

# SPECIES AT RISK

in the Northwest Territories

2020



Canada 



# SPECIES AT RISK IN THE NWT 2020

A guide to species in the Northwest Territories currently listed, or under consideration for listing, under federal and territorial species at risk legislation, 2020 edition.

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Cover photo:  
Suckley's Cuckoo Bumble Bee, Cory Sheffield

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Bowhead Whale

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# HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

## Common Name

### Subspecies or Population

### Scientific Name

This table shows the status of the species under federal and territorial species at risk legislation, with the year of assessment and listing.

	Assessment	Legal List
Canada (population at risk, if there is more than one population in Canada)	Status as last assessed by COSEWIC	Status on the federal <i>Species at Risk Act</i> list (Schedule 1)
NWT	Status as last assessed by the NWT Species at Risk Committee	Status on the <i>Species at Risk (NWT) Act</i> list (NWT List of Species at Risk)

A physical description of the animal size, weight and colour, including distinguishing marks or behaviours.

Help identify and record species in the NWT by reporting your sightings to the appropriate agency.

## Potential Threats in the Northwest Territories

- Threats to a species can vary between regions in Canada. The information in this section describes threats to the species specific to the NWT.

## CATEGORIES OF SPECIES AT RISK

Species at risk are assessed and listed in one of five status categories:

- Extinct:** a species that no longer exists anywhere in the world.
- Extirpated:** a species that no longer exists in the wild in a particular region (Canada or NWT), but exists elsewhere.
- Endangered:** a species that is facing imminent extirpation or extinction.
- Threatened:** a species likely to become an endangered species if nothing is done to reverse the factors leading to its extirpation or extinction.
- Special Concern:** a species that may become threatened or endangered because of a combination of biological characteristics and identified threats.

Other terms used in the status table:

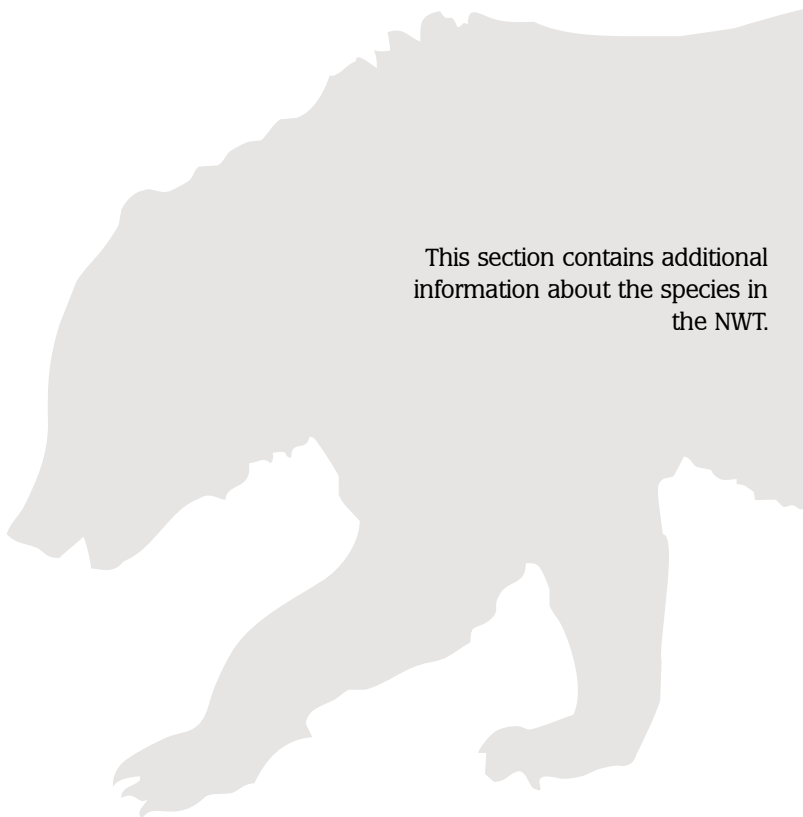
- Not applicable:** *Species at Risk (NWT) Act* does not apply to this species.
- Not assessed:** species has not been assessed.
- No status:** species has not been listed.
- Under consideration:** species is being considered for listing.
- Not at risk:** species was assessed and found to be not at risk of extinction given the current circumstances.
- Data deficient:** species was assessed, but there was not enough information to determine the status.

## Typical Habitat

- The information in this section describes the typical habitat of the species in the NWT.

## Range Map

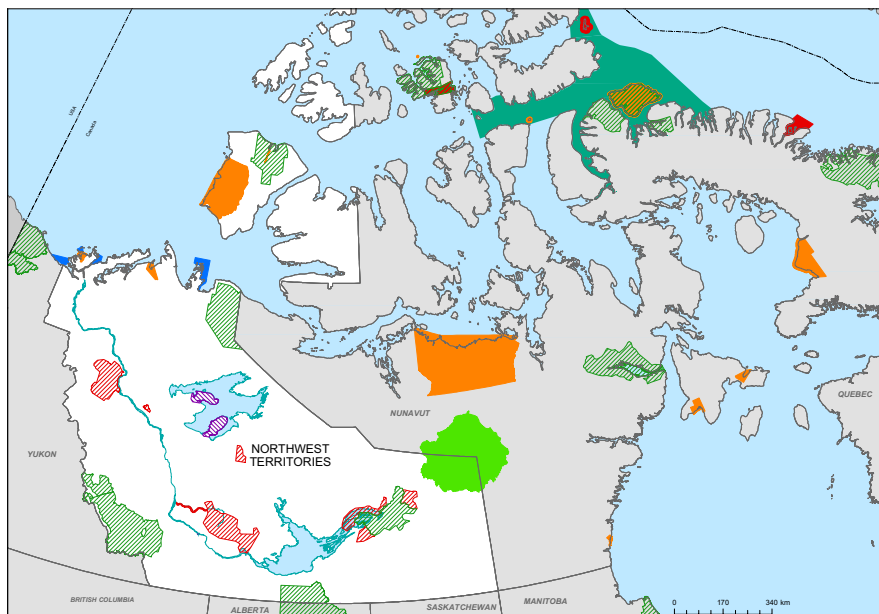
The map shows the range of each species in the NWT so that you can determine at a glance where they are expected to occur. Please note that the species range maps in this booklet are approximate and are not intended for legal use.



This section contains additional information about the species in the NWT.

## Did you know?

- The information in this section highlights interesting facts about the species.



- |   |  |  |
|---|--|--|
| <span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 10px; background-color: orange; border: 1px solid black;"></span> Migratory Bird Sanctuaries                     | <span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 10px; background-color: red; border: 1px solid black;"></span> National Wildlife Areas                  | <span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 10px; background-color: purple; border: 1px solid black;"></span> National Historic Sites |
| <span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 10px; background-color: green; border: 1px solid black;"></span> Thelon Wildlife Sanctuary                       | <span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 10px; background-color: lightgreen; border: 1px solid black;"></span> National Parks                    | <span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 10px; background-color: blue; border: 1px solid black;"></span> Marine Protected Areas    |
| <span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 10px; background-color: red; border: 1px solid black; border-style: dashed;"></span> Terrestrial Protected Areas | <span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 10px; background-color: darkgreen; border: 1px solid black;"></span> National Marine Conservation Areas |  |

## SPECIES AT RISK IN THE NWT

Indigenous groups, scientists and people with an interest in the natural world have noticed and documented the disappearance of certain plants and animals for some time.

Every jurisdiction in Canada has signed the national *Accord for the Protection of Species at Risk* and, in doing so, has agreed to work towards a national approach for protecting species at risk, with the goal of preventing species in Canada from becoming extinct as a consequence of human activity.

The responsibility for the conservation of wildlife in the Northwest Territories (NWT) is shared by the federal, territorial and Tłı̨chǫ governments, and wildlife co-management boards. The federal government has ultimate responsibility for the management of migratory birds (as described in the *Migratory Birds Convention Act, 1994*), fish, marine mammals and other aquatic species (as described in the *Fisheries Act*). The Parks Canada Agency is responsible for all species found within their protected heritage areas. The territorial government has primary responsibility for all other species.

In 2003, the Government of Canada enacted the federal *Species at Risk Act*, with the goal of protecting wildlife species and their habitats. The purposes of the *Species at Risk Act* are to prevent wildlife species from being Extirpated or becoming Extinct, to provide for the recovery of wildlife species that are



Bull Trout

J. Stewart, DFO

Extirpated, Endangered or Threatened as a result of human activity, and to manage species of Special Concern to prevent them from becoming Endangered or Threatened. The *Species at Risk Act* establishes a process for conducting assessments of the national population status of individual species, and a mechanism for listing Extirpated, Endangered, Threatened and Special Concern species. Under the federal *Species at Risk Act*, the Government of Canada is responsible for the implementation and enforcement of protection for individuals, residences and critical habitat for listed species.

In 2009, the Government of the NWT (GNWT) passed the *Species at Risk (NWT) Act*, which helps fulfill the NWT's commitment under the national Accord to provide effective protection of species at risk that are managed by the territory. The *Species at Risk (NWT) Act* sets out the processes to assess, list, protect and recover species at risk specifically for the NWT. The *Species at Risk (NWT) Act* applies to any wild animal or plant species managed by the GNWT. It applies on both public and private lands, including private lands owned under a land claims agreement.

The *Species at Risk Act* and the *Species at Risk (NWT) Act* are designed to work in a complementary fashion with other legislation and cooperatively with Indigenous people to protect species at risk and their habitats.

For more information, visit: [www.sararegistry.gc.ca](http://www.sararegistry.gc.ca) and [www.nwtspesiesatrisk.ca](http://www.nwtspesiesatrisk.ca).

# ASSESSMENT AND LISTING OF SPECIES AT RISK

## Canada

**Assessment:** The Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC) is a national committee of wildlife experts that assesses the biological status of species and assigns each species they assess to a category of risk based on the best available scientific, community and Indigenous traditional knowledge. COSEWIC submits its assessments to the federal Minister of Environment and Climate Change for listing consideration.

**Legal Listing:** After receiving COSEWIC's assessment and consulting with the appropriate Minister(s) and wildlife management boards, the Minister makes a recommendation to the Governor in Council and the decision is made on whether or not to add species to the List of Wildlife Species at Risk (Schedule 1) of the *Species at Risk Act* or to refer the matter back to COSEWIC for further information or consideration.

## Northwest Territories

### Conference of Management

**Authorities:** Responsibility for the conservation and recovery of species at risk in the NWT is shared among wildlife co-management boards established under land claim agreements, the Government of the NWT, the Tłı̨chǫ Government and the federal government. The Conference established under the *Species at Risk (NWT) Act* builds consensus among these Management Authorities on the conservation of species at risk and provides direction, coordination and leadership with respect to the assessment, listing, conservation and recovery of species at risk, while respecting the roles and responsibilities of Management Authorities under land claims agreements.

**Assessment:** The Species at Risk Committee established under the *Species at Risk (NWT) Act* is an independent committee of experts responsible for assessing the biological status of species at





Collared Pika

Suzanne Carrière, GNWT

risk in the NWT. It is similar to COSEWIC, although the Species at Risk Committee operates at the territorial level and assessments may differ from those done at the national level. Assessments are based on the best available traditional, community and scientific knowledge of the species. The Committee uses the assessments to make recommendations on the listing of species and on conservation measures to the Conference of Management Authorities. Species flagged by the General Status Ranking Program or by community members as species that may be at risk are considered and prioritized for assessment.

**Legal Listing:** After receiving the Species at Risk Committee's assessment, the Conference of Management Authorities develops a consensus agreement on whether to add the species to the NWT List of Species at Risk. As part of reaching consensus, each co-management board carries out the consultation and processes required under their land claim agreement. The Government of the

NWT is responsible for Indigenous consultation in areas without a settled land claim and for consultation with all stakeholders such as industry, outfitters, resident hunters, environmental groups and the public.

