status under SARA Schedule 1
Endangered – 2009	**Endangered – 2003**

The Eskimo Curlew is a mottled brownish colour with a streaked breast, long grey legs and a long, thin, slightly down-curving bill. It can be confused with its close relative, the Whimbrel, but the Eskimo Curlew is smaller (about half to two-thirds the size of a Whimbrel), has no barring or "stripes" on the under-wing feathers, and its central head stripe is not as wide or well-defined.

Weight: 270 to 454 g (9.5 to 16.0 oz)
Length: 32 to 37 cm (13 to 15 in)

Report Eskimo Curlew sightings to this e-mail address NWT_NUChecklist.TNO_NUReleve@canada.ca or online at www.ebird.org

Potential Threats in Nunavut

- Unknown

Hand-coloured lithograph from A History of the Birds of Europe (1871–1881) by Henry Eeles Dresser (1838–1915), distributed by Wikimedia Commons

Typical Habitat

- Known breeding habitat of the Eskimo Curlew consisted of upland tundra, dwarf shrub and grass tundra, and grassy meadow habitat. On spring and fall migration, a wide variety of coastal and terrestrial habitats was used. Eskimo Curlews reportedly concentrated their fall foraging activities in habitats where crowberries *(Empetrum nigrum)* grew.

Eskimo Curlew (Historical Range)

Population and Biology

Formerly abundant, the population was hunted to near extinction in the late 1800s and never recovered. There have been no confirmed breeding records for over 100 years and no confirmed records of birds (photographs or specimens) since 1963. A handful of unconfirmed sightings suggest that a very small population (less than 50 individuals) may still persist. Nests are established from mid-late June, with eggs hatching from early to mid-July. Clutch size is thought to be four eggs and the young are precocial (can walk and feed themselves on the day of hatching). Scientists have determined that recovery of this species is not feasible at this time. A national Recovery Strategy for the Eskimo Curlew is available at www.sararegistry.gc.ca which includes a description of the species and its needs, an identification of the species' critical habitat to the extent possible, and the reasons why its recovery is not feasible.

Did you know?

- A species may be classified as extinct if 50 years have passed since the last credible record.
- During fall migration, huge flocks once flew to the Atlantic coast and then non-stop south as far as Argentina. Spring migration was north through Texas and the mid-western states.
- The Eskimo Curlew had a habit of aggregating in large flocks during migration, which made it a popular target for commercial hunting.
- The species reportedly circled back within gun range when flock members were shot, which made it particularly susceptible to over-harvesting.
- The Eskimo Curlew had only two known breeding locations: at the base of Bathurst Peninsula in the Anderson River, Northwest Territories area and in the Amundsen Gulf-Coppermine River-Coronation Gulf region of Nunavut.

Harlequin Duck – Turngaviaq or Ivigaq

Eastern Population

Histrionicus histrionicus

COSEWIC Assessment	Status under SARA Schedule 1
Special Concern – 2013	Special Concern – 2003

The Harlequin Duck is a small sea duck. The adult male appears dark from a distance with slate blue plumage and chestnut sides. There are streaks of white on the head and body, and there is a single black stripe running from the bill to the back of the head with a chestnut stripe on either side of it. The male's underside is slate grey. Females are a plain brown-grey with small patches of white behind, below and in front of the eye. Immature ducks resemble females.

Weight: 450 to 650 g (15.87 to 22.9 oz)
Length: 33 to 46 cm (13 to 18 in)

Report Harlequin Duck sightings to this e-mail address NWT_NUChecklist.TNO_NUReleve@canada.ca or online at www.ebird.org

Potential Threats in Nunavut

- Harvest in Nunavut has a limited impact.

Rhiannon Pankratz

Typical Habitat

- Harlequin Ducks spend most of the year in coastal marine environments. During the winter, the species is often associated with offshore islands, headlands, and rocky coastlines. Each spring, Harlequin Ducks move inland to breed along fast-flowing turbulent rivers, with nearby sheltered areas for nesting. Nests are made mostly of down and are usually located on the ground near water.

Harlequin Duck – Eastern Population

Population and Biology

It is believed that individuals that breed on south Baffin Island spend their winters in Greenland. They have one brood per season with clutch size varying across their range from around five to six eggs. Breeding success tends to be low until five years of age with females and over three for males. Most counts of Harlequin Ducks are done during the winter when they are found in large groups along the coast; however, these surveys have not been done in Greenland. The most recent estimates indicate that no more than 100 pairs likely breed on south Baffin Island. Overall, there has been an improvement in numbers since hunting ended in 1990. A national Management Plan for the Harlequin Duck is available at www.sararegistry.gc.ca. The long-term objective for the Harlequin Duck population is to increase the population in Eastern Canada to have at least 3000 individuals wintering in eastern North America for three of five consecutive years with at least 1000 breeding aged females.

Did you know?

- Hunters from Kimmirut have contributed important information on the local distribution and abundance of the species.
- Harlequin Ducks are periodically taken in subsistence hunts in Greenland, where they are used for traditional bird skin quilts.
- Male-female bonds are formed on the non-breeding grounds and are maintained on the breeding grounds in the spring, resulting in long-term monogamy in the species.

Harris's Sparrow – Qupanuaq or Qupanuarjuk (general songbird name)

Zonotrichia querula

COSEWIC Assessment

Special Concern – 2017

Status under SARA Schedule 1

Under Consideration for addition

The Harris's Sparrow is North America's largest sparrow. It has a chunky body with a barrel-shaped chest that makes its head look small. Males and females have a similar appearance with streaky brown and black plumage, grey or brown cheeks, a white belly, and a pink bill. Breeding adults have a distinctive black bib, face and crown.

Weight: 30 to 45 g (1.1 to 1.6 oz)

Length: 17 to 20 cm (6.7 to 7.9 in)

Report Harris's Sparrow sightings to this e-mail address NWT_NUChecklist.TNO_NUReleve@canada.ca or online at www.ebird.org

Potential Threats in Nunavut

- Breeding habitat degradation from climate change.
- Habitat loss and degradation from resource exploration and development.
- Human activities resulting in declining food sources and increased numbers of predators.

Jim Robinson

Typical Habitat

- The Harris's Sparrow breeds in open taiga (sparse woodland) near the Arctic tree line.
- It nests on the ground, hidden in dense shrubby vegetation dominated by dwarf birch, alder and willow.
- Breeding territories typically include coniferous trees.

Harris's Sparrow

Population and Biology

Harris's Sparrows breeding range is entirely in the Canadian Arctic and Boreal forest, near the tree-line. They arrive on their breeding territories in Nunavut in late May to early June. The female builds a nest on the ground in which she lays three to five eggs; the male helps to feed the young. In late summer they form loose flocks before migrating to wintering grounds on the Great Plains of the south-central United States. Harris's Sparrow has undergone a significant long-term population decline. Christmas Bird Counts on the wintering grounds have shown a decline of 59% between 1980 and 2014, including a 16% decline over the last decade (2004–2014). Conversion of lands for agriculture on the wintering grounds and pesticide use are thought to be factors in the decline.

Did you know?

- Harris's Sparrow is the only songbird that breeds exclusively in Canada.
- Its song is a simple whistle of one to three evenly spaced notes of the same pitch.
- Crowberries, blueberries and bearberries are important food for Harris's Sparrows when they first reach the breeding grounds before insects have emerged. They include more insects and seeds in their diet as the season progresses.
- Harris's Sparrow can be found as far north as Kugluktuk.

Horned Grebe – Nujaralik

Western Population

Podiceps auritus

COSEWIC Assessment	Status under SARA Schedule 1
Special Concern – 2009	Special Concern – 2017

The Horned Grebe is a small waterbird with a short, straight black bill with a pale tip. The breeding plumage of both sexes includes a golden head tuft behind the eye that extends back to the nape of the neck (its "horns"). The neck, flanks and upper breast are chestnut-red, while its back is black and belly white. During the winter, the Horned Grebe has a black crown and back, with white cheeks and a light underside.

Weight: 300 to 570 g (10.6 to 20.1 oz)
Length: 31 to 38 cm (12 to 15 in)

Report Horned Grebe sightings to this e-mail address NWT_NUChecklist.TNO_NUReleve@canada.ca or online at www.ebird.org

Potential Threats in Nunavut

- Increased nest predation by crows, ravens, magpies, gulls, mink and foxes.

Jim Richards

Typical Habitat

- The Horned Grebe breeds in the prairies and parkland zones in Canada but can also be found across the boreal and subarctic regions of western Canada.
- It generally nests in freshwater ponds, marshes, and shallow bays.
- Breeding sites contain areas of open water and beds of emergent vegetation. Nests float in shallow water among plants for protection from predators and wind.
- Horned Grebes generally winter in estuaries and bays and are found in greatest numbers in coastal habitats that offer some degree of protection.

