

Canadian Wildlife Service  
Arctic Ecology Map Series  
Critical Wildlife areas

Descriptive report

Horton River

HORTON RIVER  
(Sheet #2061)

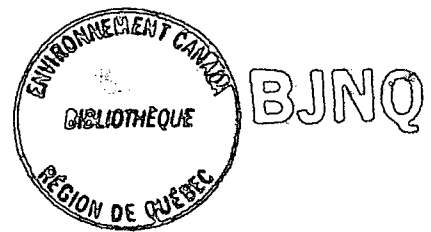
The region described includes only the northern and eastern halves of the Horton River sheet. The remainder is described in detail on the Anderson River map sheet.

The area mapped encompasses a land and sea area of some 90,000 square miles. The south end of Banks Island, the southeast portion of Victoria Island and a section of mainland bordering on Dolphin and Union Strait cover about one-half of the area.

Topography varies from low coastal regions and raised lowlands above 500 feet, to upland plateaus that rise between 1,000 and 2,000 feet above sea level. Most of the lowland areas contain numerous streams and lakes and are well vegetated. These regions are the summer ranges of several wildlife species, while higher plateaus are winter range for wintering caribou and Muskoxen.

The chief terrestrial mammals on the sheet are Barren-Ground Caribou, Muskoxen, Arctic Fox and Polar Bear. Banks Island is noted for its Arctic Fox population, and Polar Bear are common in most coastal areas. Peary Caribou occur in small numbers on the major islands, while larger numbers of Barren-Ground Caribou inhabit summer range on lowlands of the mainland area.

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Barren-Ground Grizzly are commonly distributed on the mainland.

Marine mammals including Harp and Ringed Seals and Beluga Whales are common to numerous throughout most of the coastal waters. Large herds of Belugas migrate in summer through Prince of Wales, Dolphin and Union Straits.

Migratory waterfowl including Eider Ducks, Black Brant, Lesser Snow and some Canada Geese nest at many locations and large numbers of migrating ducks and geese use staging areas along the coast.

The chief settlements on this sheet are Sachs Harbour on Banks Island and Holman Island on the Victoria Island coast. Wildlife utilization by residents of these settlements includes Arctic Fox trapping and hunting of Polar Bear and marine mammals.

The following is the descriptive text for units mapped on this sheet.

UNIT NUMBER	DESCRIPTION
1	Ringed Seals are found on the ice in June in the Prince of Wales Strait. (Williams)
2	Landlocked and sea run Arctic Char are found throughout rivers and lakes of the Prince Albert Peninsula. (Hunter)
3	The southeast edge of Prince Patrick Island is good Muskoxen and caribou habitat. (Macpherson) Muskoxen have been observed on this portion of Victoria Island. (Thorsteinsson)
4	Arctic Char are found in lakes and rivers in this general area. (Thorsteinsson)
5	Peregrine Falcons have been observed at the head of Minto Inlet. (Thorsteinsson)
6	The Kuujjua River and Lake system is a good Arctic Char spawning area. (Hunter, Barry) The annual quota is 70,000 to 100,000 pounds. (Hunter)
7	A good number of Polar Bear have been observed offshore of Cape Ptarmigan. (Barry)
8	Ringed Seals, numbering in the tens of thousands, are found in the vicinity of Albert Islands in Prince Albert Sound. (Mansfield) Seals are also common near Holman Island during the summer as well as further north along the coast. (Barry)
9	This is an Eider Duck migration route for 250,000± birds which is used May 25th to June 25th. A more widespread return movement takes place later in the year. (Barry)

UNIT NUMBER	DESCRIPTION
10	During certain years an area of open water (Polynia) is found year round in the middle of Amundsen Gulf. Polar Bear attracted from the surrounding islands congregate in these areas during the winter. Holman Island Eskimos hunt this area which is of considerable importance to these people.
11	Brant Geese and Eider Ducks nest in large numbers at the mouth of the Kagloryuak River. (Barry)
12	Eider colonies are common on the small islands in this portion of Union Strait. These are the Common and Pacific Eiders. (Information given to Barry by Bob Smith, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service)  This area is also important for Polar Bears. (Macpherson)
13	The lake and river systems of the Harding River, Hoppner River and Libby Lake area contain Arctic Char, Lake Trout, Whitefish and Pike. The rivers produce ½ pound per acre of Char annually. The area also has good tourist potential. (Hunter)
14	This unit encompasses an important area for Muskoxen and Barren-Ground Caribou and extends to the Great Bear River sheet. (Barry, Tener, Kelsall) Observations have been made in the spring and summer south of Paulatuk and Darnley Bay and near Bluenose Lake. (Tener 1958) A population estimate of between 425 and 625 Muskoxen has been made by Kelsall, <u>et al.</u> in the area south of Paulatuk and Darnley Bay. Spring populations and calving herds of caribou