### For Current Information

This booklet describes the species legally listed under the *Species at Risk Act* and the *Species at Risk (NWT) Act*, whose range includes the NWT, and those species in the NWT that are under consideration for listing, as of January 2020.

National assessments of species are completed every six months.

As there is no pre-set federal listing schedule, it is important to regularly visit the federal *Species at Risk Act* Public Registry at [www.sararegistry.gc.ca](http://www.sararegistry.gc.ca), or the COSEWIC website at

[www.cosewic.ca](http://www.cosewic.ca) for the most recent national information.

Current information on the NWT List of Species at Risk and species scheduled to be assessed in the NWT is available at

[www.nwt-speciesatrisk.ca](http://www.nwt-speciesatrisk.ca).

# SPECIES AT RISK INDEX

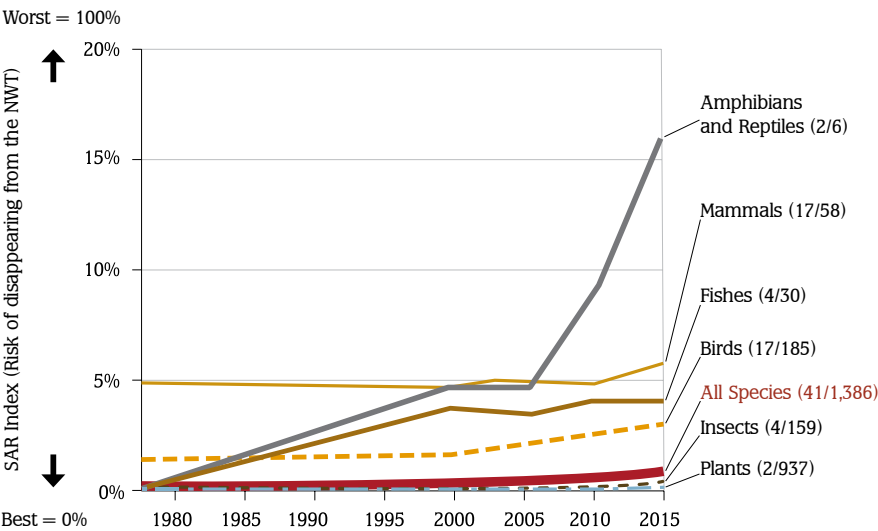
The NWT is home to fewer species than southern regions, and even though our species are well adapted to their northern environment, life at the northern limit makes northern ecosystems naturally fragile.

The **Species at Risk Index** can be used to predict an overall rate of possible biodiversity loss based on the number and status of species at risk.

The Index for the NWT provides an overall look at how our species are doing. When the risk of species extinction worsens, the Index goes up. When species are less likely to become extinct, the Index goes down. Both past threats and the current extinction risk of NWT species can be tracked using the Index.

The information used to calculate the Index comes from the NWT General Status Ranking Program and from assessments by COSEWIC and the NWT Species at Risk Committee.

## Northwest Territories Species at Risk Index



Numbers in parentheses are the number of species at risk/total number of species tracked for each group. Detailed information is available from the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, GNWT. The Species at Risk Index is updated every five years and this graph is current as of 2016.

The risk of biodiversity loss for the NWT is extremely low compared to other places, but it is slowly increasing. For example, arctic-nesting shorebirds and birds that feed on flying insects have rapidly declined in numbers over the past 20 to 30 years. The exact reasons for these declines are unknown, but lessons from the past, such as the Peregrine Falcon, show that our northern species can respond positively when their threats are stopped or reduced.

### Did you know?

- The current Species at Risk Index for the NWT is about 1%. This means that, based on current threats, about 1% of all tracked species in the NWT are at risk of disappearing from the NWT.



# Barren-ground Caribou

Caribou (Barren-ground Population)

*Rangifer tarandus groenlandicus*



	Assessment	Legal List
Canada	<b>Threatened - 2016</b>	Under consideration
NWT	<b>Threatened - 2017</b>	<b>Threatened - 2018</b>

Barren-ground Caribou are members of the deer family. In the fall, mature males have a striking white neck and mane, and a distinct band along the flank separating the brown back and mane, and a distinct band along the flank separating the brown back from the white belly. Their colours are more faded during the winter. The velvet covering their antlers is brown. The national assessment of Barren-ground Caribou as Threatened includes the Porcupine herd, but the NWT assessment and listing do not.

Weight: Females, 85 to 135 kg (187 to 298 lb)  
Males, 100 to 140 kg (220 to 309 lb)

Report Barren-ground Caribou sightings to  
[WILDLIFE OBS@gov.nt.ca](mailto:WILDLIFE OBS@gov.nt.ca)

## Potential Threats in the Northwest Territories

- Climate change impacts on habitat and health.
- Habitat loss and degradation from resource exploration and development.
- Roads that increase access for hunting and predation.
- Increasing frequency and intensity of forest fires that affect the winter range.
- Predators can have a large impact when caribou numbers are low.
- Unsustainable harvest could have a large impact, but there are measures in place to reduce harvest in response to low numbers.



## Typical Habitat

- Barren-ground Caribou give birth in places where they can minimize exposure to predators and maximize nutrition, such as open tundra and high, rocky areas.
- In summer, they seek areas with high quality grasses, sedges, shrubs and mushrooms to eat, and try to avoid insect harassment.
- Caribou move around in winter to places where food – primarily lichen – is abundant and snow is shallow.

### Sub-populations (herds)

- |                           |                   |
|---------------------------|-------------------|
| 1 - Porcupine             | 5 - Bluenose-East |
| 2 - Tuktoyaktuk Peninsula | 6 - Bathurst      |
| 3 - Cape Bathurst         | 7 - Beverly       |
| 4 - Bluenose-West         | 8 - Ahiak         |
|                           | 9 - Qamanirjuaq   |



Barren-ground Caribou   
National Parks

Barren-ground Caribou migrate long distances northwards in the spring to their traditional calving grounds and southwards in the fall to their winter range. They are highly social, gather together to have their calves, and travel in large groups. In the mid-1980s to mid-1990s most NWT herds were peaking in abundance, but since the late 1990s their numbers have undergone a dramatic decline. Barren-ground Caribou populations naturally undergo large cycles likely driven by climate interacting with food availability, predation and parasites. Current threats to Barren-ground Caribou are acting in addition to these natural cycles and the cumulative effects from multiple threats are unprecedented. There are management plans completed or underway for most of the Barren-ground Caribou herds in the NWT, and an NWT recovery strategy is available at [www.nwtspicesatrisk.ca](http://www.nwtspicesatrisk.ca).

## Did you know?

- Since time immemorial Barren-ground Caribou have had immense cultural, spiritual and economic importance to people in the NWT.
- Barren-ground Caribou is a keystone species that plays a crucial role in northern ecosystems.
- COSEWIC's assessment of the national status of Barren-ground Caribou looked at all Canadian herds together, including the Porcupine herd.
- When the NWT Species at Risk Committee assessed the territorial status of Barren-ground Caribou, they considered Porcupine caribou separately as a geographically distinct population. Porcupine caribou was assessed as Not at Risk in the NWT. Other Barren-ground Caribou herds are listed as Threatened in the NWT, but Porcupine Caribou are not.

# Boreal Caribou

## Caribou (Boreal Population)

*Rangifer tarandus caribou*



	Assessment	Legal List
Canada	Threatened - 2014	Threatened - 2003
NWT	Threatened - 2012	Threatened - 2014

Boreal Caribou are members of the deer family. Compared to Barren-ground Caribou (page 12), Boreal Caribou are larger and darker, have thicker and broader antlers, and have longer legs and a longer face. Boreal Caribou look the same as Northern Mountain Caribou (page 28), but have different habitat preferences and behaviour.

Weight: 110 to 210 kg (240 to 460 lb)

Height at shoulder: 1.0 to 1.2 m (3.3 to 4.0 ft)

Report Boreal Caribou sightings to  
[WILDLIFE OBS@gov.nt.ca](mailto:WILDLIFE OBS@gov.nt.ca)

### Potential Threats in the Northwest Territories

- Habitat disturbance, both human-caused and natural, that leads to more predators on the landscape.
- Linear features (e.g. seismic lines and roads) that result in increased access by predators and hunters.
- Climate change impacts on the forest landscape over the next 20 to 40 years.



## Typical Habitat

- Boreal Caribou use almost all forested areas east of the Mackenzie Mountains.
- They tend to spend time in mature coniferous forests with plentiful lichens.
- Ridges, swamps, burned areas and meadows are also important in spring and summer.



Boreal Caribou ■  
National Parks ▨

Boreal Caribou live throughout the boreal forest of the NWT in small groups and prefer to stay within the forest year-round. During calving, Boreal Caribou females space themselves out throughout the range, often where access is difficult for predators. Boreal Caribou need large areas of intact habitats so they can spread out to avoid predators.

An NWT recovery strategy for Boreal Caribou is available at [www.nwtspeciesatrisk.ca](http://www.nwtspeciesatrisk.ca). A national recovery strategy and action plan are available at [www.sararegistry.gc.ca](http://www.sararegistry.gc.ca). The national recovery strategy identifies critical habitat as a minimum of 65% undisturbed habitat throughout their range. Five regional range plans for Boreal Caribou in the NWT are being developed to ensure that critical habitat is maintained and protected. Range plans are guided by the NWT *Framework for Boreal Caribou Range Planning*.

## Did you know?

- Boreal Caribou are well adapted to their northern environment. Their large, well-insulated hooves prevent sinking when travelling on wetlands and snow and are adapted for digging through snow for food.
- Boreal Caribou are sometimes called the “grey ghosts of the forest” because they are secretive and difficult to find, and when disturbed they usually disappear quickly into the forest.

# Bowhead Whale

*Balaena mysticetus*



## Assessment

Canada  
(Bering-Chukchi-  
Beaufort Population)

**Special Concern - 2009**

NWT

Not applicable

## Legal List

**Special Concern - 2007**

Not applicable

The Bowhead Whale is a large baleen whale (baleen is a flexible material found in long, thin plates along the jaw, which act to filter small food particles rather than using regular teeth). The Bowhead Whale has a stocky, barrel-shaped body and a large head that takes up about 30% of its length. Its body is mostly black; white markings appear with age on the chin, fluke tips and tail. Bowhead Whales do not have a dorsal fin and their pectoral flippers are small and paddle-shaped. The upper jaw is bowed sharply upward, with an average of 330 baleen plates on each side. Adult females are slightly larger than adult males.

Weight: 75 to 100 t (82 to 110 tons)

Length: Females, 16 to 18 m (53 to 59 ft)

Males, 14 to 17 m (46 to 56 ft)

Report Bowhead Whale sightings to  
**WILDLIFE OBS@gov.nt.ca**

## Potential Threats in the Northwest Territories

- Bowhead Whales are known to sometimes be displaced for short periods of time by industrial activity such as seismic surveys and oil and gas development. Potential long-term effects on Bowhead Whales from this displacement are unknown.
- Climatic factors, which influence ice conditions, potential predators and prey availability may impact the survival and/or distribution of this whale.



## Typical Habitat

- Bowhead Whales live in marine waters ranging from open water to thick, unconsolidated pack ice.
- Satellite tagging studies help identify migration routes and areas frequented by Bowhead Whales in the western Arctic, which may indicate important feeding or congregation areas.



Bowhead Whale ■  
National Parks ▨

Bowhead Whales are still recovering from commercial whaling, which ended in the early 20th century when hunting became unprofitable. The population is currently believed to number over 12,000 individuals and may be at or near the pre-whaling population size. The Bering-Chukchi-Beaufort population of the Bowhead Whale spends the winter in the western and central Bering Sea, where there is adequate open water and broken pack ice. In spring, the whales migrate north and east to their summer feeding grounds in the eastern Beaufort Sea. They filter feed mostly on dense aggregations of small invertebrates or “zooplankton” (mainly copepods, but also euphysiids, mysids, amphipods and isopods). Females give birth every three or four years to a single calf, usually during the spring migration. A national management plan for the Bering-Chukchi-Beaufort population of Bowhead Whale is available at [www.sararegistry.gc.ca](http://www.sararegistry.gc.ca).