Horned Grebe

Population and Biology

Horned Grebes can breed in their first year with both breeding and non-breeding birds found on the breeding grounds. They are usually solitary nesters, with average clutch sizes of five eggs. The size of the western population of the Horned Grebe is estimated at between 200,000 and 500,000 individuals in North America and approximately 92% of the breeding range is in Canada. Horned Grebe numbers have declined in their wintering areas, but similar declines have not been observed in the Northwest Territories and Nunavut, which may be due to lack of data or a shift in population distribution. Conversion of lands for agriculture on the wintering grounds and pesticide use are thought to be factors in the decline.

Did you know?

- While resting or asleep, the Horned Grebe will rest its neck on its back with its head facing forward, but off to one side.
- A group of grebes is known as a "water dance" of grebes.
- The bird eats its own feathers, which eventually form a matted plug in its stomach. It has been suggested that these plugs filter food, storing hard-to-digest items until they are broken down.
- Once hatched, chicks are almost immediately able to swim and dive underwater. However, during the first few weeks, they often ride on the backs of their parents and can even go underwater with them during dives.

Hudsonian Godwit – Sigguraujaquqtujuq or Siguraujaqrkutujua

Limosa haemastica

COSEWIC Assessment

Threatened – 2019

Status under SARA Schedule 1

Under Consideration for addition

The Hudsonian Godwit is one of the largest shorebirds that breeds in Nunavut. It has long, dark legs and a long, slightly upturned bill. The bill is bi-coloured in both sexes, being pinkish-red at the base and becoming darker towards the tip. Females tend to be larger than males on average, but males have darker plumage overall. Males have distinctive red chest colouring during the breeding season, while females are a lighter rufous colouring.

Weight: Males, 196 to 266 g (6.9 to 9.4 oz)
Females, 246 to 358 g (8.7 to 12.6 oz)
Length: 36 to 42 cm (14 to 17 in)

Report Hudsonian Godwit sightings to this e-mail address NWT_NUChecklist.TNO_NUReleve@canada.ca or online at www.ebird.org

Potential Threats in Nunavut

- Breeding habitat degradation from climate change and industrial development.
- Direct disturbance at nest sites from resource exploration and development.

Lisa Pirie-Dominix

Typical Habitat

- Habitat for the Hudsonian Godwit includes wetland areas of Arctic and sub-Arctic regions, such as grass/sedge meadows or muskeg.
- The nest site is well concealed and often located on dry hummocks or ridges of tundra polygons.

Hudsonian Godwit

Additional Sightings

Population and Biology

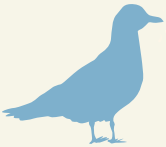
Hudsonian Godwits are known to breed at three main locations in North America: western Alaska, the Hudson Bay coast (including Nunavut), and along the Beaufort Sea coast (Mackenzie Delta). They reach maturity at three years of age and stay on their wintering grounds to breed where a single clutch of four eggs is laid. Counts at migratory stopover sites indicate the species has declined significantly since the 1970s, although the reliability of these estimates remains low. The causes of this decline are unclear, but the species is considered vulnerable to disturbance because many individuals in the population gather together at a small number of key staging and non-breeding sites.

Did you know?

- Hudsonian Godwits undertake one of the longest migrations of any bird species in the world. They can travel more than 32,000 km annually between their North American breeding grounds and non-breeding sites in South America.
- Hudsonian Godwits undergo drastic physiological changes to prepare for their long migration. Muscles used for flight can triple in size, fat stores increase dramatically, and digestive organs (which aren't useful for flight) can shrink to a fraction of their normal size to reduce weight. Overall, their body mass may double or even triple.

Ivory Gull – Naujavaaq

Pagophila eburnea



COSEWIC Assessment	Status under SARA Schedule 1
Endangered – 2006	**Endangered – 2009**

Ivory Gulls are a medium-sized gull with pure white adult plumage, black legs, and olive bill. Immature birds are white with black speckling.

Weight: 448 to 687 g (16 to 24 oz)
Length: 40 to 49 cm (16 to 19 in)
Wingspan: 94 cm (37 in)

Report Ivory Gull sightings to this e-mail address NWT_NUChecklist.TNO_NUReleve@canada.ca or online at www.ebird.org

Potential Threats in Nunavut

- Predation from Polar Bears, Arctic Foxes and Common Ravens who can destroy entire nesting colonies in a single season.
- Industrial activities, including exploration and development, can disturb colonies, attract predators to nesting sites, and put birds at risk of being exposed to oil pollution.
- Climate change is altering ice conditions, which can impact the availability of food resources and the gulls' ability to locate them.
- Vulnerability to accumulation of toxins since they are high on the food chain.

Grant Gilchrist, ECCC

Typical Habitat

- Ivory Gulls spend the entire year at high latitudes, where they rarely range far from pack ice.
- They require breeding sites that are safe from terrestrial predators and are partially free of ice in late May and early June. In the high Arctic, most known nesting locations are within 100 km (62 mi) of nearby polynyas and/or recurring leads.
- Most colonies are either on sheer granite cliffs protruding from glaciers, or on barren limestone plateaus.
- The Ivory Gull winters in marine environments, and often in association with sea ice and/or ice floe edges. Much of the global population is thought to winter in one location, the marine areas in Davis Strait between northern Labrador and Greenland.

Ivory Gull Colonies

Critical Habitat Identified for Ivory Gull

Population and Biology

Colony size ranges from a few pairs up to 200 pairs, with nests containing one to three eggs. Observations by Inuit in Arctic Bay, Grise Fiord, Resolute Bay and Pond Inlet report declines in the number of Ivory Gulls observed near communities and during spring and fall migration along ice edges. Scientific surveys led by ECCC indicate that Ivory Gull populations have declined by more than 80% over the last 30 years. In 2009 there were approximately 800 Ivory Gulls in Canada. A national Recovery Strategy for Ivory Gulls is available at www.sararegistry.gc.ca. The long-term goal for this species is to increase the Canadian population of Ivory Gulls to more than 1000 birds.

Did you know?

- Inuit elders in Grise Fiord remember when the Ivory Gull was so common that it was sometimes difficult to sleep out on the sea ice because the birds made so much noise in the spring.
- Ivory Gulls feed on small fish at sea, eat small mammals during the breeding season, and scavenge the carcasses of fish and marine mammals killed by large predators, such as Polar Bears.
- Up to 35,000 Ivory Gulls were observed wintering in the pack ice of the Davis Strait and Labrador Sea in March 1978. At that time, it was unknown where the birds originated from. Since then, a recent international research program has confirmed that Ivory Gulls breeding in Arctic Russia, Norway, Greenland and Canada converge on this wintering site.

Olive-sided Flycatcher – Qupanuaq Qirniqtaaq

Contopus cooperi

COSEWIC Assessment

Special Concern – 2018

Status under SARA Schedule 1

Threatened – 2010
Under consideration for status change

The Olive-sided Flycatcher is a deep brownish olive-grey on the on the sides and flanks with a white throat, breast and belly. The dark patches on either side of its white belly look like an unbuttoned vest. Its bill is short and stout, the top bill is dark and the bottom one is light with a black tip.

Weight: 29 to 35 g (1.0 to 1.2 oz)

Length: 18 to 20 cm (7 to 9 in)

Report Olive-sided Flycatcher sightings to this e-mail address NWT_NUChecklist.TNO_NUReleve@canada.ca or online at www.ebird.org

Potential Threats in Nunavut

- Large-scale decline or fluctuations in insect populations.

Tim Zurowski

Typical Habitat

- The Olive-sided Flycatcher lives on the edges of coniferous or mixed forests with tall trees, including those adjacent to wetlands or created by wildfires or clear-cuts. In northern boreal Canada, they are associated with muskegs, bogs and swamps dominated by spruce.

Olive-sided Flycatcher

Population and Biology

The Olive-sided Flycatcher arrives in northern Canada for the egg and nestling stages in late May/mid-June and departs in August (can vary based on latitude). The average nest size is three eggs that are incubated from 15–19 days. The Olive-sided Flycatcher overwinters in South and Central America. It eats flying insects. Like many other species of birds that feed on flying insects, the Olive-sided Flycatcher has experienced a decline of about 70% since the 1970s. A 19% decline was recently estimated over a ten-year period (2006–2016) in Canada. The reasons for the decline are not well understood but could be related to the impacts of multiple threats or cumulative effects affecting Olive-sided Flycatchers on their breeding grounds, wintering grounds, and during migration. A national Recovery Strategy for Olive-sided Flycatcher is available at www.sararegistry.gc.ca. The long-term goal for this species is to ensure a positive 10-year population trend.