UNIT NUMBER	DESCRIPTION
14 (continued)	probably occur above the 1000 foot contour. Mid-summer range probably includes low lying coastal areas as well as western areas of the unit.
15	This is a unique ecological area. Snowy Owls are found breeding here and Foxes, Loons, Muskoxen and Caribou are commonly seen in this region. The elevation is relatively high for the Arctic. Bluenose Lake itself has a good Lake Trout fishery. (Kelsall, Macpherson)
16	Lake Trout, Whitefish and Lake Herring are found in all lakes on the Parry Peninsula. The productivity for these lakes is usually $\frac{1}{2}$ pound per acre. (Hunter)
17	The approximate boundary of Cape Parry Migratory Bird Sanctuary is outlined. Murres nesting, 60 pairs, June 1st to September 1st. This area should be considered critical as this is the only colony of nesting Murres in the Western Arctic. (Barry)
18	The slopes of the Horton River are very good areas for Grizzly Bear denning. (Barry) In 1968 six different observations of Grizzly Bears (one with young) were made by Yorath in the area outlined by this unit.
19	Barren-Ground Caribou summering in this area are probably those that utilize the wintering grounds immediately to the south and east. No data exist on the number or precise distribution. Reports from pilots indicate the Caribou are

UNIT NUMBER	DESCRIPTION
19 (continued)	continuous in summer from the Anderson River to the Hornaday River. There may be a calving area within this area, or further east and south of the calving area shown as Unit 5 on the Anderson River map sheet. No further information available. (Hawley)
20	Harrowby Bay - White-Fronted Geese 700±, and Whistling Swans 200± molting in Harrowby Bay. (Barry)
21	The arrow indicates the route of a possible Polar Bear migration towards the Alaskan Coast, March through June. The bears would return on a similar course later in the year. (Jonkel, Barry) This region is an important area for Beluga Whale migration (200+), and Bowhead Whale (150±) especially in the area off Cape Parry. Eider Ducks, Old Squaws, and Scoters also use this route during spring migration (April 25th to October 1st). (Barry) Beluga Whales and Bowhead Whales numbering in the hundreds are found within this unit. (Mansfield)
22	Thayers Gull colony. (Macpherson) No further information.
23	The area around Nelson Head and offshore should be considered an important area for Polar Bear in the spring of the year. As the ice moves away from the shore, this area is used extensively by Polar Bears when hunting seals. (Jonkel) The Lambton Cape region is a critical Polar Bear area that sustains approximately 150 bears. (Macpherson) Polar Bear den throughout this unit. (Harrington)  Peregrine Falcons were found nesting at Cape Lambton and Nelson Head in 1952-53. (Manning <u>et al.</u> 1956)

UNIT NUMBER	DESCRIPTION
24	This is an important area for Polar Bear. (Williams)
25	Pacific Black Brant Geese nesting, 200 pairs, and King Eider Ducks nesting, 100 pairs, in this unit. Both of these species nest June 1st to August 15th. (Barry, Macpherson)  The Bay is a hauling out area for Ringed Seals in spring. (Macpherson)
26	Scattered herds of Muskoxen (10 to 20 animals in each herd) are common in this area. (Williams, Hawley)
27	Lesser Snow Geese nest on the Masik River. (Manning, <u>et al.</u> 1956) No recent information on population sizes is available.
28	Banks Island Migratory Bird Sanctuary #1.  Char and Lake Trout found in Middle Lake. (Barry, Hunter) Char, Lake Trout and Whitefish are found in the Sachs River system from Sachs Harbour to Raddi Lake. (Hunter)  Sandhill Cranes have been observed in the Sachs Harbour area. (Harrington, Barry) Black Brant probably nest along the whole south coast of Banks Island, particularly near Sachs Harbour and the De Sallis River areas. Lesser Snow Geese utilize the Sachs River for nesting and spring staging as far as Raddi Lake and probably other rivers all along the south coast. (Manning, <u>et al.</u> 1956)  Peregrine Falcons are known to nest on cliffs west of Sachs Harbour. Approximately 12 nests were located here in the mid 1960's. (Lambert)



UNIT NUMBER	DESCRIPTION
28 (continued)	All of Banks Island should be considered important for White Fox. (Williams) Additional information on the Banks Island Migratory Bird Sanctuary #1 is included on the Thomsen River map sheet.
29	Polar Bear frequent this area of Blue Fox Harbour. (Williams)
30	Bowhead Whales and Beluga Whales numbering in the hundreds are found in the Beaufort Sea. (Mansfield)

REFERENCES

Personal Communication

T. W. Barry  
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A. H. Macpherson  
  
J. G. Hunter (Fisheries Research Board of  
A. W. Mansfield Canada)  
  
C. R. Harington National Museum of Canada  
  
R. Williams Northwest Territories, Game Branch  
  
J. Lambert Carleton University  
  
R. Thorsteinsson Institute of Sedimentary and  
C. J. Yorath Petroleum Geology

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