

Canadian Wildlife Service
Arctic Ecology Map Series
Critical Wildlife areas

Descriptive report

Soper River

SOPER RIVER
(Sheet #2108)

This map sheet encompasses some 82,000 square miles including the southeast end of Baffin Island, two small portions of the Ungava coast and a section of Hudson Strait. Most of the land areas are extremely rugged with coastlines indented with numerous bays and inlets and dotted with in-shore islands.

Terrestrial mammals include Barren-Ground Caribou, Arctic Fox, and Polar Bear which occur both on the mainland and Baffin Island. Marine mammals include Harp, Ringed Square Flipper Seals, and Atlantic Walrus.

Rivers, lakes and coastal lowlands, particularly those on southern Baffin Island, contain numerous breeding sites for thousands of Eider Ducks and hundreds of Canada Geese. The numerous sheltered bays also provide staging areas for large numbers of migrating waterfowl.

Very large colonies of sea birds including Murres, Kittiwakes, Razorbilled Auks and several species of gulls occur along the rugged coasts and islands. Akpotok Island contains two colonies of Murres with an estimated total population of 1.2 million birds.

A few Peregrine Falcons and Gyrfalcons nest on the south coast of Baffin Island and on Akpotok Island.

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Arctic Char and Lake Trout are common in several river systems of Baffin Island and the mainland. Marine fish including Cod and Herring are also common in the region.

The major settlements on this sheet are Frobisher and Lake Harbour on Baffin Island and Port Burwell on the mainland.

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

UNIT NUMBER	DESCRIPTION
1	Good populations of Walrus. (Mansfield)
2	Common Eiders nest on McLean, Gabriel and Chase Island in Frobisher Bay. (Cooch, Glasrud)
3	Landlocked Arctic Char are found in the lakes in this area. (Hunter)
4	A relict population of Atlantic Cod are found in this tidal lake below the fresh water level in a saline stratum. This phenomenon is of considerable scientific interest. (Macpherson)
5	This unit is a critical Common Eider breeding area. ±5,000 birds nest here May through August. (Cooch)
6	This route indicates a Harp Seal migration to the head of Frobisher Bay in summer. An additional movement also takes place up the east side of Baffin Island. The migration occurs July to September and the seals number in the thousands. (Mansfield)
7	This is the most northerly breeding area for Razorbilled Auks and Murres. (Boyd)
8	Walrus are occasionally observed in the vicinity of Loks Land. (Mansfield)
9	Kittiwake colony. (Boyd, Lemieux)
10	Polar Bear spring and fall migration route. The bears moving through this region may be a last remnant of the Labrador-Ungava Bay sub-population of Polar Bears. This sub-population may be on the verge of extinction. (Jonkel)

UNIT NUMBER	DESCRIPTION
11	Kittiwake colony. (Boyd) No further information.
12	Eiders winter on the islands in the general area of the Button and Knight Islands. 10-20,000± eiders are found here. The area is considered critical. (Cooch)
13	"The fresh water systems of the peninsula produce an annual yield of approximately 20,000 pounds of Arctic Char". (Hunter)
14	Murre colony. ±900,000 nesting. (Tuck 1970, Soper)
15	Akpotok Island - Polar Bear denning and summer refuge. Critical. (Jonkel, Cooch)
16	Murre colony. ±300,000 nesting. (Tuck 1970, Soper)
17	Eider Ducks nesting at Payne Bay. (Lemieux) No further information.
18	Eider Ducks nesting at Diana Bay. (Lemieux) No further information
19	Harp Seals, Ringed Seals, Square Flipper Seals and Beluga Whales are found in this bay. (Cooch)
20	Char migration and spawning area. (Cooch)
21	One Gyrfalcon nesting, one Peregrine Falcon nesting. (Kerbes 1967, Glasrud)

UNIT NUMBER	DESCRIPTION
22	Approximately 400 Canada Geese were observed nesting in the Soper River Valley in 1966. (Kerbes 1967, Glasrud)
23	The Sylvia Grinnell system is a well known Arctic Char area. The annual yield is approximately 25,000 pounds of char and productivity is .8 to 1 pound per acre. (Hunter)
24	This is an important caribou winter area used as a hunting ground for Frobisher Bay Eskimos. (Macpherson)
25	Atlantic Cod, Halibut and Redfish are found offshore in this area. Capelin are also found in some of these regions. Sea birds from adjacent colonies feed in this area. (Hunter)

REFERENCES

Personal Communications

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- L. Lemieux National Museum of Canada
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A. W. Mansfield Canada)
- J. D. Soper
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- TUCK, L. 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.