Did you know?

- The Olive-sided Flycatcher perches on tall trees or snags and waits for insects to fly by before pursuing its prey.
- It has a loud song that sounds like "quick, THREE BEERS."
- Females will also make alarm calls when agitated or when a perceived predator comes close to their nest.

Peregrine Falcon – Kiggaviarjuk or Kigavik

Falco peregrinus anatum/tundrius

COSEWIC Assessment

Not at Risk – 2017

Status under SARA Schedule 1

Special Concern – 2012
Under consideration for status change

The Peregrine Falcon is a crow-sized bird with long pointed wings. Both sexes have blue-grey upper-parts, black cheek patches and a dark "cap" on their head. They have black wedges extending down from their eyes, and light grey or buff coloured under-parts. The amount of brown-black spotting and barring varies between individuals.

Weight: Males, 450 to 1060 g (15.8 to 37.4 oz)
Females, 800 to 1600 g (28.2 to 56.4 oz)
Length: Males, 36 to 49 cm (14.2 to 19.3 in)
Females, 45 to 58 cm (17.7 to 22.8 in)

Report Peregrine Falcon sightings to this e-mail address NWT_NUChecklist.TNO_NUReleve@canada.ca or online at www.ebird.org

Potential Threats in Nunavut

- Reproductive failure due to widespread use of chemical pesticides between the 1940s and 1970s.
- Extreme weather due to climate change can affect migration and reproduction.
- Cabin building, recreation activities and resource exploration can cause disturbance to breeding pairs not accustomed to human activity.

Gordon Court

Typical Habitat

- Peregrine Falcons occur in a wide range of habitats, from Arctic tundra to coastal islands, desert canyons, and major cities.
- Nests are most often on cliff ledges or in rock crevices, usually at heights of 50 to 200 m (164 to 656 ft). Nest sites are generally near water and close to foraging areas with a high abundance of small mammals and birds.
- Birds in Rankin Inlet have been found to prefer nesting in south or southwest-facing cliffs.

Peregrine Falcon

Population and Biology

The Peregrine Falcon population declined sharply by the 1970s due to the wide-spread use of pesticides. Reduction in DDT use worldwide and active recovery efforts have helped the species recover. Since the 1970s, populations in Canada have shown continuing increases. By the late 1990s, an estimated 4,800–6,000 pairs (both subspecies combined) were thought to be breeding in North America. Breeding occurs at two to three years of age with three to four eggs being laid. Adults tend to return to previously used nest sites. Many falcons that breed across the uninhabited Arctic landscapes have not been included in regular surveys that have been conducted in other parts of the species' range. A national Management Plan for Peregrine Falcon is available at www.sararegistry.gc.ca; its objective is for the species to be self-sustaining within 10 years.

Did you know?

- Peregrine Falcons can reach speeds of more than 320 km per hour (200 mi per hour) when diving through the air after prey.
- During the 1970s, the collapse of the Peregrine Falcon became an environmental icon that helped shift public attitude toward better general environmental stewardship.
- Rainfall caused one-third of nestling mortality in a Rankin Inlet study between 2008 and 2010.
- An unknown amount of illegal poaching occurs in North America, with many of these birds being exported for use in falconry.
- The Peregrine Falcon's comeback is a good example of how addressing threats can help species at risk to recover.
- Peregrine Falcon was previously listed as Threatened in Canada but downlisted to Special Concern under the federal *Species at Risk Act* in 2012. In 2017, COSEWIC re-assessed the *anatum/tundrius* complex as Not at Risk.

Red Knot – Saarraq Sigjariarjuk/ Sigjariaq or Aupaqtuq Sigjariarjuk/ Sigjariaq or Kajuglak

Calidris canutus islandica/rufa

Subspecies	COSEWIC Assessment	Status under SARA Schedule 1
islandica	**Not at risk – 2020**	**Special Concern – 2012** Under consideration for status change
rufa	**Endangered – 2020**	**Endangered – 2012**

The Red Knot is a medium-sized shorebird with a small head, straight black bill (tapering from thick base to thinner tip), and long tapered wings giving an elongated streamlined profile to the body. Red Knots in breeding plumage have a red face, breast and belly. The *islandica* Red Knots have more vivid breeding colours than the *rufa* subspecies of Red Knot.

Weight: 85 to 220 g (3 to 7.8 oz)
Length: 23 to 25 cm (9 to 10 in)

Report Red Knot sightings to this e-mail address NWT_NUChecklist.TNO_NUReleve@canada.ca or online at www.ebird.org

Potential Threats in Nunavut

- Breeding habitat degradation from threats like climate change and industrial development.
- Direct disturbance at nest sites from resource exploration and development.

Jim Richards

Typical Habitat

- Red Knots nest in dry vegetated and near barren habitats such as windswept ridges, slopes or plateaus.
- Nest sites are usually placed in a small patch of vegetation in dry, south-facing locations, within about 500 m of a pond, wetlands or other waterbody.
- On migration and non-breeding sites, Red Knots tend to favour coastal areas with extensive intertidal flats.

Red Knot *islandica*

Red Knot *rufa*

Critical Habitat Identified for Red Knot *rufa*

Population and Biology

Red Knots lay a single clutch of four eggs in late June with eggs hatching in mid-July. Males stay on to accompany the chicks until they fly as the females leave soon after hatching. Both subspecies of Red Knot have been in decline since the 1980s due to a decrease in food resources: *islandica* on their non-breeding grounds, and *rufa* along their migration route. Between the 1970s and 1990s, from non-breeding population census, there were an estimated 300,000 to 400,000 *islandica* individuals. The current estimate for the *islandica* subspecies is 270,000 (of which about 81,000 breed in Canada). Original estimates of the *rufa* subspecies were 100,000 to 150,000 individuals. By 2005, this number was estimated at 18,000 to 20,000 *rufa* individuals. A national Management Plan for the Red Knot *islandica* subspecies, and a national Recovery Strategy for the Red Knot *rufa* subspecies are available at www.sararegistry.gc.ca.

Did you know?

- Nests are extremely hard to find because Red Knots are well camouflaged and do not leave the nest, even when approached.
- To prepare for migration to their breeding grounds, Red Knots increase the size of the parts of their body used for flying (heart and flight muscles) and decrease the size of the parts not used for flight (digestive system). Once they arrive on their breeding grounds, their reproductive organs increase in size and their heart and flight muscles decrease to normal size.
- There is a third subspecies of Red Knot called *roselaari* that is federally listed as Threatened. New information suggests *roselaari* breeds in Alaska and Russia and only occurs in Canada in small numbers during migration at a few minor stopover sites.

Red-necked Phalarope – Aupaluktuq Saurraq or Aupaqtuq Saarvaq

Phalaropus lobatus

COSEWIC Assessment	Status under SARA Schedule 1
Special Concern – 2014	Special Concern – 2019

The Red-necked Phalarope is a small shorebird with a thin, needle-like bill. Both sexes have a dark head with a white spot above the eye, white throat and a dark back with bold, buff-coloured streaking. The bright, chestnut-red stripe that extends down the sides of the neck from behind the ear is distinctive. Females have brighter and bolder colours overall and are slightly larger than males.

Weight: 29 to 44 g (1.0 to 1.6 oz)

Lenght: 18 to 20 cm (7.1 to 7.9 in)

Report Red-necked Phalarope sightings to this e-mail address NWT_NUChecklist.TNO_NUReleve@canada.ca or online at www.ebird.org

Potential Threats in Nunavut

- Breeding habitat degradation from threats like climate change and industrial development.
- Habitat loss as a direct result of over-abundant snow goose populations.

Lisa Pirie-Dominix

Typical Habitat

- Red-necked Phalaropes breed in low-Arctic and sub-Arctic wetlands, or tundra-forest transition habitats. Nests are typically found in grass-sedge vegetation near freshwater water bodies of all sizes and depths. They are well concealed as birds pull the grass-sedge around the nest cup to help hide it from predators.
- The species spends most of its time at sea during the non-breeding season, congregating in areas of upwelling where there is lots of prey available.

Red-necked Phalarope

Population and Biology

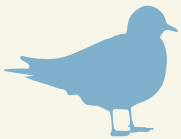
Red-necked Phalaropes can breed during their first year with a clutch of four eggs laid within four days. Females will lay additional clutches with different males when possible in the breeding season. The current population estimate for the species across North America is at least 2.5 million birds. It is believed that 74% (1.85 million) of these individuals nest in Canada. Red-necked Phalaropes appear to have experienced significant declines at an important migratory staging area since the 1970s, but the overall population trend is unknown.