## Did you know?

- A weapon fragment found in a Bowhead Whale caught off the Alaskan coast in May 2007 dated back to 1879.
- Bowhead Whales are able to use their head and back to break ice over 20 cm thick in order to breathe.
- Bowhead Whales can live to be over 150 years of age.

# Collared Pika

*Ochotona collaris*



	Assessment	Legal List
Canada	<b>Special Concern - 2011</b>	<b>Special Concern - 2017</b>
NWT	Not assessed	No status

The Collared Pika is a small, solitary member of a group of species that includes rabbits and hares. The Collared Pika has small, round ears, a white underbelly and a distinctive “collar” of light grey fur around its neck.

Weight: 130 to 185 g (4.5 to 6.5 oz)

Length: 178 to 198 mm (7 to 7.5 in)

Report Collared Pika sightings to  
[WILDLIFE OBS@gov.nt.ca](mailto:WILDLIFE OBS@gov.nt.ca)

## Potential Threats in the Northwest Territories

- The greatest threat to the Collared Pika in other areas is the effect of climate change, including changes in precipitation patterns in spring and increasing temperature in summer.
- Threats related to how climate change affects the Collared Pika in the NWT are unclear.



## Typical Habitat

- Collared Pikas mostly live in cool and dry mountain boulder fields, or talus, with nearby meadows. The boulders help shelter the pikas from weather and predators.
- The Mackenzie River in the NWT likely acts as a barrier on the eastern edge of its range. The Liard River valley may form a barrier between the Collared Pika and the more southern American Pika.



Collared Pika ■  
National Parks ▨

Collared Pikas primarily live in the mountain regions of Alaska, Yukon and northern British Columbia. Their range in the NWT extends into the Richardson Mountains west of Aklavik and throughout the Mackenzie Mountains in the Dehcho and Sahtu regions.

## Did you know?

- Pikas defend individual territories of about 15 to 25 m radius.
- Female pikas have only a 30 day gestation period, give birth to 3 to 4 offspring, and usually do not live longer than 4 years.
- Pikas do not hibernate during the winter and survive using stored food.
- Pikas spend long hours harvesting herbs and grasses, making hay-piles to supply food during the winter.



# Dolphin and Union Caribou



**Caribou (Dolphin and Union Population)**

*Rangifer tarandus groenlandicus x pearyi*

	Assessment	Legal List
Canada	<b>Endangered - 2017</b>	<b>Special Concern - 2011</b>
NWT	<b>Special Concern - 2013</b>	<b>Special Concern - 2015</b>

Dolphin and Union Caribou are members of the deer family. Like Peary Caribou (page 32), Dolphin and Union Caribou have a mostly white coat in winter, and are slate-grey with white legs and under-parts in summer. The velvet covering their antlers is grey. Dolphin and Union Caribou are slightly darker than Peary Caribou.

**Report Dolphin and Union Caribou sightings to**  
**WILDLIFEBOBS@gov.nt.ca**

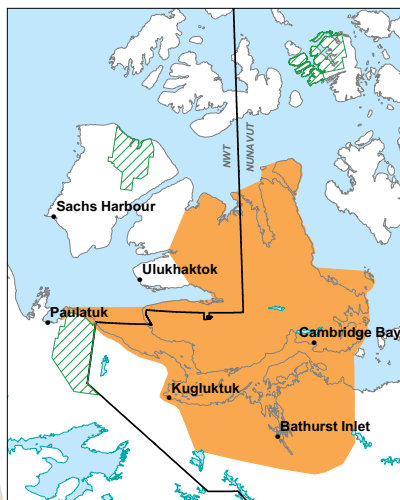
## Potential Threats in the Northwest Territories

- An unknown number of caribou die every fall breaking through the ice crossing to the mainland.
- Changes to sea ice freeze-up and break-up due to climate change could threaten migration.
- Increased ship traffic may affect ice formation and caribou migration.
- Harvest levels in the NWT and Nunavut combined may lead to over-harvesting.
- Over-grazing may be an issue in areas where caribou wait before migrating to the mainland for the winter.
- Local knowledge indicates an increase in predators across summer ranges; how this affects the Dolphin and Union Caribou population is uncertain.
- Weather events, such as rain-on-snow and melt-freeze, can cause an ice crust to form over vegetation.



## Typical Habitat

- Dolphin and Union Caribou summer on Victoria Island, commonly using beach ridges and river valley slopes.
- They winter on the mainland in windswept areas with shallow snow cover, primarily in the Bathurst Inlet area of Nunavut.
- Sea ice is important because they cross the ice between Victoria Island and the mainland twice a year.



Dolphin and Union Caribou ■  
National Parks ▨

Dolphin and Union Caribou were at very low numbers during the mid-20th century and had stopped migrating from Victoria Island to the Nunavut-NWT mainland. From the 1970s to the 1990s, numbers increased and Dolphin and Union Caribou resumed migrating across the sea ice. Population estimates from 1997, 2007 and 2015 show the population was above 30,000 in 1997, but since then, there has been a decline to about 18,000 as of 2015. Traditional knowledge and *Inuit Qaujimajatuqagit* have also noted a declining trend. Mortality of Dolphin and Union Caribou due to drowning (breaking through sea ice), predation and hunting is relatively high. All these factors contributed to COSEWIC's assessment of Endangered in 2017. A management plan for Dolphin and Union Caribou is available at [www.nwtspicesatrisk.ca](http://www.nwtspicesatrisk.ca) and [www.sararegistry.gc.ca](http://www.sararegistry.gc.ca).

## Did you know?

- Dolphin and Union Caribou were once thought to be Peary caribou; however, genetic studies have now clearly shown that they are distinct.
- Dolphin and Union Caribou are often locally called Island Caribou.
- Dolphin and Union Caribou sometimes gather in large numbers along the southern shore of Victoria Island in the fall, waiting for the sea ice to become thick enough to cross.

# Grey Whale

*Eschrichtius robustus*



Canada  
(Northern Pacific  
Migratory Population)

NWT

## Assessment

**Not at Risk - 2017**

Not applicable

## Legal List

**Special Concern - 2005**

Not applicable

The Grey Whale is a medium to large-sized baleen whale (baleen is a flexible material found in long, thin plates along the jaw, which act to filter small food particles rather than using regular teeth). It has a streamlined body and narrow, tapered head. Its skin is dark grey and mottled, often covered with patches of barnacles and crustaceans. This whale does not have a dorsal fin but has a low hump and a series of seven to fifteen "knuckles" along its dorsal ridge. Two to four grooves on the underside of the throat allow the whale to extend its throat so it can feed by scooping up bottom sediment and straining it through its baleen.

Weight: 22 to 38 t (24 to 42 tons)

Length: Females, 12 to 15 m (39 to 50 ft)

Males, 11 to 14 m (36 to 46 ft)

Report Grey Whale sightings to  
[WILDLIFEOBS@gov.nt.ca](mailto:WILDLIFEOBS@gov.nt.ca)

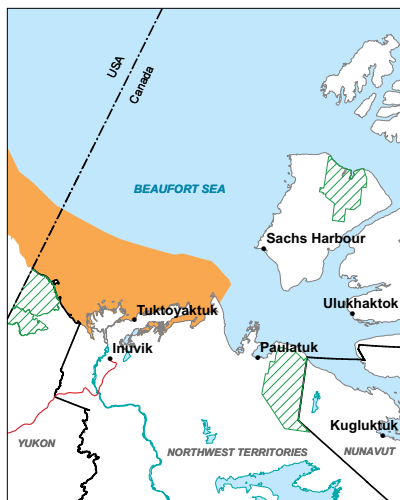
## Potential Threats in the Northwest Territories

- Loss of habitat due to industrial development (such as oil and gas) and associated noise.
- Collisions with ships are a possibility, but likelihood of collisions is low in the western Arctic at the present time.
- Years with extended ice cover on summer feeding grounds may limit ocean productivity and, therefore, feeding opportunities. This may become less of an issue with climate change.



## Typical Habitat

- Grey Whales live in shallow ocean water (less than 60 m deep) close to shore, over mud or sand bottoms.



Grey Whale   
National Parks

In late winter of alternating years, female Grey Whales give birth to a single calf. In spring, most migrate north from Mexico to their summer feeding grounds in northern Alaska, Russia and the southern Beaufort Sea. This migration is over 16,000 km round trip. Grey Whales feed mainly on shrimp-like animals (amphipod crustaceans). They use their baleen plates like a strainer to filter sediment and locate their prey. They scoop up mouthfuls of sediment and allow it to sift through the spaces between the baleen, with only the prey left behind in their mouths. Grey Whale populations were severely reduced by commercial whaling in the 1800s and early 1900s, but since the 1950s they have recovered considerably under international protection. Grey Whales are still susceptible to human activities especially while they spend the winter on their calving grounds. A national management plan for Grey Whale is available at [www.sararegistry.gc.ca](http://www.sararegistry.gc.ca).

## Did you know?

- When COSEWIC assessed Grey Whale in 2004, the NWT's whales were grouped with other whales from the northern Pacific and western Arctic oceans and assessed as a species of Special Concern. In 2017, the large Northern Pacific Migratory population (which includes the NWT) was assessed separately from smaller populations in British Columbia and was assigned a status of Not at Risk.
- Because Grey Whales re-circulate nutrients from bottom sediments through the water column while feeding, they are an important species in arctic marine ecosystems.
- Grey Whales can live up to 70 years of age.

# Grizzly Bear

*Ursus arctos*



	Assessment	Legal List
Canada (Western Population)	<b>Special Concern - 2012</b>	<b>Special Concern - 2018</b>
NWT	<b>Special Concern - 2017</b>	No status

Grizzly Bears are larger than Black Bears and more heavily built. They can be recognized by their prominent shoulder hump, dish-shaped face and long claws. Colour varies from light gold to almost black, with pale bears being the most common on the barren-lands.

Weight: Females, 120 to 160 kg (260 to 350 lb)  
Males, 150 to 250 kg (330 to 550 lb)

Report Grizzly Bear sightings to  
[WILDLIFE OBS@gov.nt.ca](mailto:WILDLIFE OBS@gov.nt.ca)

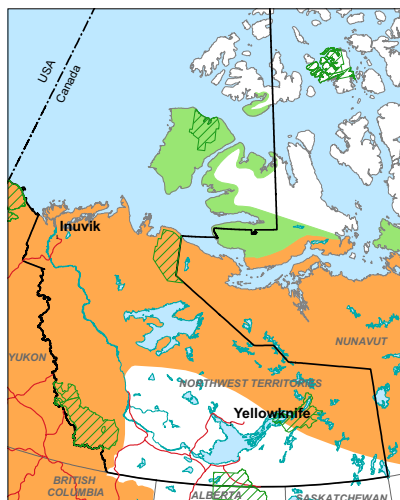
## Potential Threats in the Northwest Territories

- Individual bears move great distances so they may be exposed to the negative effects of human developments or activities, even when these activities occur at a considerable distance from the core range.
- Human activity such as communities, campsites and industrial development in the NWT may lead to human-bear conflicts and bear mortalities.



## Typical Habitat

- Grizzly Bears use open or semi-forested areas, most commonly in alpine and subalpine terrain, on the tundra and less commonly in the boreal forest.
- They are becoming more common in areas of the NWT and Nunavut where they used to be rarely seen.



