

Canadian Wildlife Service  
Arctic Ecology Map Series  
Critical Wildlife areas

Descriptive report

Kokvik River

KOVIK RIVER  
(Sheet #2109)

This map sheet encompasses approximately 82,000 square miles of the eastern side of Hudson Bay, the adjacent mainland (Ungava Peninsula), Hudson Strait and a small part of Baffin Island. Salisbury, Mill and Nottingham Islands and part of Mansel Island are also included on this sheet.

The topography of the mainland area and Baffin Island varies from coastal lowland tundra to rugged interior regions. Coastlines are irregular, particularly on Baffin Island, and the inland regions contain many lakes and river systems.

Terrestrial mammals include caribou on the mainland, Arctic Fox and Polar Bear. The latter are found at several points along Hudson Bay and Baffin Island and commonly migrate through Hudson Strait. Several locations are critical denning areas for Polar Bear. Harbour Seals are common in Hudson Bay and Ringed Seals are numerous along the coast of Baffin Island. Walrus are found on Salisbury Island and other points and White Whales commonly occur in most areas of Hudson Bay.

Large numbers of Canada Geese, Whistling Swans, Eider Ducks and other species breed in, or migrate through the region. Nesting Eider Ducks support a small eiderdown collecting industry at Cape Dorset.

QH  
541.5  
.P6  
R45



BJNQ

Numerous colonies of gulls (Glaucous, Kumlein's and Herring) and other sea birds are located along the Baffin Island coast.

Human populations are scattered throughout the region with two major Eskimo settlements at Povungnituk on Hudson Bay and Cape Dorset on Baffin Island.

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

UNIT NUMBER	DESCRIPTION
1	A Polar Bear migration route. A limited annual migration occurs through this area of Hudson Strait. (Jonkel)
2	Kumlien's Gull nesting colonies. (Macpherson)
3	This unit (Okolli Island) encompasses a portion of the Cape Dorset Migratory Bird Sanctuary. The entire sanctuary is illustrated on the Koukdjuak River map sheet. There are approximately 5,000 Eiders breeding in this area, which is the basis for the eiderdown industry at Cape Dorset. (Cooch) Eider Ducks also breed on Sakkiak Island. (Macpherson)
4	The area within this boundary has excellent Ringed Seal populations which number in the tens of thousands along the south coast of Baffin Island. (Mansfield)
5	The south part of Salisbury Island is a hauling out ground for Walrus in October and November. (Mansfield)
6	Gull colonies are located throughout the area along the southwest coast of Baffin Island. Colonies extend from Cape Dorset to Frobisher Bay, and include Glaucous Gulls, Kumlien's Gulls and Herring Gulls. (Macpherson 1961) Specific colony sites have not been pinpointed.
7	Canada Geese and Whistling Swans nest in large numbers throughout this area from the end of May through August. The birds use the small water areas and the large areas of low lying tundra along the coast for nesting. (Lemieux)

UNIT NUMBER

DESCRIPTION

- 8           The whole of Smith Island is considered critical for Polar Bears. Bears use the area extensively during the spring when hunting offshore areas. It is also used as a sanctuary (an area where Polar Bear are stranded by a lack of floe ice) during the summer when floe ice retreats from the islands. No important denning has been documented. The area is hunted extensively by Eskimos from Povungnituk. (Jonkel)
- 9           This portion of Mansel Island is used as a sanctuary (an area where Polar Bear are stranded by a lack of floe ice). Some denning may occur on Mansel Island. (Jonkel)
- 10          Two Thick-Billed Murre colonies exist within this unit. One is located on Digges Island and the other on the adjacent mainland. The total population of Murres in these two colonies is not less than two million birds, but is not likely more than three million. These are probably the largest Murre colonies in the eastern Canadian Arctic. (Tuck 1970)

REFERENCES

Personal Communication

F. G. Cooch  
C. J. Jonkel (Canadian Wildlife Service)  
A. H. Macpherson  
  
L. Lemieux National Museum of Canada  
  
A. W. Mansfield Fisheries Research Board of Canada

Reports and Publications

MACPHERSON, A. H., 1961. Observations on Canadian Arctic Larus Gulls, and on the Taxonomy of L. Thayeri Brooks. Arctic Institute of North America, Technical Paper #7.  
  
TUCK, LESLIE, M., 1960. The Murres - Their Distribution, Populations and Biology, a Study of Genus Uria. Dept. of Northern Affairs and National Resources, Canadian Wildlife Service Series 1, Ottawa.