Did you know?

- The usual sex-roles found in most bird species are reversed in phalaropes. Females have brightly-coloured plumage and compete for males, who are more camouflaged and are solely responsible for all of the parental care (tending to nest, egg and young).
- When aquatic invertebrates are not available at the water's surface, phalaropes use their feet and legs to spin around in a way that draws this food upward to the surface where they can reach it.
- Red-necked Phalaropes have been reported to associate with whales, Long-tailed Ducks, and schools of fish during the non-breeding season when they are at sea. This is presumably because these other species help draw invertebrates to the ocean's surface.

Ross's Gull – Naujavaaralaaq (Naujaq)

Rhodostethia rosea



COSEWIC Assessment	Status under SARA Schedule 1
Threatened – 2007	Threatened – 2003

Ross's Gull is a small gull with a black bill and red legs and feet. It can be distinguished from other gulls by its wedge-shaped tail, grey under wing, and a narrow black collar that completely encircles its head. In the breeding season, much of the body takes on a pink colour, although it is most pronounced on the breast and belly.

Weight: 120 to 250 g (4.2 to 8.8 oz)
Length: 29 to 32 cm (11.4 to 12.6 in)
Wingspan: 82 to 92 cm (32.3 to 36.2 in)

Report Ross's Gull sighting to this e-mail address NWT_NUChecklist.TNO_NUReleve@canada.ca or online at www.ebird.org

Potential Threats in Nunavut

- Risk of oil spills in the Beaufort and Bering Seas because of development activity in the region.
- Climate change impacting future annual snow and ice patterns which influence reproduction.
- Increased human disturbance.

Mark Mallory

Typical Habitat

- Ross's Gulls typically breed in marshy wetlands, but also make use of subarctic, and high Arctic tundra, and gravel reefs. Nests are located near open water, such as lakes, ponds, polynyas, or open leads in the pack ice. Nests are often close to Arctic Tern colonies. The wintering distribution of the species is not well understood, but it is believed that they associate with the edge of pack ice in the northern Bering Sea and several birds breeding in Nunavut were recently shown to winter in the Labrador Sea[2].

Ross's Gull

Population and Biology

Ross's Gull breeds primarily in eastern Siberia, but four breeding sites have been confirmed in northern Canada: one at Churchill, Manitoba, one on western Baffin Island, and two in the high Arctic. Ross's Gulls reach sexual maturity in their second year with three eggs being laid. Eggs hatch around 22 days later. A colony usually consists of at least eight pairs up to 20. Monitoring information is poor because of the rarity of the species, and the remoteness of their breeding sites. The best available information suggests that the population has shown little change in Canada since about 1970. The total known number of breeding pairs has ranged from zero to 10 pairs per year although there has been some suggestion that there may be upwards of 100 breeding pairs at undiscovered nest sites. There is not enough recent information available to determine whether the global population is stable. A national Recovery Strategy for Ross's Gull is available at www.sararegistry.gc.ca. The long-term goal for Ross's Gull is to ensure its long-term survival by maintaining the population at its current level and by maintaining current and some historical breeding locations.

Did you know?

- This species is always a notable find for bird-watchers given its rarity. The discovery of the species nesting near Churchill, Manitoba in the 1980s boosted the local economy as birders and photographers flooded the area.
- Ross's Gull eggs were sold on the black market in the 1980s, with an estimated value of $10,000 to $20,000 per egg.
- During the winter, the diet of Ross's Gull is made up largely of Arctic Cod, while insects have found to be their primary food source during the breeding season.
- Nesting colonies are normally quiet, with the gulls calling only in defense against a predator.

2 Maftei, M., Davis, S.E. and Mallory, M.L. (2015), Confirmation of a wintering ground of Ross's Gull *Rhodostethia rosea* in the northern Labrador Sea. Ibis, 157: 642–647.

Rusty Blackbird – Kajuangajuq Qiqniqtaq Qupanuaq

Euphagus carolinus

COSEWIC Assessment	Status under SARA Schedule 1
Special Concern – 2017	Special Concern – 2009

Rusty Blackbirds are forest birds with narrow, pointed wings. During the breeding season, males are uniformly black with a faint greenish gloss on the body, and a violet gloss on the head. Females are slate grey and do not have any gloss. In fall and winter, both sexes show rusty brown feathers on the head, back and chest. The Rusty Blackbird has black legs, a black bill, and pale yellow eyes.

Weight: 45 to 80 g (1.6 to 2.8 oz)
Length: 21 to 25 cm (8.2 to 9.8 in)

Report Rusty Blackbird sightings to this e-mail address NWT_NUChecklist.TNO_NUReleve@canada.ca or online at www.ebird.org

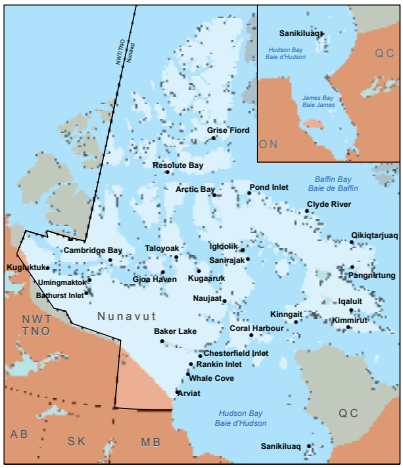
Potential Threats in Nunavut

- Activities that change their forest and wetland habitats such as forest clearing, changes in surface water levels or flow patterns and wetlands drying as a result of climate change.
- Mercury in wetlands, deposited from the atmosphere and released by melting permafrost.
- Human activities resulting in declining food sources and increased numbers of predators.

Mark Peck

Typical Habitat

- The Rusty Blackbird breeds along the edges of bogs, fens, swamps, and muskeg in the boreal forest region. Nests are made of twigs, grasses, roots, mosses and lichens and are placed in thickets of small conifers, shrubs, or in dead trees.
- The Rusty Blackbird spends most of the winter in wetlands, including flooded forests, lakes, streams, and beaver ponds.



Rusty Blackbird

Population and Biology

Rusty Backbirds begin nesting in mid-late May in the northern part of their range and continue until mid-July. They usually lay one clutch a year of three to seven eggs. The density of the species varies greatly by region. Estimates of abundance are difficult to obtain because much of the northern population is not covered by traditional surveys. Despite discrepancies in estimated population sizes, it is generally agreed that there have been decreases of approximately 88% of the population since the 1970s. More than 70% of the world's Rusty Blackbirds nest in Canada's boreal forests. A national Management Plan for Rusty Blackbird is available at www.sararegistry.gc.ca. The main objectives for Rusty Blackbird are to stop the decline and maintain the population at its 2014 level, and then to increase the population.

Did you know?

- Blackbirds are not protected by the Migratory Birds Convention Act because they were considered pest species when the Act was first passed in 1917.
- During severe winter conditions, the Rusty Blackbird may prey on other birds.
- On migration routes and in wintering areas, the Rusty Blackbird may join flocks of Red-winged Blackbirds, European Starlings, and Common Grackles.
- During the nesting season, Rusty Blackbirds rely almost exclusively on aquatic insects and larvae for food, particularly dragonfly nymphs.
- Rusty Blackbirds can accumulate high levels of mercury contamination through the insects they eat.

Short-eared Owl – Siutikituq Ukpik

Asio flammeus

COSEWIC Assessment	Status under SARA Schedule 1
Special Concern – 2008	Special Concern – 2012

Short-eared Owls are mottled with a combination of beige, brown, and black streaks and spots, making them well camouflaged unless they are in flight. Short-eared Owls get their name from small "ear tufts" that are most visible when they are in a defensive pose: these tufts are actually feathers, but resemble the furry ears of mammals. Females are slightly larger and darker than males and tend to have heavier streaking.

Weight: Males, 206 to 363 g (7.3 to 12.8 oz)
Females, 284 to 475 g (10.0 to 16.8 oz)
Length: 34 to 42 cm (13.3 to 16.4 in)
Wingspan: 85 to 110 cm (33 to 43 in)

Report Short-eared Owl sightings to this e-mail address NWT_NUChecklist.TNO_NUReleve@canada.ca or online at www.ebird.org

Potential Threats in Nunavut

- Limited monitoring data in Nunavut to assess population trends.
- Climate change could alter their tundra habitat or prey populations.
- Degradation and loss of habitat on both their non-breeding and breeding ranges.

Doug Dance

Typical Habitat

- The Short-eared Owl makes use of a variety of habitats across its range, including Arctic tundra, grasslands, bogs and marshes, and some agricultural landscapes. Nests are most often found in areas of dense grassland, or in dense willow thickets in the tundra.
- The species nests on the ground in shallow scrapes lined with grasses and feathers. During the winter, the species can be found in many different habitat types, as long as adequate prey is available.