Grizzly Bear ■  
 Areas of Increased Presence ■  
 National Parks ▨

The NWT is home to an estimated 4,000 to 5,000 Grizzly Bears with the highest densities found in the Mackenzie and Richardson Mountains. Grizzly Bears in the NWT, and throughout their range in Canada, are sensitive to population declines because they do not reproduce until they are between six and eight years of age, they have small litters (one to three cubs), and there are three to five years between litters.

## Did you know?

- Grizzly Bears can travel long distances. One bear collared on the tundra traveled 471 km in 23 days.
- Grizzly Bears require large areas of habitat. The largest home ranges are known from the central barrens of the NWT and Nunavut, where Grizzly Bears have home ranges of up to 6,700 km<sup>2</sup> for males and 2,100 km<sup>2</sup> for females.
- Bears are very powerful animals. Learn to avoid conflicts with bears and always travel in groups.



# Little Brown Myotis

*Myotis lucifugus*



	Assessment	Legal List
Canada	<b>Endangered - 2013</b>	<b>Endangered - 2014</b>
NWT	<b>Special Concern - 2017</b>	<b>Special Concern - 2018</b>

The Little Brown Myotis is a medium-sized bat. Fur on its back ranges from yellowish-brown to dark brown-black and is often glossy. Fur on its underside is lighter and goes from light brown to tan. The tragus (fleshy projection which covers the entrance of the ear) is short and blunt. Females are slightly larger than males and usually only have one young (called a pup) per year.

Weight: 7 to 14 g (0.3 to 0.5 oz)

Wingspan: 22 to 27 cm (9 to 11 in)

Report Little Brown Myotis sightings to  
[WILDLIFEOBS@gov.nt.ca](mailto:WILDLIFEOBS@gov.nt.ca)

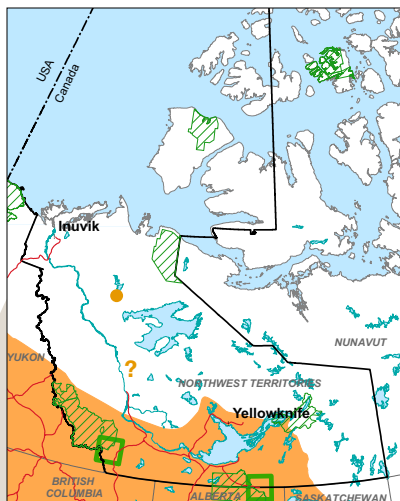
## Potential Threats in the Northwest Territories

- A fungal disease called white-nose syndrome occurs elsewhere in Canada, but has not yet been reported in the NWT. It could eventually spread north. A map of its spread is available at [www.whitenosesyndrome.org](http://www.whitenosesyndrome.org).
- Bats with white-nose syndrome show loss of body fat and unusual behaviour during winter, including flying outside in the day.
- Bats with white-nose syndrome very often die of the disease.
- Human activities at hibernation sites, such as caves and mines, can have significant negative impacts on bat populations.
- Removing or renovating buildings that are used by bats or blocking their entry/exit points can kill large numbers of bats at once.



## Typical Habitat

- Little Brown Myotis hunt flying insects in a variety of habitats, often over water.
- Summer roosts can include man-made structures (like attics), tree cavities, under the bark of trees, rock crevices and caves.
- Winter hibernation sites (also called hibernacula) are usually in caves or mines.



- Little Brown Myotis
- Area Containing Critical Habitat
- Northern Range Limit is Uncertain
- Single Record
- National Parks

The Little Brown Myotis is an insect-eating bat found throughout much of Canada. In the NWT, it has been found north and south of Great Slave Lake, in the Dehcho, and occasionally in the Sahtú. Since 2006, this bat has been dying in significant numbers in the eastern United States and Canada from a disease called white-nose syndrome. The fungus that causes white-nose syndrome grows in humid, cold environments typical of the caves where bats hibernate. It is estimated that at the current rate of spread, the fungus will severely impact the entire Canadian population of Little Brown Myotis within the next two decades. A national recovery strategy for the

Little Brown Myotis is available at [www.sararegistry.gc.ca](http://www.sararegistry.gc.ca) and includes critical habitat identification. An NWT bats management plan is available at [www.nwtspicesatrisk.ca](http://www.nwtspicesatrisk.ca).

## Did you know?

- Approximately 3,000 bats overwinter in one NWT cave, making it the largest known hibernation site in western Canada.
- A Little Brown Myotis can eat as many as 600 mosquito-sized insects in one hour.
- Nahanni National Park Reserve is the northernmost bat hibernation area documented in North America.
- To help the Little Brown Myotis, avoid entering caves and abandoned mines where bats may be hibernating and use bat-friendly practices to deal with bats in buildings. A *NWT Guide for Managing Bats in Buildings* is available at [www.enr.gov.nt.ca](http://www.enr.gov.nt.ca).

# Northern Mountain Caribou

**Caribou (Northern Mountain Population)**

*Rangifer tarandus caribou*



	Assessment	Legal List
Canada	<b>Special Concern - 2014</b>	<b>Special Concern - 2005</b>
NWT	Not assessed	No status

Northern Mountain Caribou are members of the deer family. Compared to Barren-ground Caribou (page 12), Northern Mountain Caribou are larger and darker, have thicker and broader antlers, and have longer legs and a longer face. Northern Mountain Caribou look the same as Boreal Caribou (page 14), but have different habitat preferences and behaviour.

Weight: 110 to 210 kg (240 to 460 lb)

Height at shoulder: 1.0 to 1.2 m (3.3 to 4.0 ft)

**Report Northern Mountain Caribou sightings to  
WILDLIFE OBS@gov.nt.ca**

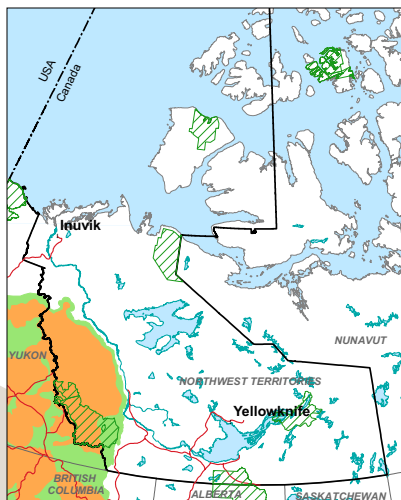
## Potential Threats in the Northwest Territories

- There are concerns about mineral exploration activities, which disturb Northern Mountain Caribou and increase access into their range.
- Increased access can lead to increased hunting pressure, potential vehicle collisions, and easier access for predators.



## Typical Habitat

- Northern Mountain Caribou live throughout the Mackenzie Mountains in open alpine and sub-alpine areas in summer, and montane spruce-lichen forest areas with shallow snow cover in winter.



Northern Mountain Caribou ■  
 Trace Occurrences ■  
 National Parks ▨

Northern Mountain Caribou live in the Mackenzie Mountains in large groups, sometimes in the thousands. They have distinct migrations, where they move up or down in elevation depending on the season. A national management plan for Northern Mountain Caribou is available at [www.sararegistry.gc.ca](http://www.sararegistry.gc.ca).

## Did you know?

- While there is some localized hunting pressure in mountain areas with road access, overall there is limited harvesting of Northern Mountain Caribou because they live in very remote areas.
- Caribou are the only species of the deer family where both males and females have antlers.

# Northern Myotis

*Myotis septentrionalis*



	Assessment	Legal List
Canada	<b>Endangered - 2013</b>	<b>Endangered - 2014</b>
NWT	<b>Special Concern - 2017</b>	<b>Special Concern - 2018</b>

The Northern Myotis is very similar in colour and size to the Little Brown Myotis (page 26), but the ears are longer (extend beyond the nose when pressed forward) and the tragus (fleshy projection which covers the entrance of the ear) is long, slender and pointed. Sometimes the Northern Myotis and Little Brown Myotis use the same roosts or hibernacula and it is difficult to tell the species apart.

Weight: 6 to 9 g (0.2 to 0.3 oz)  
Wingspan: 23 to 27 cm (9 to 11 in)

**Report Northern Myotis sightings to**  
**WILDLIFEOBS@gov.nt.ca**

## Potential Threats in the Northwest Territories

- A fungal disease called white-nose syndrome occurs elsewhere in Canada, but has not yet been reported in the NWT. It could eventually spread north. A map of its spread is available at [www.whitenosesyndrome.org](http://www.whitenosesyndrome.org).
- Bats with white-nose syndrome show loss of body fat and unusual behaviour during winter, including flying outside in the day.
- Bats with white-nose syndrome very often die of the disease.
- Human activities at hibernation sites, such as caves and mines, can have significant negative impacts on bat populations.
- Removal of trees used by Northern Myotis as summer roosts can affect large numbers of bats at once.



## Typical Habitat

- Northern Myotis often hunt in cluttered areas such as forests, forest edges and overgrown trails.
- Summer roosts are most often in large trees (in tree cavities and under loose bark), but can also be in man-made structures (e.g. under shingles).
- Winter hibernation sites (also called hibernacula) are usually in caves or mines.



Northern Myotis ■  
National Parks ▨

The Northern Myotis is an insect-eating bat found in forested areas throughout much of Canada. It uses echolocation to capture its prey from tree branches or leaves as well as on the fly. The Northern Myotis is highly susceptible to white-nose syndrome. Both Northern Myotis and Little Brown Myotis are long-living and reproduce slowly, which makes them sensitive to population decline. A national recovery strategy for the Northern Myotis is available at [www.sararegistry.gc.ca](http://www.sararegistry.gc.ca) and includes critical habitat identification. An NWT bats management plan is available at [www.nwtspicesatrisk.ca](http://www.nwtspicesatrisk.ca).

## Did you know?

- The Northern Myotis used to be called the northern long-eared bat.
- White-nose syndrome is estimated to be spreading 200 to 400 km a year, but can also jump long distances if accidentally spread by humans.
- There are eight bat species in the NWT – seven confirmed and one suspected.
- To help the Northern Myotis, avoid entering caves and abandoned mines where bats may be hibernating. Before removing large aspen trees, consider whether Northern Myotis may be roosting in them.



# Peary Caribou

*Rangifer tarandus pearyi*



	Assessment	Legal List
Canada	<b>Threatened - 2015</b>	<b>Endangered - 2011</b>
NWT	<b>Threatened - 2012</b>	<b>Threatened - 2014</b>

Peary Caribou are members of the deer family and are the smallest of all caribou subspecies. Like Dolphin and Union Caribou (page 20), Peary Caribou have a mostly white coat in winter and are slate-grey with white legs and under-parts in summer. The velvet covering their antlers is grey.

Weight: Males, 70 kg (150 lb)

Length: 1.7 m (5.6 ft)

Report Peary Caribou sightings to  
[WILD.LIFE.OBS@gov.nt.ca](mailto:WILD.LIFE.OBS@gov.nt.ca)

## Potential Threats in the Northwest Territories

- Severe winter and spring weather creates ice layers preventing Peary Caribou from reaching their food, sometimes causing starvation or inadequate fat reserves for females to reproduce.
- Muskoxen may influence Peary Caribou populations through competition, avoidance or interactions with predators or parasites.
- Hunting and predation may have contributed to population declines on Banks and northwest Victoria Islands.
- Low numbers and variable population size indicates Peary Caribou are vulnerable to random catastrophic events such as severe icing events.



## Typical Habitat

- Peary Caribou are found in small groups on the arctic islands of the NWT and Nunavut.
- Summer range includes river valley slopes or other moist areas, and upland plains with abundant sedges, willows, grasses and herbs.
- Winter range includes exposed areas like hilltops and raised beach ridges where the snow is thinner and it is easier to find food.



Peary Caribou ■  
National Parks ▨

Peary Caribou populations in the NWT declined steeply between the 1960s and the 1990s, likely due to a combination of factors, including several years of unusually severe winter and spring weather. Over the last 20 years there have been sustained low numbers; however, there is recent evidence of an increase in numbers on the Queen Elizabeth Islands and Banks Island. A recovery strategy for Peary Caribou is being developed in cooperation with local communities, wildlife management boards and federal/territorial governments.

