

Canadian Wildlife Service  
Arctic Ecology Map Series  
Critical Wildlife areas

Descriptive report

Rowley River

ROWLEY RIVER  
(Sheet #2058)

This map sheet encompasses a total area of approximately 118,000 square miles. The central portion of Baffin Island and islands in northern Foxe Basin comprise the land portions of the map sheet. Baffin Island is bordered by Davis Strait to the south-east, Baffin Bay to the north-east, and Foxe Basin to the south-west.

The topography of central Baffin Island varies between a rugged, mountainous east coast to a featureless, western lowland.

The eastern sector features a mountain range approximately 50 miles wide and reaching heights of 6,000 feet. The mountain range is intersected by long fiords. Apart from three large, flat promontories between Home Bay and Eglinton Fiord the mountains extend to the sea. Glaciers and snowfields cover much of the area, but the Barnes Ice-cap is the only area of continuous ice cover.

From the eastern mountains, the terrain slopes westward to form lowland terrain which extends to the Foxe Basin coast. Islands in the Foxe Basin are low and flat with indefinite coastlines.



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The east coast of Baffin Island is one of the best areas in the Arctic for Polar Bears. Denning occurs along the entire coast and inland up to 10 miles. The bays and fiords along the east coast have a rich marine mammal fauna which includes Ringed Seal and Narwhal.

Small bands of Caribou range over the entire area of the island, but concentrate in lowlands on the heads of fiords in summer to feed on the richly vegetated marsh areas.

Most rivers draining Baffin Island support excellent populations of Anadromous Arctic Char, with the possible exception of those draining the Barnes Ice-cap where heavy silt loads may limit productivity.

Northern Foxe Basin is probably the best area in the Arctic for Walrus. Thousands of these animals congregate here in the summer, and winter in the west wherever open water can be found. Ringed Seals are abundant throughout the area, as are Polar Bear.

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

UNIT NUMBER

DESCRIPTION

- 1 Ringed Seals are abundant in fiords in this area (Mansfield).
- 2 Harp Seals returning from summer feeding grounds in Lancaster and Jones Sound migrate through this area in September (Mansfield).
- 3 Ringed Seals are abundant in all fiords in this area. Narwhal numbering 25 to 30 have been observed here in summer (Jackson).
- 4 This unit outlines a very important Polar Bear denning area (Jonkel).  
  
Harrington (1962) located 29 Polar Bear dens in the region of Cape Adair and Cape Hooper. The dens usually occurred from 5-10 miles inland. Female Bears den usually from late September (or early October) until mid-March. Winter denning by males occurs but not to the same extent as females. The Bears hunt Seal on the pack-ice along the coastline and in the fiords cutting into the mainland. Some movement of Bears along the coast on the pack-ice occurs during the summer. The average annual trade take of Polar Bears in the area was 56 animals over 1959, 1960, 1961.
- 5 Muskoxen and Barren-Ground Caribou have been observed in the vicinity of Bieler Lake (Muir).
- 6 Anadromous Arctic Char are found in the Esquimaux River system (Anders, 1968).
- 7 The lush vegetation growing on the flat marshy areas at the heads of fiords in the region provides good summer range for Caribou. Eskimos hunt Barren-Ground Caribou in the area (Harrington, Macpherson).

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The Caribou move to the highland areas in the winter where vegetation is sparse, but windswept of snow (Macpherson).

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Clyde Inlet and Inugsuin Fiord are important summer range and calving areas for Narwhal numbering in the low hundreds (Mansfield). Narwhal usually appear at Clyde Inlet about mid-September. Eskimos come to the area to hunt Narwhal. Narwhal carcasses and caches provide a great attraction to Polar Bears in the area (Harrington).

In addition to their function as calving areas, inlets are thought to serve as sanctuaries for Narwhal from Killer Whales which will not venture into the shallow waters in quest of the Narwhal (Bruemmer).

Narwhals retreat from this summer range to wintering areas in Davis Strait when fast-ice forms (Dunbar).

This area is generally excellent for Ringed Seals (Dunbar, Mansfield).

Bearded Seals are scattered along the coast of Baffin Island. They require moving pack-ice and shallow water and are thus restricted (Mansfield).

The Clyde Inlet - Clyde River system will support an Arctic Char fishery (Anders, 1968).

Bowhead Whales numbering in the tens are observed each summer along the coast of Baffin Island between Cape Hewett and Eglinton Fiord (Mansfield).

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Arctic Char occur in this river system (Anders, 1968).

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Ringed Seals are abundant in this system of fiords (Mansfield). Anadromous Arctic Char are abundant in McBeth Fiord and the McBeth River (Anders, 1968).

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- 11 A concentration of five Polar Bear dens was located on Aulitivik Island (Harington).
- 12 This unit outlines excellent Ringed Seal country. Pupping occurs on the fast-ice (Mansfield, Dunbar, Macpherson, Anders, 1968).
- 13 Anadromous Arctic Char are abundant in this system (Anders, 1968).
- 14 Anadromous Arctic Char are abundant in this system (Anders, 1968).
- 15 This unit outlines some important Barren-Ground Caribou summer range. Caribou are found in good numbers at the heads of inlets and on the lowlands along the Foxe Basin coast of Baffin Island (Macpherson).
- 16 An important area for Polar Bear during summer (Macpherson).
- 17 Anadromous Arctic Char are abundant in this system (Macpherson).
- 18 This unit outlines important Polar Bear summer range (Macpherson).
- 19 Barren-Ground Caribou utilize Prince Charles Island during the summer (Macpherson, Loughrey). Some scattered Snow Goose nesting occurs on the island (Cooch).
- Polar Bear may use the island for denning and as a summer sanctuary (Jonkel).
- 20 Walrus from the northern Foxe Basin group frequently "haul out" on the rocky areas of these islands (Loughrey).

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- 21 This unit outlines probably the best area for Walrus and Bearded Seal in the Arctic. Walrus from the northern Foxe Basin group, which numbers from 1,000 to 5,000 animals, concentrate here during the summer after ice retreat. Wintering probably occurs to the west wherever open water is available (Mansfield).
- 22 Ringed Seals are abundant in the fiord and Bearded Seal and Harp Seal are observed occasionally (Mansfield, Anders, 1968). Bow-head Whales and Narwhal occur infrequently in the area (Mansfield).
- 23 This unit includes areas which are free of ice year round and which are used by Walrus for wintering areas (Loughrey).
- 24 Steensby Inlet and associated fiords support very good populations of Ringed Seal. Rivers draining into the inlet support populations of anadromous Arctic Char (Anders, 1968).
- 25 The Ravn River supports a large population of anadromous Arctic Char and has an excellent fishery potential (Anders, 1968).
- 26 A concentration of Barren-Ground Caribou, estimated at 555 animals, was observed in this area in March, 1960. They are scattered in small groups (Tener, Solman, 1960). A herd of about 50 animals was observed in the area in the summer of 1965 (Jackson).
- 27 Several herds of Barren-Ground Caribou were observed in this area during summer (Jackson).
- 28 There is good Ringed Seal hunting in the area. The occasional Narwhal is taken (Mansfield).

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