Short-eared Owl

Population and Biology

Short-eared Owls lay clutches of four to seven eggs from April to June with a single brood being raised. Surveys indicate a large decrease in the population across southern Canada since about 1970. In recent years the population appears to have stabilized, although there is some suggestion that the Canadian population continued to decrease by about 27% between 1998 and 2008. The global population of Short-eared Owls is estimated to be about 2 million individuals, with about 350,000 of these occurring in Canada. A national Management Plan for Short-eared Owls is available at www.sararegistry.gc.ca. The long-term objective for Short-eared Owls is to ensure a positive population trend, and an increase in the area of occupancy, including the recolonization of areas in the southern portion of the Canadian range.

Did you know?

- Short-eared Owls are one of the few owl species that build their own nests.
- Short-eared Owls are widely distributed in Nunavut, with higher concentrations during years of lemming outbreaks.
- One of the best ways to identify a Short-eared Owl is to watch its distinct moth-like flight when hunting: deep wing-beats, occasional hovering, and cutting low over patches of grassland or marsh.
- Owls are not able to digest the bone and hair they eat when they swallow their prey. To get rid of these parts, they cough them up as "pellets."

Atlantic Cod – Ugaq

Arctic Lakes population

Gadus morhua

COSEWIC Assessment

Special Concern – 2010

Status under SARA Schedule 1

Under Consideration for addition

The Atlantic Cod has a classic, streamlined shape, three dorsal fins, two anal fins, and a single chin barbell. They are brown to green in colour with spots on their sides and backs. The Arctic Lakes populations are made up of mainly smaller individuals, with a few large individuals. While cod in the ocean may grow to more than 2 m (6.5 ft) in length, those in the Arctic Lakes are somewhat smaller, at no more than 1.5 m (<5 ft).

Length: 1.5 to 2 m (5 to 6.5 ft)

Report Atlantic Cod sightings to this e-mail address Takuvunga@gov.nu.ca

Potential Threats in Nunavut

- Vulnerable due to only three confirmed locations in Nunavut (three lakes) and the absence of prey in the lakes.
- Decreased genetic diversity due to the isolation of the lakes from each other and from marine populations.
- Fishing activities at one of the three lakes, Ogac Lake.

David Hardie

Typical Habitat

- Atlantic Cod are typically found in waters ranging from 2 to 11 degrees Celsius. They have been documented in only three lakes in the southeastern part of Baffin Island, although Inuit knowledge indicates that there are more lakes containing the species. These lakes have a layer of fresh water on top, but the Atlantic Cod live in the deeper saltwater. The Arctic Lakes populations are physically separated from the ocean and have become genetically distinct from their marine cousins, and from each other.

Atlantic Cod
(Arctic Lakes population)

Population and Biology

Females produce 300,000–500,000 eggs in a single breeding season, and large females can produce upwards of several million eggs annually. Marine populations of Atlantic Cod are the original source of the Arctic Lake populations. A study conducted at Ogac Lake between 1957 and 1962 produced similar population estimates as a 2003 study, indicating that the population in that water body has remained relatively stable. There is very little information available on the trends of the populations in the other two lakes.

Did you know?

- Atlantic Cod produce plasma antifreeze proteins, allowing them to withstand temperatures as low as -1.5 degrees Celsius without ice crystals forming in their blood.
- The largest individuals in the Arctic Lake populations have achieved their size through cannibalism.

Atlantic Wolffish – Pingannaq Imavingmitiktaalirlait (Akuak)

Anarhichas lupus

COSEWIC Assessment	Status under SARA Schedule 1
Special Concern – 2012	Special Concern – 2003

Atlantic Wolffish is a large bottom-dwelling marine fish with a heavy head and a blunt snout. Its profile is rounded, and it lacks pelvic fins. Like other Wolffish, it has large canine-like teeth in the front of its jaws with flattened, grinding teeth in behind. The colour of Atlantic Wolffish varies with its surroundings: from slate blue to olive green to purplish brown. They have between nine and thirteen dark stripes along their bodies.

Weight: up to 24 kg (44 lb)
Length: up to 1.5 m (5 ft)

Report Atlantic Wolffish sightings to this e-mail address Takuvunga@gov.nu.ca

Potential Threats in Nunavut

- Unknown

Claude Nozeres, DFO

Typical Habitat

- This species occupies different habitats depending on its life stage: boulders and caves are required for spawning, the eggs are deposited on the bottom, the larvae swim in the water column, and the juveniles and adults primarily inhabit the cold, deep waters near the sea bottom. The Atlantic Wolffish prefers rocky or hard clay bottoms and uses areas with sandy or muddy bottoms only occasionally.

Atlantic Wolffish

Population and Biology

Female Atlantic Wolffish spawn multiple times over their lifetime with low egg production. Changes in Atlantic Wolffish abundance were assessed using the results of research trawl surveys, which assess the abundance of several groundfish and invertebrate species. The total number of Atlantic Wolffish in Canadian waters has been conservatively estimated at 49 million, including about 5 million mature individuals. However, data is insufficient to establish status in the northernmost portion of its Canadian range. A national Management Plan for Atlantic Wolffish is available at www.sararegistry.gc.ca. The main objective for Atlantic Wolffish is to increase population levels and distribution in eastern Canada to ensure the long-term viability of the species.

Did you know?

- Atlantic Wolffish mainly eat shellfish found on the seafloor, but will eat other small fish on occasion.
- Atlantic Wolffish are almost entirely sedentary, very rarely leaving a specific site on the seafloor.
- The species is called "steinbítur" in Iceland, which means "stone biter".

Lumpfish – Nipisa

Cyclopterus lumpus

COSEWIC Assessment

Threatened – 2017

Status under SARA Schedule 1

Under Consideration for addition

The Lumpfish is a thick round fish; it has a short head, blunt rounded snout and an upward-facing mouth. The first fin on the back forms a long crest in adult Lumpfish. The modified pelvic fins form an adhesive disc (sucker). Individuals can vary in body colour between different shades of blue, bluish grey, or greenish, while the underbelly is a yellowish or whitish hue. The colour of Lumpfish frequently matches their surroundings, especially for young individuals. Breeding males change colour to have orange/red fins and underside during the reproductive period.

Weight: up to 10 kg (22 lb)

Length: Males, 26 to 46 cm (10.2 to 18.1 in)
Females, 29 to 68 cm (11.4 to 26.7 in)

Report Lumpfish sightings to this e-mail address Takuvunga@gov.nu.ca

Potential Threats in Nunavut

- Unknown

Claude Nozeres, DFO

Typical Habitat

- Depending on the time of year and life stage, Lumpfish can be found in the water column and near the bottom in a variety of habitats. Young-of-the-year often attach to eelgrass beds or floating seaweed in near-surface waters, while adult Lumpfish live in the water column except during the spawning season.
- Lumpfish of all life stages possess a sucker, which they use to attach to objects such as lobster pots, stones, and seaweed, and which prevents them from drifting with the currents. In Canadian waters, Lumpfish appear to prefer waters less than 5°C.

Lumpfish*

Population and Biology

Female Lumpfish are thought to sexually mature anywhere from three to five years of age and are thought to spawn at least twice in their lifetime. Lumpfish are occasionally caught up to 65°N in Davis Strait but are more common further south with the highest estimates of abundance in waters surrounding the island of Newfoundland. There is no quota regulation for this fishery, however, the fishery has Conservation Harvesting Plans in place in both the Newfoundland and Labrador and Quebec regions. Current management measures include season dates, gear restrictions, depth restrictions, and vessel size restrictions.

Did you know?

- Adult males exhibit a homing instinct which allows them to return annually to their preferred spawning areas. Females leave the nest after spawning, while male Lumpfish stay at the nest site to clean and aerate the eggs and protect them from predators.
- Canada was the leading exporter of Lumpfish roe during the 1980s and 1990s. Lumpfish (wild-sourced and hatchery reared) are being used to control sea lice at some Newfoundland and Labrador salmon aquaculture sites.

* For more information on surveys and search effort, consult the COSEWIC Assessment and Status Report on the Lumpfish *Cyclopterus lumpus* in Canada (2019).

Northern Wolffish – Agguqpasiani Tiktaalirlait or Uangnangarnimiu Akuak

Anarhichas denticulatus

COSEWIC Assessment	Status under SARA Schedule 1
Threatened – 2012	Threatened – 2003

The Northern Wolffish is a fairly large marine fish; its body is long and stout with small or no pectoral fins. It has a uniform body colour, ranging from black to chocolate brown, with indistinct stripes on its back and sides. It has a relatively small head, protruding front teeth, and powerful jaws in a small mouth. The snout is blunt and the eyes are small.