## Did you know?

- The Inuvialuit have taken a strong leadership role in protecting Peary Caribou. Self-imposed harvest quotas for Peary Caribou have been implemented since 1990 and are now reviewed annually.
- The Olokhtomiut Hunters and Trappers Committee (Ulukhaktok) enabled specific management zones in their by-laws to ensure quotas are followed for Peary Caribou on northwest Victoria Island and harvest remains low.

# Polar Bear

*Ursus maritimus*



Canada

Assessment

**Special Concern - 2018**

NWT

**Special Concern - 2012**

Legal List

**Special Concern - 2011**

**Special Concern - 2014**

Polar Bear fur appears white or off-white due to translucent hairs (sunlight partially goes through them). Polar Bears have no shoulder hump and they have shorter claws and a longer neck than Grizzly Bears.

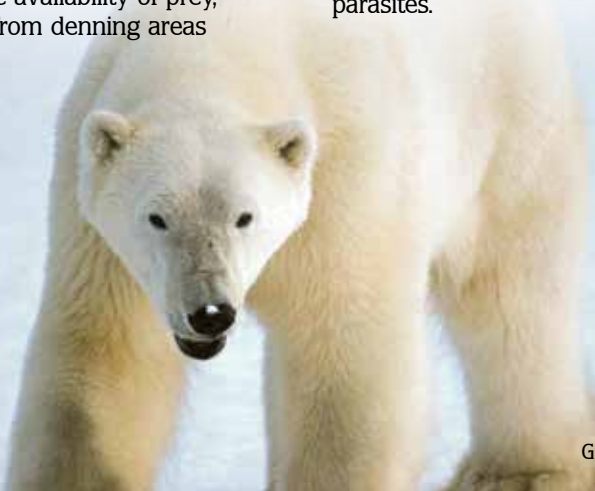
Weight: Females, less than 350 kg (770 lb)

Males, up to 800 kg (1,750 lb)

**Report Polar Bear sightings to  
WILDLIFE@GOV.NT.CA**

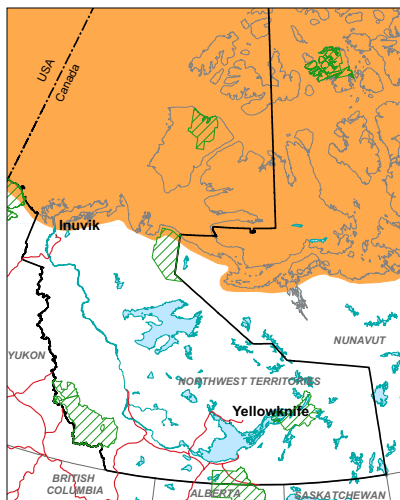
## Potential Threats in the Northwest Territories

- The most serious long-term threat to Polar Bears in the NWT is habitat change due to climate change – especially reduction in sea ice. This will have direct and indirect effects on Polar Bears, including loss of habitat, ecosystem-level changes affecting the availability of prey, separation from denning areas on land, contaminants from the environment, expansion of human activities, and increased likelihood of human-bear interactions.
- Additional management concerns include increased shipping, pollution and contamination, research impacts, disease and parasites.



## Typical Habitat

- Polar Bear habitat is closely linked to density and distribution of seals (their main prey) and to the distribution of annual ice in the winter.
- Bears generally follow the retreating ice offshore in the summer.
- Maternal denning sites are usually located on land in snowdrifts near the coast, but have also been found on sea ice.



Polar Bear ■  
National Parks ▨

NWT shares three sub-populations of Polar Bears, an estimated 3,000 bears, with neighbouring jurisdictions: Southern Beaufort Sea, Northern Beaufort Sea, and Viscount Melville Sound. The Southern Beaufort Sea sub-population is likely declining based on scientific information, but stable based on Indigenous knowledge. The Northern Beaufort Sea sub-population is likely stable. The status of the Viscount Melville Sound sub-population is uncertain based on scientific information, but Indigenous knowledge indicates it has increased. The information for that sub-population is being updated. Little is known about the fourth sub-population, Arctic Basin. A joint management plan for Polar Bears in the Inuvialuit Settlement Region is available at [www.nwt-species-at-risk.ca](http://www.nwt-species-at-risk.ca).

## Did you know?

- Polar Bears are sensitive to population declines because they only breed every three years, have small litters and take a long time to reach maturity.
- In the NWT, all human-caused mortality of Polar Bears is strictly managed through a quota system recommended by the wildlife co-management boards.
- Inuvialuit have exclusive rights to hunt Polar Bears in the Inuvialuit Settlement Region, but can transfer that right to other hunters.

# Ringed Seal

*Pusa hispida*



	Assessment
Canada	<b>Special Concern - 2019</b>

NWT

Not applicable

Legal List
Under consideration
Not applicable

The Ringed Seal is the smallest species in the seal family. They have a small head and a short snout. Ringed Seals get their name from the pattern of light rings against a dark background that is visible on its coat. Ringed Seals are the most abundant seals in Arctic waters.

Weight: Adults, 50 to 70 kg (110 to 154 lb)

Length: Adults, average 1.5 m (5 ft)

Report Ringed Seal sightings to  
[WILDLIFEOBS@gov.nt.ca](mailto:WILDLIFEOBS@gov.nt.ca)

## Potential Threats in the Northwest Territories

- Habitat change due to climate change is the most serious long-term threat to Ringed Seals – especially reduction in snow cover during the pup-rearing period and reduction in sea ice. Climate change will have direct

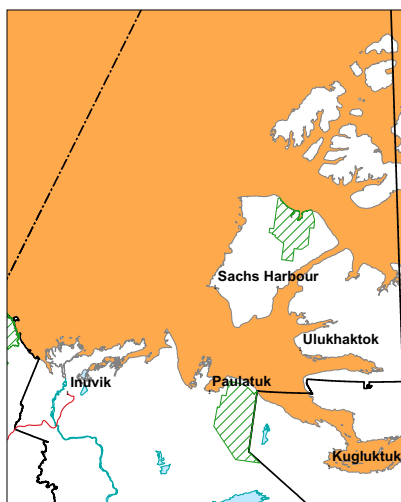
and indirect effects on Ringed Seal, including loss of habitat and expansion of human activities.

- Activities like shipping, tourism and industrial development can lead to disturbance, habitat change and pollution.



## Typical Habitat

- Ringed Seals live in Arctic waters and use sea ice as a platform to raise pups, rest and moult.
- In winter and spring, breeding adults prefer stable, landfast ice with good snow coverage, such as pressure ridges, bays and coastlines. Snow cover is important because females give birth in snow lairs.
- During the open water season, seals move around through areas where they can find food.



Ringed Seal ■  
National Parks ▨

Ringed Seals are found in ocean waters around the North Pole, including all seas of the Arctic Ocean. Their habitat is strongly linked to the sea ice. They eat a wide variety of small prey, including Arctic Cod, shrimp, and other fish and crustaceans. Female Ringed Seals can give birth to a single pup per year in March or April. Pups are born in a snow lair that protects them from the environment and predators. It is difficult to determine population trends for Ringed Seals. They are still abundant, and there are about 2.3 million Ringed Seals in Canada and nearby waters. However, their Arctic sea ice habitat has changed a lot since the 1970s. The extent and amount of sea ice and snow cover are declining and the open-water season is getting longer.

## Did you know?

- Ringed Seals create breathing holes in the ice. They use the claws on their flippers to scrape away ice to keep breathing holes open.
- In the spring, Ringed Seals haul themselves out on the sea ice to moult and bask in the sun.
- Ringed Seals are an important traditional source of food, fuel, and pelts (furs) for Inuvialuit.
- Ringed Seals are the main prey for Polar Bears and important prey for Arctic Foxes.

# Wolverine

*Gulo gulo*



	Assessment	Legal List
Canada	<b>Special Concern - 2014</b>	<b>Special Concern - 2018</b>
NWT	<b>Not at Risk - 2014</b>	No status

The Wolverine resembles a small, stocky bear. Colour varies from brown to black, often with a pale facial mask and yellowish or tan stripes running along its sides from the shoulders and crossing at the tail.

Weight: Females, 7.5 to 11 kg (16 to 24 lb)  
Males, 12 to 16 kg (26 to 35 lb)

Report Wolverine sightings to  
[WILDLIFE OBS@gov.nt.ca](mailto:WILDLIFE OBS@gov.nt.ca)

## Potential Threats in the Northwest Territories

- Although this species is classified Not at Risk in the NWT, development and other human activities can disturb Wolverines and fragment habitat, even if these activities are a considerable distance from the core range of a Wolverine.
- Disturbance of maternal den sites can result in abandonment of kits.
- Human-caused mortalities due to conflicts and harvesting could become an issue if they are not well-managed.



## Typical Habitat

- Wolverines are found in a wide variety of habitats, from the boreal forest to alpine tundra and barrenlands.
- They require large wilderness areas with adequate year-round food supplies.



Wolverine ■  
 Areas of Increased Presence ■  
 National Parks ▨

Wolverines are scavengers and predators that eat many different types of carrion and prey. Wolverines can travel long distances and they occur at low densities. The NWT population is generally stable but there are indications of recent declines in the central barrens, possibly linked to Barren-ground Caribou declines.

Wolverines only breed every two years, have small litters, and their kits can have high mortality rates. Because of this, they do not recover easily from population declines.

## Did you know?

- Wolverine fur is resistant to frost and ice and, therefore, highly valued for parka trim.
- They have large paws that help them move easily on top of crusted snow.
- They have strong jaws that allow them to crush bones and frozen food.
- An NWT-specific assessment found that Wolverine is Not at Risk in the territory, but it is still a species of Special Concern in Canada.

# Wood Bison

*Bison bison athabasca*



Assessment  
Canada

**Special Concern - 2013**

Legal List

**Threatened - 2003**

NWT

**Threatened - 2016**

**Threatened - 2017**

Wood Bison are the largest land mammals in North America. They are dark brown and have a massive head, a distinct beard, a shoulder hump and curved horns.

Weight: Females, 500 to 550 kg (1,100 to 1,200 lb)

Males, 650 to 1,080 kg (1,430 to 2,400 lb)

Height at shoulder: 1.5 to 2.0 m (4 to 6 ft)

Report Wood Bison sightings to  
[WILDLIFE OBS@gov.nt.ca](mailto:WILDLIFE OBS@gov.nt.ca)

## Potential Threats in the Northwest Territories

- Introduced bovine brucellosis and tuberculosis and the management actions that are necessary to manage these diseases.
- Limited genetic diversity in disease-free populations.
- Naturally occurring outbreaks of anthrax.
- Collisions with vehicles.
- Spring floods and falling through thin ice.
- Human-bison conflicts and lack of public acceptance in some areas.

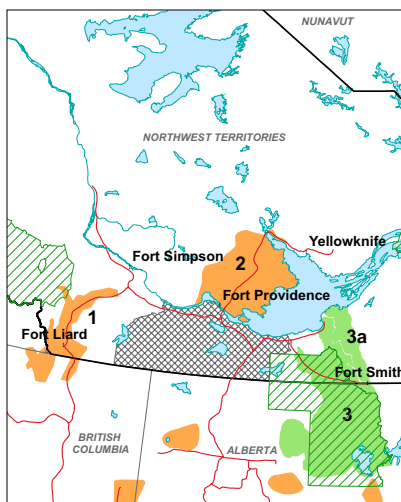


## Typical Habitat

- Slave River Lowlands and Mackenzie populations: willow savannas with grasses and sedges
- Nahanni population: meadows and oxbows with sedges and horsetails

### Populations

- 1 - Nahanni
- 2 - Mackenzie
- 3 - Greater Wood Buffalo National Park
- 3a - Slave River Lowlands



- Wood Bison ■
- Wood Bison (diseased) ■
- Bison Control Area
- National Parks

Once on the verge of extinction due to over-hunting, Wood Bison now occur in the NWT in three free-ranging populations. The Greater Wood Buffalo National Park population, which includes bison in the Slave River Lowlands, is infected with bovine tuberculosis and brucellosis.

