

Canadian Wildlife Service
Arctic Ecology Map Series
Critical Wildlife areas

Descriptive report

Lancaster Sound

LANCASTER SOUND
(Sheet #2036)

This map sheet encompasses a total land and marine area of 94,000 square miles. Cornwallis, Devon, Somerset and the north end of Baffin Island comprise about one half of the area. The islands are separated by broad straits, sounds and inlets which allow summer shipping access and provide major migration routes for Walrus, Beluga Whales, Narwhal and Seals.

Island topography varies from the low (under 1000 feet), undulating contours of Cornwallis to the high rugged interior of Baffin Island. The east half of Devon Island is dominated by a huge permanent icefield that rises to an elevation of 6,000 feet. Many streams drain the interior of the islands but ice-free lakes inhabited by fish are rare.

Land areas with elevations of less than 1000 feet and sufficient vegetation and water are summer ranges for scattered herds of Muskoxen and Peary Caribou along with varying numbers of Arctic Foxes and Wolves. During the summer the wet river valleys and tussock marshes which are common in these regions support large numbers of Eider Ducks, Black Brant and other species.

The adjacent coastal marine areas support large numbers of Harp, Ringed and Square Flipper Seals and herds of

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Walrus, Narwhal and Beluga as well as good populations of Polar Bear. Large colonies of cliff-dwelling Fulmars, Murres, Kittiwakes, Guillemots and gulls occur along coastal areas.

The human population of this map sheet is small and consists mainly of temporary hunting camps from Resolute, the only settlement, or from areas outside the region.

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

UNIT NUMBER	DESCRIPTION
1	Polar Bear are found year around in this region of Jones Sound. Denning probably occurs. The offshore areas are considered most important to the Polar Bear and are used for hunting seals. The Grise Fiord Eskimos hunt Polar Bear in this region. (Jonkel)
2	Fulmar nesting colony. (Boyd) No further information.
3	Walrus are found throughout Jones Sound. (Harington)
4	Polar Bear denning. This area as well as the offshore area should be considered important for bears year around. (Jonkel)
5	This unit encompasses a critical breeding area for Muskoxen (100+) Snow Geese and other undetermined species of waterfowl nest here. (Harington, Christie, Pruitt) Research teams from the University of Alberta and the University of Manitoba are based in this region of Devon Island.
6	This unit indicates a general Walrus summering area off the southwest tip of Ellesmere Island. (Mansfield)
7	This important area is the most northerly known Murre colony in North America. (Tuck 1960) No population estimates are available, however numbers are thought to exceed 40,000 in this colony.
8	The shores of Coburg Island are important for Polar Bear. This area is hunted by Grise Fiord Eskimos and Greenland Eskimos. (Jonkel)

UNIT NUMBER	DESCRIPTION
9	Harp Seals migrate through Lady Ann Strait to Jones Sound in the tens of thousands and perhaps hundreds of thousands. (Mansfield) The east side of Devon Island is void of wildlife generally. In 1968-69, a few Harp Seals and a few Walrus were observed along the east coast. (Christie)
10	This unit is considered important as a breeding area for Pacific Black Brant. Greater Snow Geese nest here as well in the hundreds. (Boyd)
11	Polar Bear are found in Croker Bay. Five animals were noted here at one time in June of 1968. (Christie)
12	Thousands of Old Squaw Ducks observed in flocks May 29, 1968. (Christie)
13	Walrus and Narwhal migrate past Dundas Harbour through Lancaster Sound during July and August. (Kelsall)
14	A Harp Seal migration route in late summer (August). (Loughrey)
15	Wollaston Island is occasionally used as a Walrus hauling out ground. (Mansfield)
16	Thick-billed Murres nesting. This colony may include one million \pm individual birds. (Tuck 1960)
17	Bylot Island Migratory Bird Sanctuary. The whole island is critical.
18	Narwhal concentrations occur in Navy Board Inlet in late July. (Loughrey)