Weight: 13.5 to 20 kg (30 to 44 lb)

Length: 0.8 to 1.45 m (2.6 to 4.8 ft), but can grow up to 180 cm (5.9 ft)

Report Northern Wolffish sightings to this e-mail address Takuvunga@gov.nu.ca

Potential Threats in Nunavut

- Vulnerable to by-catch in commercial fisheries.
- Trawling the seafloor for scallops and clams can disrupt spawning, degrade habitat, and suspend sediment, which can cause damage to gills.
- Offshore oil and gas exploration and production, as well as seismic activities.
- Ocean dumping such as sewage sludge, fish waste, and dredging spoils.

Carolyn Miri, DFO

Typical Habitat

- The Northern Wolffish is a cold water species, with the highest densities at temperatures between 2 and 5°C. Northern Wolffish eggs are likely deposited on the bottom, with larvae and juveniles occupying the upper layer of the water column.
- Adult Northern Wolffish spend more time in the water column than the other two Wolffish species found in Nunavut waters. Of the three species of Wolffish in the northwest Atlantic, the Northern Wolffish occurs at the greatest depths, with adults found as deep as 1,500 m (4,900 ft).

Northern Wolffish

Population and Biology

The Northern Wolffish is a solitary fish that is slow-growing and long-lived. It inhabits cold, deep ocean waters and preys on jellyfish, sea urchins, crabs and starfish. This fish does not undertake long migrations and the size of its territory is very restricted. Northern Wolffish reach maturity at five years of age and can live up to 14 years. For a fish of its size it has a low ability to produce offspring. A primarily eastern species, it is found as far north as the Davis Strait off Nunavut, off southwest Greenland, on the northeast Newfoundland and Labrador shelves, on the Flemish Cap, in the Gulf of St. Lawrence and sometimes on the Scotian Shelf. The number of Northern Wolffish in Canadian waters is estimated at more than 2.5 million. The species is relatively rare off the coast of Nunavut. During six separate surveys in Arctic waters, a total of 10 Northern Wolffish were caught. There are also four verified records from the western Arctic suggesting that the range of the species could extend right across the Arctic, though more surveys are needed to verify this. A national Recovery Strategy for Northern Wolffish is available at www.sararegistry.gc.ca. The main goal for Northern Wolffish is to increase population levels and distribution in eastern Canada to ensure the long-term viability of the species.

Did you know?

- The fearsome teeth of the Northern Wolffish ensure that it has few natural predators.
- In most areas this fish is not eaten by humans because of its jelly-like flesh.
- The Northern Wolffish preys primarily on benthic crustaceans and invertebrates.

Roundnose Grenadier – Uugaralaat Ijirkuqtujumariit

Coryphaenoides rupestris

COSEWIC Assessment

Endangered – 2008

Status under SARA Schedule 1

Under Consideration for addition

The Roundnose Grenadier's body is short and tapers to a sharp pointed tail. The head is large in diameter but fairly short, making up about 15% of the total body length. There is a barbell under the chin. The Roundnose Grenadier is brown or grey, with black or brown eyes, mouth, gills and fins. The species can be distinguished from other grenadiers by its short-rounded nose.

Length: up to 100 cm (39 in)

Report Roundnose Grenadier sightings to this e-mail address Takuvunga@gov.nu.ca

Potential Threats in Nunavut

- Unknown

Alexei Orlov

Typical Habitat

- Primarily a bottom-dwelling species, Roundnose Grenadier have been reported to occur up to 100 m above the seafloor.
- Across its range, the Roundnose Grenadier has been found at depths between 200 and 2,600 m (650 to 8,500 ft). In the western North Atlantic, the species is the most abundant at depths of 400 to 1,200 m (1,300 to 3,900 ft).Roundnose Grenadiers prefer areas with little to no current, and are found in dense concentrations in troughs, gorges, and terraces.
- Roundnose Grenadiers are usually found in waters between 3.5 and 4.5°C in Canada.
- There is some suggestion that the species may move up and down the continental slope seasonally.

Roundnose Grenadier*

Population and Biology

Relatively little is known about the biology of this species. They reach a maximum age of 60 years and females reach maturity at 10 years of age. Their diet consists of a variety of deep-sea invertebrates ranging from amphipods to squid. A commercial fishery for the Roundnose Grenadier was initiated in 1967 (not in Nunavut range). The catch levels used to be high, with more than 75,000 tonnes reported in 1971. The first quotas were put in place in 1974, and catch rates declined sharply after 1978. Surveys between 1978 and 1994 were not conducted at all depths inhabited by the Roundnose Grenadier; however, the data suggested that the species declined by up to 96% in that period. A moratorium on directed fishing for Roundnose Grenadier in Canadian waters was imposed in 1997. Population estimates averaged 73.6 million individuals between 2000 and 2003.

Did you know?

- Roundnose Grenadiers are very slow swimmers: in the absence of a current, the fish are almost immobile.
- Studies have shown that males usually make up about 65% of the population.
- The Roundnose Grenadier is considered to be one of the most important prey species of turbot.
- Differences in the types and numbers of parasites helped researchers determine that the species live in small groups, isolated from one another.

* Data from Fishbase.se – see also Cohen, D.M., T. Inada, T. Iwamoto and N. Scialabba, 1990. FAO species catalogue. Vol. 10. Gadiform fishes of the world (Order Gadiformes). An annotated and illustrated catalogue of cods, hakes, grenadiers and other gadiform fishes known to date. FAO Fish. Synop. 125(10). Rome: FAO. 442 p. (Ref. 1371)

Spotted Wolffish – Taqsalit Tiktaalirlait (Akuak)

Anarhichas minor

COSEWIC Assessment	Status under SARA Schedule 1
Threatened – 2012	Threatened – 2003

The Spotted Wolffish is an elongated fish with a relatively large head, a rounded snout, and large pectoral fins. As with all Wolffish, it has large prominent canine-like teeth in the front of its jaws and flattened, grinding teeth behind. Spotted Wolffish range from yellowish or greyish brown to dark brown. It is distinguished from other Wolffish by the distinctive spotted pattern on its body. The species has a long dorsal fin, but no pelvic fins.

Weight: up to 23 kg (51 lb)

Length: can reach a length of 1.8 m (5.9 ft)

Report Spotted Wolffish sightings to this e-mail address Takuvunga@gov.nu.ca

Potential Threats in Nunavut

- Climate change may affect the habitat and distribution of the Spotted Wolffish.
- Vulnerable to by-catch in other directed commercial fisheries.
- Disturbance or alteration of ocean bottoms by repeated use of mobile gear (primarily bottom trawls and dredges).

Claude Nozeres, DFO

Typical Habitat

- Like other Wolffish species, the Spotted Wolffish is a cold-water fish, with the highest densities at temperatures from 1.5 to 5° Celsius.
- The Spotted Wolffish occupies different habitats depending on its life stage. The eggs are deposited on the seafloor, and larvae spend time in the water column before settling on the sea bed. Juvenile Spotted Wolffish have been found to use shelters in laboratory experiments.
- To date, no spawning, nursery, or foraging grounds have been identified in Nunavut.

Spotted Wolffish

Population and Biology

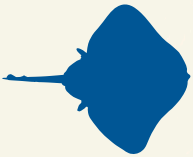
Female Spotted Wolffish are thought to reach maturity between five to six years of age and produce a small number of eggs. The Spotted Wolffish was of commercial interest in the 1990s, but they were not found in high enough densities to support a directed commercial fishery. The total number of Spotted Wolffish in Canadian waters is estimated to be more than 5 million individuals. In the northern part of its Canadian range (Baffin Bay and Davis Strait), there is not enough available data to establish the status of this species. In the rest of its Canadian range, Spotted Wolffish abundance is relatively low, but there is evidence of an increasing trend since the early 1990s. A national Recovery Strategy for Spotted Wolffish is available at www.sararegistry.gc.ca. The main goal for Spotted Wolffish is to increase population levels and distribution in eastern Canada to ensure the long-term viability of the species.

Did you know?

- The skin of the Spotted Wolffish can be tanned.
- Laboratory studies have shown that Spotted Wolffish can hybridize with Atlantic Wolffish, although no studies have been conducted on their potential for hybridization in the wild.

Thorny Skate – Qarlik

Amblyraja radiata



COSEWIC Assessment

Special Concern – 2012

Status under SARA Schedule 1

Under Consideration for addition

The Thorny Skate is a relatively large skate. The body is spade or heart-shaped, with rounded corners and a rounded snout. Its back is usually brown, although this is variable and younger individuals may have darker spots. Its size, body proportions, and growth rates vary between regions. The Thorny Skate is distinguished from other skates in the northwest Atlantic by a row of 11 to 19 large "thorns" running down the middle of its back and along the tail.