The Mackenzie and Nahanni populations are free of these diseases.

A Bison Control Area was created to prevent the spread of bovine tuberculosis and brucellosis to the Mackenzie and Nahanni populations.

All bison in the control area are presumed to be disease carriers and are therefore removed. A national recovery strategy for Wood Bison is available at [www.sararegistry.gc.ca](http://www.sararegistry.gc.ca) and an NWT recovery strategy is available at [www.nwtspeciesatrisk.ca](http://www.nwtspeciesatrisk.ca). There are also management plans available for each of the herds.

## Did you know?

- In 2013, COSEWIC assessed Wood Bison as Special Concern. Wood Bison previously had a status of Threatened (in 2000 and 1988) and Endangered (in 1978).
- The Mackenzie population experienced a large decline from 2012 to 2013, due primarily to an anthrax outbreak, but seems to be recovering. In 2019, the population was estimated to be about 1,470 animals.
- A survey in 2017 showed the Nahanni population has grown to about 960 animals.
- The Slave River Lowlands population has about 660 bison on the east and west sides of the Slave River outside of Wood Buffalo National Park of Canada, and there is also a large population of Wood Bison within the park. These populations have been declining.

# Bank Swallow

*Riparia riparia*



	Assessment	Legal List
Canada	<b>Threatened - 2013</b>	<b>Threatened - 2017</b>
NWT	Not applicable	Not applicable

The Bank Swallow is a small, slender songbird that feeds on flying insects. It can be recognized by its small head, thin wings and long, slender, notched tail. It has pale brown upper-parts and rump, white under-parts and throat, and a well-defined dark band across its chest. Males and females have similar plumage.

Weight: 10.6 to 18.8 g (0.4 to 0.7 oz)  
Length: 11.9 to 14.0 cm (4.7 to 5.5 in)

Report Bank Swallow sightings to [www.ebird.org](http://www.ebird.org)  
or [NWT\\_NUChecklist.TNO\\_NUReleve@canada.ca](mailto:NWT_NUChecklist.TNO_NUReleve@canada.ca)

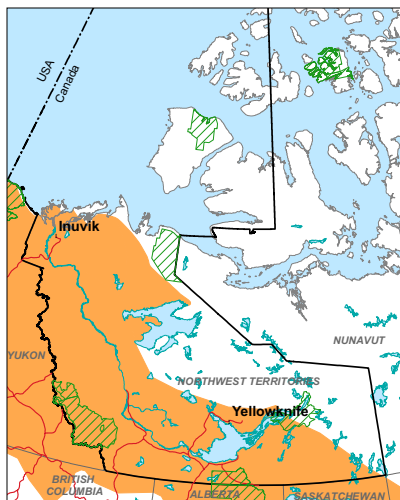
## Potential Threats in the Northwest Territories

- Large-scale decline or some other change in insect populations.
- Direct and indirect mortality due to severe weather events (cold snaps).
- Slumping of river banks where Bank Swallows nest.
- Nests located at sand/gravel mounds or aggregate quarries can be destroyed if material extraction at these sites occurs during the nesting season.
- Habitat loss and degradation from human activities.



## Typical Habitat

- Bank Swallows nest on artificial and natural sites with vertical sand-silt banks such as riverbanks, lake and ocean bluffs, sand/gravel mounds, aggregate quarries and road cuts. A burrow is dug into the side of these sites that leads to a nest chamber.
- They breed near open habitats along rivers, streams, lakes and gravel pits where they search for flying insects.



Bank Swallow ■  
National Parks ▨

The Bank Swallow is a widespread species of swallow that is found on every continent except Australia and Antarctica. It is found breeding in colonies in the northern two-thirds of the United States and north to the treeline of Canada. It winters mainly in South America. Like many other species of birds that feed on flying insects, the Bank Swallow has seen a decline of about 95% of its Canadian population since the 1970s. A 34% decline was recently estimated over a ten-year period (2005-2015). The cause of the severe declines is not fully understood, but it is likely the impact of multiple threats or cumulative effects affecting Bank Swallows on their breeding grounds, wintering grounds, and during migration.

## Did you know?

- Bank Swallows are very social birds and are often found with other birds when away from the nest.
- Male Bank Swallows dig burrows leading to underground nest chambers using their small beak, feet and wings. The male digs the burrow before he has a mate and then the female chooses a mate and nest by hovering in front of the burrow.
- Nest burrows are 63 cm deep on average, and are generally dug straight into the side of the bank (parallel to the ground).
- Females build the nest by making a mat of straw, grasses, leaves and roots torn from the exposed bank.
- Bank Swallows nest in colonies ranging from 10 nests to nearly 2,000 nests.

# Barn Swallow

*Hirundo rustica*



	Assessment	Legal List
Canada	<b>Threatened - 2011</b>	<b>Threatened - 2017</b>
NWT	Not applicable	Not applicable

The Barn Swallow is a small bird easily recognized by its steely-blue upper-parts, cinnamon under-parts, chestnut throat and forehead, and deeply forked tail. Both sexes have similar plumage, but males have longer outer tail streamers than females and tend to be darker chestnut on their under-parts.

Weight: 17 to 21 g (0.6 to 0.7 oz)  
Length: 15 to 18 cm (5.9 to 7.1 in)

Report Barn Swallow sightings to [www.ebird.org](http://www.ebird.org)  
or [NWT\\_NUChecklist.TNO\\_NUReleve@canada.ca](mailto:NWT_NUChecklist.TNO_NUReleve@canada.ca)

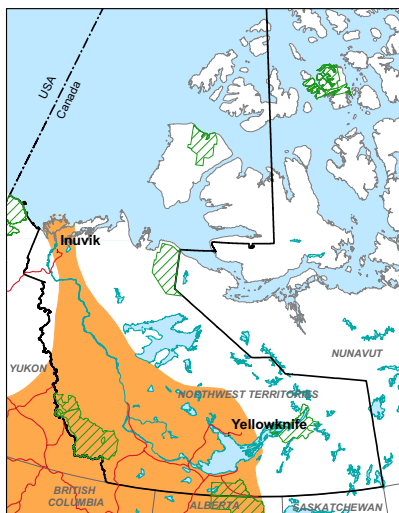
## Potential Threats in the Northwest Territories

- Large-scale decline or some other change in insect populations.
- Direct and indirect mortality due to severe weather events (cold snaps).
- Habitat loss and degradation from human activities.
- Nests located on human-built structures, such as buildings and culverts, can be destroyed if structures are modified during the nesting season.



## Typical Habitat

- Barn Swallows nest in man-made features such as buildings, garages, barns, bridges and road culverts, as well as natural habitats such as caves, and crevices in cliff faces.
- They breed near open habitats, including meadows near wetlands, where they search for flying insects and can use mud to build their nests.



Barn Swallow ■  
National Parks ▨

The Barn Swallow is the most widespread species of swallow in the world and is found on every continent except Antarctica. It breeds across much of North America and winters throughout Central and South America. In Canada, it breeds in all provinces and territories except Nunavut. Like many other species of birds that feed on flying insects, the Barn Swallow has experienced declines of about 78% since the 1970s. A 13% decline was recently estimated over a ten-year period (2005-2015). The reasons for the declines are not well understood, but they are likely the impacts of multiple threats or cumulative effects affecting Barn Swallows on their breeding grounds, wintering grounds, and during migration.

## Did you know?

- Barn Swallow nests are primarily made of mud, often mixed with grasses and stems, which they collect in their beak and attach to a ledge or vertical surface. They often return to the same nesting site and may even reuse an old nest from previous years.
- Barn Swallows prefer to nest in human-made structures. It is estimated that only about 1% of Barn Swallows in Canada currently use natural nesting sites.
- Barn Swallows can be easily distinguished from other swallows by their deeply forked tail with long outer tail streamers.

# Buff-breasted Sandpiper

*Calidris subruficollis*



	Assessment	Legal List
Canada	<b>Special Concern - 2012</b>	<b>Special Concern - 2017</b>
NWT	Not applicable	Not applicable

The Buff-breasted Sandpiper is a medium-sized sandpiper. Its head appears small relative to its body, and it has a short black bill and bright yellow-ochre (green-brown) or yellow-orange legs. Its neck appears long because of its small head and upright posture. It has a “buff” (pale peach or yellowy-tan) coloured breast and a mottled, dark brown and buff back that looks “scaly” because of the strong tone variation between these two colours.

Weight: 46 to 78 g (1.6 to 2.8 oz)

Length: 18 to 20 cm (7.1 to 7.8 in)

Report Buff-breasted Sandpiper sightings to [www.ebird.org](http://www.ebird.org)  
or [NWT\\_NUChecklist.TNO\\_NUReleve@canada.ca](mailto:NWT_NUChecklist.TNO_NUReleve@canada.ca)

## Potential Threats in the Northwest Territories

- Breeding habitat degradation from threats like climate change and industrial development.
- Direct disturbance at nest sites from resource exploration and development.



## Typical Habitat

- Buff-breasted Sandpiper habitat use varies throughout the breeding season on the tundra.
- Breeding displays usually start on dry, unvegetated, snow-free areas and move to moister grass and sedge meadows as the season progresses.
- Nests are typically in sedge patches near dry display areas and close to water sources, or in wetlands near large waterbodies or rivers.
- Foraging is usually on sparsely vegetated areas, especially along the banks of streams and rivers.



Buff-breasted Sandpiper ■  
National Parks ▨

The Buff-breasted Sandpiper is a shorebird that breeds in the central Canadian Arctic, including Banks Island and western Victoria Island in the NWT. Historically, there were many Buff-breasted Sandpipers, but extensive market hunting in the early 1900s caused a drastic decrease in population size. The Buff-breasted Sandpiper currently has a relatively small population size (compared to other species of shorebirds in the Arctic) and is suspected to be in further population decline because of changes to its migration stopover sites (from native grassland to agricultural land). It winters in the pampas (grassland plains) of South America.

## Did you know?

- The Buff-breasted Sandpiper is a polygamous species. This means one male courts and breeds with several females.
- The Buff-breasted Sandpiper is the only North American shorebird with a lek mating system. A lek is when several males gather to perform competitive displays which entice females to come watch and check out potential mates.
- While most male shorebirds stop displaying once nests are established and the breeding season progresses, Buff-breasted Sandpiper males display to females already on established nests, and even while on migration.

# Canada Warbler

*Cardellina canadensis*



Canada **Assessment**

**Threatened - 2008**

NWT

Not applicable

**Legal List**

**Threatened - 2010**

Not applicable

The Canada Warbler is a small, brightly coloured songbird with bluish grey upper-parts and yellow under-parts. A series of patterned black spots form a "necklace" on its bright yellow breast, but tends to be greyer and less defined in females. Other features such as the white eye ring, thin pointed bill, and white feathers at the base of the tail help to distinguish this bird from similar species.