UNIT NUMBER	DESCRIPTION
19	This unit outlines the Greater Snow Goose breeding area of Bylot Island. (Boyd) This unit lies within the boundary of the Bylot Island Migratory Bird Sanctuary.
20	Important concentrations of Narwhal are found in Eclipse Sound. They number in the thousands during the summer. (Mansfield, Macpherson) Harp Seals are also found in this area during June and July. (Macpherson)
21	"This unit is a summer calving area for several thousand Narwhal". (Mansfield)
22	An annual productivity of 10,000 pounds of Arctic Char is suspected in the Robertson River system. (Hunter)
23	A large Fulmar colony is located in this area. No population data available. (Boyd)
24	This line indicates the approximate ice edge. This region is a concentration area for Walrus and Polar Bear. The water area remains open into January. (Macpherson)
25	Cape Clarence and Prince Leopold Island are critical areas for nesting sea birds. Approximately 350,000 Thick-billed Murres nest on Prince Leopold Island. (Tuck 1960, Barry) Fulmars ($\pm 150,000$), Glaucous Gulls ($\pm 3,000$), Kittiwakes ($\pm 180,000$) and Guillemots ($\pm 4,000$) nest on both Cape Clarence and Prince Leopold Island. (Barry) The population estimates include the approximate totals for both regions.
	Prince Leopold Island is used as a stopping point for migrating Polar Bear during the summer. (Barry)

UNIT NUMBER	DESCRIPTION
26	Prince Regent Inlet is very important for Bowhead Whales. (Macpherson)
27	Walrus are found in Batty Bay and Elwin Bay during the summer. The estimated total population for both bays is 75.
27	Greater Snow Geese nesting, 800±. This area is considered secondary. Snow Geese are scattered throughout the island as well. (Barry)
29	Creswell Bay is a concentration area for Narwhal, Bearded Seal, Ringed Seal, Beluga Whale, and Polar Bear. (Barry, Christie, Boyd) The concentration of Beluga Whale (a few hundred) is considered a breeding population. (Boyd)
30	An important area for nesting sea birds. (Macpherson)
31	Stanwell-Fletcher Lake is seldom ice free. Good sized Arctic Char are found in this lake. (Hunter)
32	Narwhal and Beluga Whale are very common in Peel Sound in both Spring and summer. (Manning and Macpherson 1961), (Mansfield, Harington) A few Walrus are seen in this area as well. (Mansfield)
33	A Beluga Whale concentration area. (Barry)
34	Polar Bear frequent an area of open water found in this area during the winter. They likely hunt seals which congregate at this opening as well. According to local Eskimos, this concentration of Polar Bears is a yearly occurrence. (Harington)

UNIT NUMBER	DESCRIPTION
35	Murre, Fulmars, Kittiwakes, and Guillemots nest on Limestone Island. (Barry)
36	The sea ice is an important area for female Polar Bears with cubs during the summer. (Jonkel)
37	Beluga Whales (approximately 2,000 plus young) concentrate in this area during summer. (Barry)
38	The arrows indicate Polar Bear migration routes. These migrations take place in the early spring with bears moving from denning areas to summering areas. The bears return to the area shown on South Devon later in the year. (Jonkel)
39	The entire south portion of Devon Island, plus a small area of Cornwallis Island, is considered critical for Polar Bear denning. The mouths of all bays, river banks, and river valleys are of particular importance. The offshore areas are considered equally important to the bears, as they are used as hunting grounds. The majority of this activity occurs in the Barrow Strait and Lancaster Sound. Wellington Channel is not utilized by Polar Bears to any extent north of the line indicated on the map. (Jonkel)
40	These arrows show the direction of migrating Harp Seals during the summer. In addition, Walrus, Beluga Whales and occasional Narwhal move through this area as well. (Mansfield, Loughrey)
41	Murre colonies are located on Griffith Island. (Macpherson). No specific information available.

UNIT NUMBER	DESCRIPTION
42	Muskoxen have been observed on Cornwallis Island. During 1950 to 1953 approximately 30 were noted by Thorsteinsson. In 1965 14 were counted, and in 1968 only 3 were observed. Thorsteinsson feels these animals move back and forth between Cornwallis and Bathurst Islands. Harington suspects that up to 50 animals may winter on Cornwallis Island. Approximately 100 to 300 caribou are resident on Cornwallis Island year around. These are suspected to be Peary Caribou. (Thorsteinsson)
43	Arctic Char run inland from Copeland Point. (Thorsteinsson, Macpherson)
44	Very large concentrations of Kittiwakes nest at Washington Point, and on Houston Stuart Island. A few Glaucous Gulls were observed in these areas as well. (Thorsteinsson)

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R. L. Christie (Institute of Sedimentary and
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