Weight: up to 12.5 kg (27.6 lb)
Length: up to 110 cm (43 in)

Report Thorny Skate sightings to this e-mail address Takuvunga@gov.nu.ca

Potential Threats in Nunavut

- Predation by seals.

Carolyn Miri, DFO

Typical Habitat

- Thorny Skates are ground-fish typically found at depths of 18 to 1,400 m (59 to 4,600 ft). They live on various types of sediments, including sand, broken shells, gravel, pebbles, and soft mud. They are found at temperatures between −1.7°C and 11.4°C, but are most abundant in waters that are between 0°C and 5.5°C. Specific habitat associations appear to vary over the range of the species.

Where Thorny Skate were caught during survey*

Where Thorny Skate were not caught during survey X

Population and Biology

Thorny Skates mature at around 11 years of age, can live for 16 to 20 years and lay six to 40 eggs per year. Based on surveys conducted north of 60 degrees between 1999 and 2009, the Thorny Skate was found to occur at lower densities in Baffin Bay, Davis Strait and Hudson Strait/Ungava Bay than in more southern parts of its range. Minimum abundance estimates from 1999 and 2000 suggest that the Arctic population consisted of at least 1.5 million fish, representing less than 1% of the species across its range. It is suspected that Thorny Skates may be more abundant near Greenland. The species has been declining across its Canadian range, although not enough data is available to determine trends in Arctic waters.

Did you know?

- In Canada, Thorny Skates are targeted for their wings. There is a small domestic market, but most are exported.
- On the Grand Banks (Newfoundland), Thorny Skates are known to consume more than 90 different species, mainly fish and crustaceans.
- The Thorny Skate was found in a saltwater lake more than 140 km (87 mi) inland near Goose Bay, Labrador.

* Data from DFO surveys in 1999–2009. More information in the COSEWIC assessment and status report on the Thorny Skate *Amblyraja radiata* in Canada (2013).

Porsild's Bryum – Maniq or Urjurnait

Haplodontium macrocarpum

COSEWIC Assessment	Status under SARA Schedule 1
Threatened – 2017	**Threatened – 2011**

Porsild's Bryum form bright green cushions with individual reddish-brown stems ranging from 0.5 to 3.0 cm in length and leaves that are shiny or sparkly in appearance. They grow closely together in clumps and the capsule opening is surrounded by a single row of narrow and fragile teeth.

Report Porsild's Bryum sightings to this e-mail address Takuvunga@gov.nu.ca

Potential Threats in Nunavut

- Limited ability to establish new populations.

René Belland

Typical Habitat

- Porsild's Bryum requires a specific habitat and is only known in a few isolated areas.
- Porsild's Bryum is found on calcareous cliffs in areas that are constantly moist during the growing season. It is believed the water freezing during the winter months may be required to make an area suitable for the species.
- The moss grows primarily in silt deposits on limestone, basalt, sandstone and shale.

Porsild's Bryum

Critical Habitat Identified for Porsild's Bryum

Population and Biology

Porsild's Bryum occurs in 26 separate sites in North America and is restricted to 10 locations in Canada. Colonies average 22 square cm (3.4 square in) in size. The number of colonies ranges from three to 260 colonies at each site. The only known location in Nunavut is in Quttinirpaaq National Park of Canada on Northern Ellesmere Island. Several populations have declined in recent years. In Alberta, a population dried up during the winter of 2001–2002, and a Newfoundland population was nearly eradicated by ice scouring and a rockfall in the same winter season. A national Recovery Strategy and Action Plan for Porsild's Bryum are available at www.sararegistry.gc.ca. The goal is to maintain or increase the distribution and number of colonies for all known populations of the species, and to re-establish the species to locations where it existed previously where possible.

Did you know?

- Porsild's Bryum is thought to belong to an ancient group of species that were once widespread and survived glaciation in protected areas around the Bering Strait.
- The species has great difficulty establishing new populations but seems capable of long-term local persistence once it has become established at a site.

Other Globally Rare Plants

Bank's Island Alkali Grass – Ikahuakmi Tariulingmi Piruqtut Ivik

Puccinellia banksiensis

Found infrequently in frost-heaved, densely vegetated tundra near the shores of inland freshwater lakes. There are three known locations on Banks Island in the Northwest Territories, four in Nunavut, and one in Alaska.

Drummond Bluebell – Turaman Pulupiul

Mertensia drummondii

Found on sandy and gravelly banks or ridges in ten locations in the Northwest Territories and Nunavut, and in four sites in Alaska.

Report rare plant locations to Takuvunga@gov.nu.ca

Why is there a Conservation Concern?

These plants are globally rare species that are unassessed by COSEWIC and have very limited distributions in Nunavut.

Banks Island Alkali Grass ■

Drummond Bluebell ▲

SPECIES AT RISK AT A GLANCE

This checklist summarizes species at risk in Nunavut and the regions in which they are found. See page 12 for an explanation of the assessment and legal listing processes for Canada and Nunavut. See page 7 for an explanation of the categories used in the table.

Kitikmeot
Kivalliq
Qikiqtaaluk

	Species	COSEWIC Assessment	Status under SARA Schedule 1	Kitikmeot	Kivalliq	Qikiqtaaluk
Mammals	Barren-ground Caribou	Threatened	Under consideration	✓	✓	✓
	Dolphin and Union Caribou	Endangered	Special Concern	✓		
	Grizzly Bear (Western population)	Special Concern	Special Concern	✓	✓	✓
	Peary Caribou	Threatened	Endangered	✓		✓
	Polar Bear	Special Concern	Special Concern	✓	✓	✓
	Torngat Mountains Caribou	Endangered	Under consideration			✓[1]
	Wolverine	Special Concern	Special Concern	✓	✓	✓

Marine Mammals

Species	COSEWIC Assessment	Status under SARA Schedule 1	Kitikmeot	Kivalliq	Qikiqtaaluk
Atlantic Walrus – Central/Low Arctic Population	Special Concern	Under consideration		✓	✓
Atlantic Walrus – High Arctic Population	Special Concern	Under consideration			✓
Beluga Whale – Cumberland Sound population	Endangered	Threatened			✓
Bowhead Whale – Eastern Canada-West Greenland population	Special Concern	Under Consideration	✓	✓	✓
Bowhead Whale – Bering-Chukchi Beaufort population	Special Concern	Special Concern	✓[2]		✓[2]
Killer Whale – Northwest Atlantic/ Eastern Arctic	Special Concern	Under Consideration	✓	✓	✓
Narwhal	Special Concern	Under Consideration	✓	✓	✓
Ringed Seal	Special Concern	Under Consideration	✓	✓	✓

Birds[4]

Species	COSEWIC Assessment	Status under SARA Schedule 1	Kitikmeot	Kivalliq	Qikiqtaaluk
Buff-breasted Sandpiper	Special Concern	Special Concern	✓		✓
Eskimo Curlew	Endangered	Endangered	✓		
Harlequin Duck (Eastern population)	Special Concern	Special Concern			✓
Harris's Sparrow	Special Concern	Under Consideration	✓	✓	✓
Horned Grebe (Western population)	Special Concern	Special Concern		✓	
Hudsonian Godwit	Threatened	Under Consideration			✓[3]
Ivory Gull	Endangered	Endangered	✓	✓	✓
Olive-sided Flycatcher	Special Concern	Threatened			✓[3]
Peregrine Falcon	Not at Risk	Special Concern	✓	✓	✓
Red Knot – *islandica*	Not at Risk	Special Concern			✓
Red Knot – *rufa*	Endangered	Endangered	✓	✓	✓
Red-necked Phalarope	Special Concern	Special Concern	✓	✓	✓
Ross's Gull	Threatened	Threatened		✓	✓
Rusty Blackbird	Special Concern	Special Concern	✓	✓	✓[3]
Short-eared Owl	Special Concern	Special Concern	✓	✓	✓[3]

	Species	COSEWIC Assessment	Status under SARA Schedule 1	Kitikmeot	Kivalliq	Qikiqtaaluk
Fishes	Atlantic Cod (Arctic Lakes population)	Special Concern	Under Consideration			✓
	Atlantic Wolffish	Special Concern	Special Concern			✓
	Lumpfish	Threatened	Under Consideration			✓
	Northern Wolffish	Threatened	Threatened			✓
	Roundnose Grenadier	Endangered	Under Consideration			✓
	Spotted Wolffish	Threatened	Threatened			✓
	Thorny Skate	Special Concern	Under Consideration			✓
Plants	Porsild's Bryum	Threatened	Threatened			✓

1 Killiniq and adjacent islands.
2 Bering-Chuckchi-Beaufort Bowhead Whale population may not come to Nunavut every year.
3 Limited to James Bay islands (including Akimiski Island Migratory Bird Sanctuary).
4 Bird's migration routes are not included in this table.