Weight: 7.9 to 16.3 g (0.3 to 0.6 oz)

Length: 12 to 15 cm (4.7 to 5.9 in)

Report Canada Warbler sightings to [www.ebird.org](http://www.ebird.org)  
or [NWT\\_NUChecklist.TNO\\_NUReleve@canada.ca](mailto:NWT_NUChecklist.TNO_NUReleve@canada.ca)

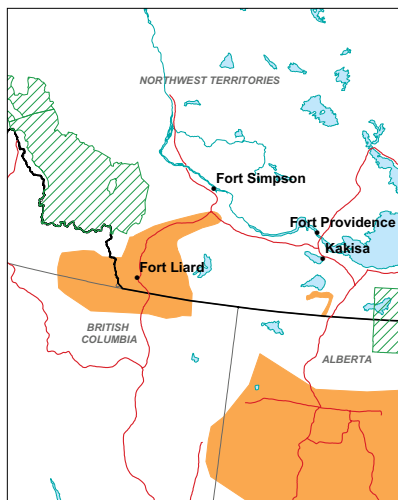
## Potential Threats in the Northwest Territories

- Loss and degradation of breeding habitat from human-caused and natural disturbances.
- Human activities resulting in increased numbers of predators and declining food sources.



## Typical Habitat

- The Canada Warbler lives in moist deciduous and mixed deciduous-coniferous boreal forests with a well-developed shrub layer, often on steep slopes.



Canada Warbler ■  
National Parks ▨

Canada Warblers have been found nesting in the southern NWT (from north of Fort Liard to Kakisa). They eat flying insects and spiders captured in flight or on the ground. The Canada Warbler population has declined by about 63% in Canada since the 1970s. A 9% decline was recently estimated over a ten-year period (2005-2015). The reasons for decline are not fully understood. Loss of forest on the wintering grounds in South America and events occurring during migration are contributing to population declines. A national recovery strategy for Canada Warbler is available at [www.sararegistry.gc.ca](http://www.sararegistry.gc.ca).

## Did you know?

- The Canada Warbler is one of the last warblers to arrive in the NWT in the spring and one of the first to leave in the fall.
- The Canada Warbler flies approximately 8,000 km to its wintering grounds each fall, and again as it returns to its breeding grounds in the spring.
- This warbler received its name from its discovery in Canada, where the majority of its breeding range occurs.

# Common Nighthawk

*Chordeiles minor*



	Assessment	Legal List
Canada	<b>Special Concern - 2018</b>	<b>Threatened - 2010</b>
NWT	Not applicable	Not applicable

The Common Nighthawk is a medium-sized bird, with dark brown plumage mottled with black, white and buff. It has long, slender, pointed wings and a long slightly notched tail. The head is large and flat, with large eyes, a small bill, and a wide mouth. In flight, a white patch can be seen on the wings of the adults. Females can be distinguished from males by their throat band, which is pale yellow rather than white. The throat band on juveniles is mottled or absent. Adult males have a white tail band which is lacking in most adult females.

Weight: 71 to 93 g (2.5 to 3.3 oz)

Length: 21 to 25 cm (8 to 10 in)

Report Common Nighthawk sightings to [www.ebird.org](http://www.ebird.org)  
or [NWT\\_NUChecklist.TNO\\_NUReleve@canada.ca](mailto:NWT_NUChecklist.TNO_NUReleve@canada.ca)

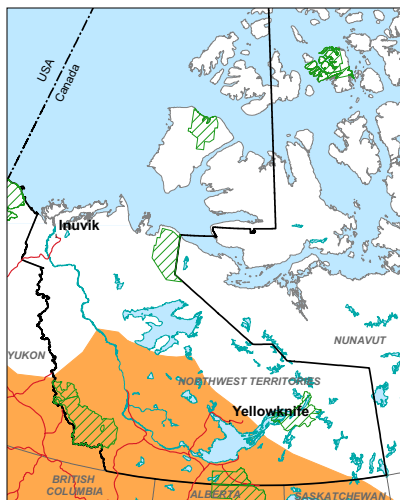
## Potential Threats in the Northwest Territories

- Collisions with motor vehicles and aircraft.
- Large-scale decline or some other change in insect populations.
- Human activities resulting in declining food sources and increased numbers of predators.
- Direct and indirect mortality due to severe weather events (cold snaps).
- Habitat loss and degradation from human activities.



## Typical Habitat

- The Common Nighthawk nests in a variety of habitats such as sand dunes and beaches, open forests, forest clearings (including recently logged or burned areas), rocky outcrops, peat bogs, marshes, lakeshores, river banks, gravel areas (roads, quarries and flat gravel-covered roofs), and airports.



Common Nighthawk ■  
National Parks ▨

Common Nighthawks arrive in the NWT to breed in mid-May to early June. They lay on average two eggs directly on the soil, sand, gravel or bare rock. Chicks stay in the nest area for about three weeks and are primarily fed by the male. Fall migration to wintering areas in South America occurs from mid-August to mid-September. Like many other species of birds that feed on flying insects, the Common Nighthawk has experienced declines of about 68% since the 1970s. A 13% decline was recently estimated over a ten-year period (2005-2015). The reasons for the declines are not well understood but they could be the impacts of multiple threats or cumulative effects affecting Common Nighthawks on their breeding grounds, wintering grounds, and during migration. A national recovery strategy for Common Nighthawk is available at [www.sararegistry.gc.ca](http://www.sararegistry.gc.ca).

## Did you know?

- Common Nighthawks can be recognized by their loud, nasal “peent” calls and erratic, almost bat-like flight. They actively pursue flying insects at dusk and dawn, often feeding on insects attracted to lights and insects swarming over bodies of water.
- Common Nighthawks are crepuscular, meaning they are most active at dawn and dusk.
- Male Common Nighthawks perform spectacular booming courtship dives as part of mating and territorial displays. The booms are produced by air rushing through the feathers.

# Eskimo Curlew

*Numenius borealis*



	Assessment	Legal List
Canada	<b>Endangered - 2009</b>	<b>Endangered - 2003</b>
NWT	Not applicable	Not applicable

The Eskimo Curlew is a mottled brownish shorebird with long legs and a long, thin, slightly down-curving bill. It can be confused with its close relative, the Whimbrel, but is smaller (the size of a pigeon), has no barring or "stripes" on the under-wing feathers, and its central head stripe is not as wide or well-defined.

Weight: 270 to 454 g (9.5 to 16.0 oz)

Length: 32 to 37 cm (13 to 15 in)

Report Eskimo Curlew sightings to [www.ebird.org](http://www.ebird.org)  
or [NWT\\_NUChecklist.TNO\\_NUReleve@canada.ca](mailto:NWT_NUChecklist.TNO_NUReleve@canada.ca)

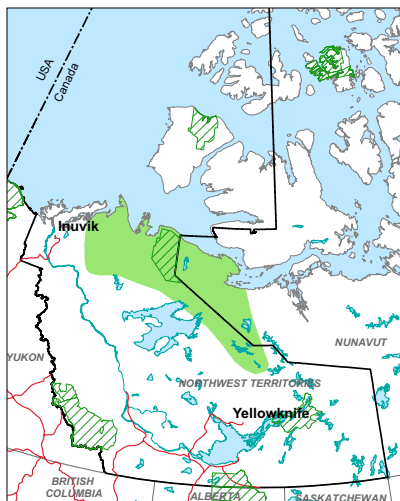
## Potential Threats in the Northwest Territories

- Unknown.



## Typical Habitat

- Known breeding habitat of the Eskimo Curlew consisted of upland tundra, dwarf shrub and grass tundra, and grassy meadow habitat.



Eskimo Curlew (historical range) ■  
National Parks ▨

The Eskimo Curlew once nested abundantly in the barrens of the NWT. During fall migration, huge flocks flew to the Atlantic coast and then non-stop to Argentina. Spring migration was through Texas and the mid-western states, with some birds found in the Canadian prairies. Eskimo Curlews were hunted to near extinction during the 19th century. A national recovery strategy for the Eskimo Curlew is available at [www.sararegistry.gc.ca](http://www.sararegistry.gc.ca). Scientists have determined that recovery of this species is not feasible at this time.

## Did you know?

- The Eskimo Curlew has been near extinction for much of the last century. There have been unconfirmed sightings in the NWT, but the last confirmed sighting was in 1963.
- There has been no evidence of nesting since 1866.
- A species can be classified as extinct if 50 years have passed since the last credible record, there is no remaining habitat, or there is information to confirm extinction. The last time Eskimo Curlew was assessed by COSEWIC was in 2009. At that time fewer than 50 years had passed since the last confirmed sighting.
- The Eskimo Curlew had only two known breeding locations, both in the NWT: at the base of Bathurst Peninsula in the Anderson River area and in the region of Amundsen Gulf-Coronation Gulf-Coppermine River.

# Evening Grosbeak

*Coccothraustes vespertinus*



	Assessment	Legal List
Canada	<b>Special Concern - 2016</b>	<b>Special Concern - 2019</b>
NWT	Not applicable	Not applicable

The Evening Grosbeak is a stocky songbird with a massive greenish-yellow bill. The adult male is boldly coloured with a dark brown head, brilliant yellow eyebrow stripe, yellow body and black tail. It has black wings with a distinct patch of white on each wing. The adult female is generally grayish-brown with a yellowish nape and flanks. Its wings and tail are black and white.

Weight: 53 to 74 g (1.9 to 2.6 oz)  
Length: 16 to 18 cm (6 to 7 in)

Report Evening Grosbeak sightings to [www.ebird.org](http://www.ebird.org)  
or [NWT\\_NUChecklist.TNO\\_NUReleve@canada.ca](mailto:NWT_NUChecklist.TNO_NUReleve@canada.ca)

## Potential Threats in the Northwest Territories

- Loss or degradation of mature and old-growth forests from human-caused and natural disturbances.
- Human activities resulting in increased numbers of predators and declining food sources.



54 Male

Jim Richards

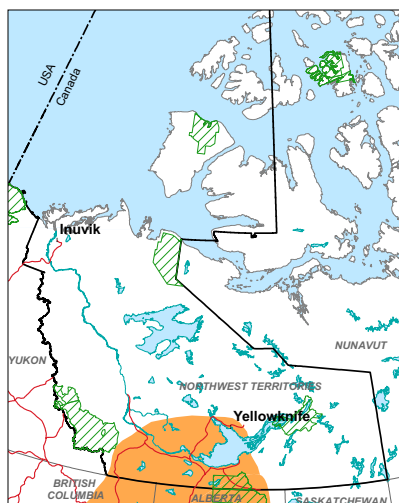


Female

Jim Richards

## Typical Habitat

- The Evening Grosbeak breeds in open, mature conifer-dominated forests.
- Its habitat includes areas with abundant seeds or insects to eat (will move around as the food supply changes).



Evening Grosbeak ■  
National Parks ▨

The Evening Grosbeak is found year-round in the boreal forest, including the southern NWT. It is a nomadic species whose movements are driven by a variable food supply. In winter, Evening Grosbeaks eat seeds and are found in areas where seed-crops, such as pine and spruce, are high. In summer, they eat insects, especially Spruce Budworm, which has a natural cycle of periodic outbreaks that can attract large numbers of Evening Grosbeaks to an area. The Evening Grosbeak expanded its range to eastern Canada in the early 20th century. Since 1970, the species has seen population declines of 77% to 86% over most of its range, correlated with Spruce Budworm cycles. Other potential reasons for decline are not well understood, but could include multiple threats or cumulative effects affecting Evening Grosbeaks on their breeding grounds, wintering grounds, and during migration.

## Did you know?

- The Evening Grosbeak can act as natural pest control for the Spruce Budworm, a native insect responsible for significant damage to forests across Canada.
- In winter, Evening Grosbeaks are familiar visitors at bird feeders.
- With its enormous bill, the Evening Grosbeak can crack seeds that are too large for smaller birds to open. Smaller birds sometimes seek out Evening Grosbeaks to eat the scraps they leave behind.
- Three subspecies of Evening Grosbeak are recognized in North America. The subspecies can be distinguished by their calls and distribution.

# Harris's Sparrow

*Zonotrichia querula*



	Assessment	Legal List
Canada	<b>Special Concern – 2017</b>	Under consideration
NWT	Not applicable	Not applicable

The Harris's Sparrow is North America's largest sparrow. It has a chunky body with a barrel-shaped chest that makes its head look a bit small. Males and females have a similar appearance with streaky brown and black plumage, grey or brown cheeks, a white belly, and a pink bill. Breeding adults have a distinctive black bib, face and crown.

