

Canadian Wildlife Service
Arctic Ecology Map Series
Critical Wildlife areas

Descriptive report

Victoria Strait

VICTORIA STRAIT
(Sheet #2060)

The Victoria Strait map sheet encompasses a land and sea area of about 118,000 square miles. The southeast portion of Victoria Island comprises about one-half of the sheet. The remaining land areas include King William Island, the south end of Prince of Wales Island, the west tip of Boothia Peninsula, the north tip of Adelaide Peninsula and the whole of Kent Peninsula. A number of small islands are found in the marine areas of Coronation and Queen Maud Gulfs, Dease Strait, Victoria Strait and McClintock Channel.

The most important wildlife areas on this sheet are found on Victoria Island, King William Island and Kent Peninsula.

Various waterfowl species are abundant during the summer months on southeast Victoria Island and the adjacent small islands. King and Common Eider Ducks are predominant, however Brant, Lesser Snow, Canada and White-Fronted Geese also occur in varying numbers.

Small populations of Muskoxen and Barren-Ground Caribou occur in the interior regions of Victoria Island.

The west side of King William Island includes critical nesting areas for Whistling Swans and Canada, White-Fronted and Lesser Snow (and Blue) Geese.

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Polar Bear, Beluga Whales and Square Flipper, Harp and Ringed Seals vary in abundance in the coastal areas and archipelagos.

Anadromous and landlocked char are common along the coasts of the islands with one modest fishery at Wellington Bay on Victoria Island.

Human populations are fairly large in this region with one major settlement at Cambridge Bay and numerous temporary hunting camps originating out of Gjoa Haven on King William Island.

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

UNIT NUMBER

DESCRIPTION

- 1 Landlocked Arctic Char are abundant in Fisher Lake. (Macpherson)
- 2 This is an important area for sea bird colonies. (Macpherson)
- 3 White Whale and Narwhal concentration area. Beluga Whales are plentiful in Franklin Strait during the summer. Barry (1958) observed 1,450 here in August. Narwhal are also plentiful here during the summer. (Barry)
- 4 Atlantic Brant nesting in small numbers. (Barry)
- 5 Arctic Char, Lake Trout and Lake Herring are found in the lakes of this island. Productivity is as follows:
- | | |
|--------------|------------------|
| Arctic Char | 1 pound per acre |
| Lake Trout | ½ pound per acre |
| Lake Herring | ½ pound per acre |
- (Hunter)
- 6 This unit is critical for nesting waterfowl.
- | | |
|----------------------|--------|
| Whistling Swans | 300± |
| Canada Geese | 1,000± |
| Brant | 2,000± |
| White -Fronted Geese | 100+ |
- Snow and Blue Geese (45% Blue) 1,000 all nest in this region of Erebus Bay. (Barry) Totals given includes Unit 7 as well.
- 7 This unit surrounds the critical Unit 6 and includes scattered groups of the same species of nesting waterfowl listed in Unit 6.

UNIT NUMBER	DESCRIPTION
8	Lake Trout, Arctic Char, Whitefish and herring are found in this region. Expected productivity for fresh water lakes is $\frac{1}{2}$ pound per acre, and for rivers 1 pound per acre. (Hunter) No further information available.
9	Canada Geese and Whistling Swans nest on Jenny Lind Island. (Barry) Canada Geese also occur around Wellington Bay and Albert Edward Bay on Victoria Island.
10	Pacific Black Brant (3,000) nest in the three areas indicated. The population count includes the total number of birds in all three areas. (Barry) Swans nest in this region of Prince of Wales Island, however they are few in number. This may be a northern record for nesting swans. (Barry)
11	Lesser Snow and Blue Geese nest within this unit. Total population is approximately 1,500 of which 20% are blue phase. (Barry)
12	Brant Geese and some Canada Geese nest in this unit. (Barry) No further information.
13	Arctic Char are found in the lake and river systems in this area. Production is fairly high at 1 pound per acre. (Hunter)
14	A good Arctic Char area. (Loughrey) Annual quota should be 7-8,000 pounds. (Hunter)

UNIT NUMBER	DESCRIPTION
15	There is a commercial char fishery in this region. (Loughrey) A very good Lake Trout area. Annual quota should be 20,000 pounds. (Hunter)
16	This unit is considered the best char fishery in the Arctic. The annual quota for char here is 100,000 pounds. Lake Trout are also abundant with an annual quota of 20-40,000 pounds. (Hunter), (Jones)
17	Brant and White-Fronted Geese nesting. (Barry) No further information.
18	This unit indicates the general area of nesting Pacific Black Brant Geese. The population is estimated to be approximately 1,800. In addition to this unit, the birds are spread generally along the coast as well. (Barry)
19	Canada Geese nest on Melbourne Island. (Barry) No further information.
20	This migratory bird sanctuary is one of the major waterfowl nesting grounds in the Northwest Territories. Within its boundary thousands of Canada Geese, Ross' Geese, White-Fronted Geese, Brant, Lesser Snow Geese, Sandhill Cranes, King Eider Ducks, Pintails and other species of ducks nest, molt and stage in the summer. In addition, Muskoxen range throughout the area, and Arctic Char are found in all streams running to the sea. This unit should be considered extremely critical. A more detailed description of the wildlife species contained in this unit may be found in Unit 1 of the Thelon River map sheet.

UNIT NUMBER	DESCRIPTION
21	Caribou winter and summer on the Kent Peninsula. (Loughrey) This area may be used for calving during certain years. (Loughrey, Kelsall)
22	Another area commonly used for calving is the upland plateau region northeast of Bathurst Inlet. (Williams, Kelsall) Calving takes place in May and June. Williams reports that in 1964 there were approximately 100,000 animals utilizing this and nearby areas, consisting of cows, calves and some yearlings.
23	Swans nesting, approximately 200 birds. (Barry)
24	A Thayers Gull colony is located on Richardson Island. (Macpherson)
25	Arctic Char, Lake Trout and herring are found in a series of lakes in this region of Victoria Island. Productivity for these lakes with access to the sea is 1 pound per acre. (Hunter)
26	Lakes in this area commonly have good populations of Lake Trout and Whitefish. The annual productivity here is approximately ½ pound per acre. (Hunter)
27	Muskoxen have been observed here. Animals may remain here year round. No further information available. (Macpherson)
28	Brant Geese and Eider Ducks nest in large numbers at the mouth of the Kagloryuak River. (Barry)

UNIT NUMBER

DESCRIPTION

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|----|--|
| 29 | Black Brant molt at the mouth of Hadley Bay.
(Barry) No further information. |
| 30 | Arctic Char are found in lakes and rivers in
this general area. (Thorsteinsson) |

REFERENCES

Personal Communication

- T. W. Barry
J. P. Kelsall
A. G. Loughrey (Canadian Wildlife Service)
A. H. Macpherson
- J. G. Hunter Fisheries Research Board of Canada
- R. Jones University of Western Ontario
- R. Williams Northwest Territories, Game Branch
- R. Thorsteinsson Institute of Sedimentary and
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