STEWARDSHIP AND WHAT YOU CAN DO

Stewardship makes a real difference in habitat protection, the recovery of species, and the preservation of biodiversity. There are many ways that YOU can be a steward of the land, animals and plants of Nunavut, and there is funding available to assist you:

- The federal Habitat Stewardship Program for Species at Risk funds projects that conserve and protect species at risk and their habitats. For more information visit: www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/services/environmental-funding or http://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/species-especes/sara-lep/index-eng.html.
- The federal Aboriginal Funds for Species at Risk is designed to help Aboriginal organizations and communities participate actively in the conservation and recovery of species at risk. For more information visit: www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/services/environmental-funding or http://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/species-especes/sara-lep/index-eng.html.
- The Nunavut Wildlife Studies Fund funds community-based wildlife management and research projects in Nunavut, including those led by community groups and individual Land Claim Beneficiaries. Additional information is available at: www.nwmb.com (click on "Funding" and select "Nunavut Wildlife Studies Fund" in the menu on the left).
- The Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit Research Fund (IQRF) funds community-based management and research projects in Nunavut, in particular projects led by Hunters and Trappers Organizations. The IQRF provides an annual allocation of studies funded to encourage Inuit and community-based organizations to undertake and lead research projects that address community needs and concerns related to the management of wildlife in Nunavut. Additional information is available at: www.nwmb.com (click on "Funding" and select "Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit Research Fund" in the menu on the left).

Atlantic Walrus Dr. Becky Sjare

Featured Projects

Wolverine non-invasive hair sampling near Arviat

The Arviat Hunters and Trappers Organization received funding through the Aboriginal Fund for Species at Risk to collect hair samples from wolverines to use in establishing baseline data on the species. Hair samples can identify individual animals using DNA analysis, and can therefore provide an estimate of the population size in the area. In the spring of 2015, 182 posts were baited and wrapped with barbed wire. A total of 851 hair samples were collected over a 4,550 square kilometre area, defined based on interviews with local hunters and elders. This area will be recognized as important wolverine habitat for future protection and monitoring under a Management Plan for the species. The hair samples were submitted to a genetics lab for analysis and were combined with data from the 2016 season.

Kitikmeot Grizzly bear monitoring – non-invasive and community-based initiative

The Government of Nunavut received funding in 2020 through the Habitat Stewardship Program for Species at Risk to estimate Grizzly Bear population size and density through a combination of culturally acceptable (non-invasive) scientific methods and hunter's knowledge. They will use traditional ecological knowledge, Inuit hunter's relevant skills and capacities to collect information and hair snags from wooden tripod posts (for DNA analysis) to identify denning sites and establish population data. This project is the basis for long-term monitoring of Grizzly Bear in Nunavut. It will also provide fieldwork training, technology skills transfer and employment to Hunters and Trappers Organization (HTO) members and improve collaboration between government and co-management partners.

Syd Cannings

GLOSSARY

Assessment: The act of assessing the risk of extinction or extirpation (disappearing from Canada).

Carrying Capacity: The maximum population that an area will support without undergoing deterioration

Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC): Council of wildlife experts that decides the level of risk of extinction (disappearing) of a species in Canada.

Critical Habitat: The habitat that is necessary for the survival or recovery of a listed wildlife species and that is identified as the species' critical habitat in the recovery strategy or in an action plan for the species.

Data Deficient: A category that applies when the available information is insufficient to resolve a wildlife species' eligibility for assessment or to permit an assessment of the wildlife species' risk of extinction.

Designatable Unit: Species, Subspecies, variety, or geographically or genetically distinct population that may be assessed by COSEWIC, where such units are both discrete and evolutionarily significant.

Endangered: A wildlife species facing imminent extirpation or extinction.

Extirpated: A wildlife species that no longer exists in the wild in Canada, but exists elsewhere.

Extinct: A wildlife species that no longer exists.

Floe: A sheet of floating ice.

Floe Edge: Called Sinaaq in Inuktitut, also known as the "Line of Life" where land-fast ice meets the open water of the Arctic Ocean.

Habitat: For aquatic species, spawning grounds and nursery, rearing, food supply, migration and any other areas on which aquatic species depend directly or indirectly in order to carry out their life processes, or areas where aquatic species formally occurred and have the potential to be reintroduced.

For other wildlife species, the area or type of site where an individual or wildlife species naturally occurs or depends on directly or indirectly in order to carry out its life processes or formerly occurred and has the potential to be reintroduced.

Hunters and Trappers Organization (HTO): Located in each community in Nunavut and are generally responsible for the management of harvesting among their members.

Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit (IQ): Inuit Traditional Knowledge.

Indigneous Knowledge (IK): Refers to the understandings, skills and philosophies developed by societies with long histories of interaction with their natural surroundings.

Indigenous Traditional Knowledge (ITK): A network of knowledge, beliefs, nd traditions intended to preserve, communicate, and contextualize Indigenous relationships with culture and landscape over time.

List of Species at Risk: The legal list of species that are classified as either Extirpated, Endangered, Threatened, or Special Concern, under the *Species at Risk Act*.

Non-quota limitation: A limitation of any kind, except a total allowable harvest, and may include a limitation on season of harvest, sex of wildlife, size of wildlife, ago of wildlife, or method of harvest.

Not at Risk: A wildlife species that has been evaluated by COSEWIC and found to be not at risk of extinction given the certain circumstance.

***Nunavut Agreement*:** Agreement between the Inuit of the Nunavut Settlement Area and Her Majesty the Queen in right of Canada (as amended).

Nunavut Wildlife Management Board (NWMB): The main instrument of wildlife management in the Nunavut Settlement Area.

Pack ice: An expanse of large pieces of floating ice driven together into a nearly continuous mass, as occurs in polar seas.

Population: Total number of individuals living in the same area or region at the same time. Two populations of the same species usually have limited movement of individuals among them.

Pressure Ridges: A ridge produced on floating ice by buckling or crushing under lateral pressure of wind or tide.

Recovery: Return to the original or to a healthy, sustainable state or condition. For a wildlife species this usually involves increasing in numbers and/or distribution.

Recovery Strategy: A written document that identifies what will be done to help a species recover.

Regional Wildlife Organization (RWO): Composed of representatives from each of the HTO's in the region and are generally responsible for the management of harvesting among the members of the HTO's in the region. There are three RWO's in Nunavut, one for each region (Qikiqtaaluk, Kivalliq and Kitikmeot).

Residence: Means a dwelling-place, such as a den, nest or other similar area or place, that is occupied or habitually occupied by one or more individuals during all or part of their life cycles, including breeding, rearing, staging, wintering, feeding or hibernating.

Special Concern: A wildlife species that may become Threatened or Endangered because of a combination of biological characteristics and identified threats.

***Species at Risk Act* (SARA):** A federal act whose purpose is to prevent a species from being Extirpated or becoming Extinct; to provide for the recovery of wildlife species that are Extirpated, Endangered or Threatened as a result of human activity; and to manage species of Special Concern to prevent them from becoming Endangered or Threatened.

Status Report: A report, commissioned by the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada, on the status of a species. The report contains a summary of the best available information on the wildlife species, including scientific knowledge, community knowledge, and aboriginal traditional knowledge.

Subspecies: A category in biological classification that ranks immediately below a species and designates a population of a particular geographic region genetically distinguishable from other such populations of the same species and capable of interbreeding successfully with them where its range overlaps theirs.

Threatened: A wildlife species that is likely to become an Endangered species if nothing is done to reverse the factors leading to its extirpation or extinction (disappearance).

Threats: An activity or process (natural or human-caused) that has caused, is causing or may cause harm, death or behavioural changes to a species at risk, or destroy or degrade its habitat.

Total Allowable Harvest (TAH): The number of individuals from a population of wildlife that may be lawfully harvested as established by the NWMB pursuant to Sections 5.6.16 to 5.6.18 of the *Nunavut Agreement*.

***Wildlife Act*:** A territorial act, in Nunavut, whose purpose is to establish a comprehensive regime for the management of wildlife and habitat in Nunavut, including the conservation, protection and recovery of species at risk, in a manner that implements provisions of the *Nunavut Agreement* respecting wildlife, habitat and the rights of Inuit in relation to wildlife and habitat.

GOVERNMENT OF CANADA

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COSEWIC

Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC)
www.cosewic.ca

Canada