Weight: 26.2 to 48.8 g (0.9 to 1.7 oz)  
Length: 17 to 20 cm (6.7 to 7.9 in)

Report Harris's Sparrow sightings to [www.ebird.org](http://www.ebird.org)  
or [NWT\\_NUChecklist.TNO\\_NUReleve@canada.ca](mailto:NWT_NUChecklist.TNO_NUReleve@canada.ca)

## Potential Threats in the Northwest Territories

- Breeding habitat degradation from climate change.
- Human activities resulting in declining food sources and increased numbers of predators.
- Habitat loss and degradation from resource exploration and development.



Jim Robinson

## Typical Habitat

- The Harris's Sparrow breeds in semi-forested tundra (open tundra mixed with patches of trees and shrubs).
- It nests on the ground, hidden in dense shrubby vegetation dominated by dwarf birch, alder and willow.
- Breeding territories typically include coniferous trees.



Harris's Sparrow ■  
National Parks ▨

Harris's Sparrows breed near the tree-line in northern Canada. They arrive on their breeding territories in the NWT in late May to early June.

The female builds a nest on the ground in which she lays three to five eggs; the male helps to feed the young. In late summer they form loose flocks before migrating to wintering grounds on the Great Plains of the south-central United States. Harris's Sparrow has undergone a significant long-term population decline. Christmas Bird Counts on the wintering grounds have shown a decline of 59% between 1980 and 2014, including a 16% decline over the last decade (2004-2014). Conversion of lands for agriculture on the wintering grounds, as well as pesticide use, are thought to be factors in the decline.

## Did you know?

- Harris's Sparrow is the only songbird that breeds exclusively in Canada. About half of its breeding range is in the NWT.
- Its song is a simple whistle of 1 to 3 evenly spaced notes of the same pitch.
- Crowberries, blueberries and bearberries are important food for Harris's Sparrows in the spring when they first return to the tundra. They include more insects and seeds in their diet as the season progresses.

# Horned Grebe

*Podiceps auritus*



	Assessment	Legal List
Canada (Western Population)	<b>Special Concern - 2009</b>	<b>Special Concern - 2017</b>
NWT	Not applicable	Not applicable

The Horned Grebe is a small waterbird with a short, straight bill with a pale tip. Its breeding plumage includes a distinctive patch of bright buff feathers behind the eye ("horns") and extending back to the nape of the neck and contrasting sharply with its black head. The foreneck, flanks and upper breast are chestnut-red, while its back is black and belly white. This plumage is shared by both sexes.

Weight: 300 to 570 g (10.6 to 20.1 oz)

Length: 31 to 38 cm (12 to 15 in)

Report Horned Grebe sightings to [www.ebird.org](http://www.ebird.org)  
or [NWT\\_NUChecklist.TNO\\_NUReleve@canada.ca](mailto:NWT_NUChecklist.TNO_NUReleve@canada.ca)

## Potential Threats in the Northwest Territories

- Increases in nest predators such as crows, ravens, magpies, gulls, mink and foxes.
- Predation on chicks by Northern Pike and gulls.
- Climate change may cause loss of wetlands due to drought or changes in water quality.



## Typical Habitat

- Habitat for Horned Grebe includes small ponds, marshes and wetlands, either natural or man-made.
- Grebes build floating nests in shallow water, and use willow, cattails or other plants for protection from predators and shelter from strong waves.



Horned Grebe ■  
National Parks ▨

Horned Grebes arrive in the NWT in May. They lay five to seven eggs that hatch in mid-June and July. Adults leave the NWT by mid-August and young leave by early September. They winter along the Pacific and Atlantic coasts of North America. They eat aquatic insects, small fish and crustaceans. Horned Grebe numbers have declined in their wintering areas, but similar declines have not been observed in the NWT.

## Did you know?

- Once hatched, chicks are almost immediately able to swim and dive underwater. However, during the first few weeks they often ride on the backs of their parents and can even go underwater with them during dives.
- Both parents participate in raising the chicks. Often the pair will split the brood and each parent will care for half the chicks.
- Horned Grebes are known for eating their own feathers to aid in digestion and even feed feathers to young chicks.

# Hudsonian Godwit

*Limosa haemastica*



	Assessment	Legal List
Canada	<b>Threatened - 2019</b>	Under consideration
NWT	Not applicable	Not applicable

The Hudsonian Godwit is one of the largest shorebirds that breeds in the NWT. It has long, dark legs and a long, slightly upturned bill. The bill is bi-coloured in both sexes, being pinkish red at the base and becoming darker towards the tip. Females tend to be larger than males, on average, but males have darker plumage overall.

Weight: Females, 246 to 358 g (8.7 to 12.6 oz)

Males, 196 to 266 g (6.9 to 9.4 oz)

Length: 36 to 42 cm (14 to 17 in)

Report Hudsonian Godwit sightings to [www.ebird.org](http://www.ebird.org)  
or NWT\_NUChecklist.TNO\_NUReleve@canada.ca

## Potential Threats in the Northwest Territories

- Breeding habitat degradation from threats like climate change and industrial development.
- Direct disturbance at nest sites from resource exploration and development.



## Typical Habitat

- Habitat for the Hudsonian Godwit includes wetland areas of Arctic and sub-Arctic regions, such as grass/sedge meadows or muskeg.
- The nest site is well concealed and often located on dry hummocks or ridges of tundra polygons.



Hudsonian Godwit ■  
National Parks ▨

Hudsonian Godwits are known to breed at three main locations in North America: western Alaska, the Hudson Bay coast, and along the Beaufort Sea coast in the Inuvialuit Settlement Region (especially the Mackenzie River Delta). Counts at migratory stopover sites indicate the species has declined significantly since the 1970s, although the reliability of these estimates remains low. The causes of this decline are unclear, but the species is considered vulnerable to disturbance because many individuals in the population can gather together at only a small number of key staging and wintering sites.

## Did you know?

- Hudsonian Godwits undertake one of the longest migrations of any bird species in the world. They can travel more than 32,000 km annually between their North American breeding grounds and wintering sites in South America.
- Hudsonian Godwits undergo drastic physiological changes to prepare for their long migration. Muscles used for flight can triple in size, fat stores increase dramatically, and digestive organs (which aren't useful for flight) can shrink to a fraction of their normal size in order to reduce weight. Overall, their body mass may double or even triple.

# Ivory Gull

*Pagophila eburnea*



	Assessment	Legal List
Canada	<b>Endangered - 2006</b>	<b>Endangered - 2009</b>
NWT	Not applicable	Not applicable

The Ivory Gull is a medium-sized gull that can be identified by its pure white plumage and black legs.

Weight: 448 to 687 g (16 to 24 oz)

Length: 40 to 49 cm (16 to 19 in)

Report Ivory Gull sightings to [www.ebird.org](http://www.ebird.org)  
or NWT\_NUChecklist.TNO\_NUReleve@canada.ca

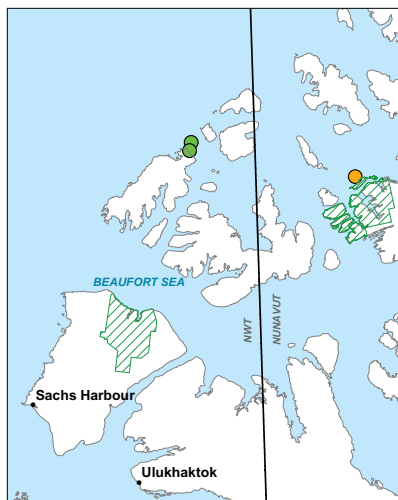
## Potential Threats in the Northwest Territories

- Disturbance and pollution at marine feeding and resting areas.
- Contaminants affecting the food they eat.
- Degradation of marine feeding areas as a result of climate change.
- Human disturbance at colonies.
- Human activities resulting in increased numbers of predators (foxes, ravens and other gulls) near colonies.



## Typical Habitat

- Ivory Gull habitat includes pack ice or areas of open water surrounded by ice (polynyas).
- The Ivory Gull is an uncommon migrant in the Beaufort Sea and may winter in the offshore leads (fractures in the sea ice exposing open water) in some years.



- Ivory Gull Colonies ●  
 Ivory Gull Historic Colonies ●  
 National Parks ▨

Ivory Gulls are found across northern Canada, Greenland and the western European Arctic year-round. From September to May they winter in Davis Strait, Nunavut, along the southern edge of the pack ice. They move to the High Arctic in late May and then into their nesting colonies in June. Colony size ranges from a few to 200 pairs and they lay one to three eggs. Ivory Gull populations have declined by more than 70% since the 1980s and this decline may be attributed to illegal harvest in Greenland, high levels of certain contaminants in their foods, and degradation of ice-related feeding areas as a result of climate change. A national recovery strategy for Ivory Gulls is available at [www.sararegistry.gc.ca](http://www.sararegistry.gc.ca).

## Did you know?

- In Canada, Ivory Gulls currently only nest in Nunavut on windswept plateaus, ice-choked islands, or on steep cliffs of mountains protruding from glaciers. They once nested on Prince Patrick Island in the Northwest Territories, but this site has been abandoned since its initial discovery in the 1800s.
- Large expanses of the western Arctic are apparently unsuitable for nesting Ivory Gulls because there is no ice-free ocean regularly available when the birds arrive to breed. Furthermore, the flat vegetated landscape of these islands supports predators of the Ivory Gull such as foxes.

# Olive-sided Flycatcher

*Contopus cooperi*



	Assessment	Legal List
Canada	<b>Special Concern - 2018</b>	<b>Threatened - 2010</b>
NWT	Not applicable	Not applicable

The Olive-sided Flycatcher is a deep olive-grey with a white breast and belly. The dark patches on either side of its white belly look like an unbuttoned vest. Its bill is short and stout, the top bill is dark and the bottom one is light with a black tip.

Weight: 29 to 35 g (1.0 to 1.2 oz)

Length: 18 to 20 cm (7 to 9 in)

Report Olive-sided Flycatcher sightings to [www.ebird.org](http://www.ebird.org)  
or NWT\_NUChecklist.TNO\_NUReleve@canada.ca

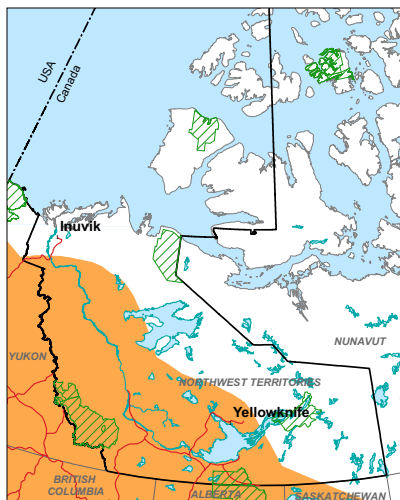
## Potential Threats in the Northwest Territories

- Habitat loss and degradation from human activities.
- Human activities resulting in increased numbers of predators and declining food sources.
- Large-scale decline or some other change in insect populations.



## Typical Habitat

- The Olive-sided Flycatcher lives in wetlands, mature conifer forests and areas with young trees, including those created by wildfires or clear-cuts.
- It also uses open forests containing tall trees or snags for perching.



Olive-sided Flycatcher   
National Parks

The Olive-sided Flycatcher arrives in the NWT in late May and early June. Females incubate 3 to 4 eggs for about 15 days. The Olive-sided Flycatcher leaves the NWT in late July to early August and winters in South and Central America. It eats flying insects. Like many other species of birds that feed on flying insects, the Olive-sided Flycatcher has experienced a decline of about 70% since the 1970s. An 18% decline was recently estimated over a ten-year period (2005-2015). The reasons for the decline are not well understood, but could be related to the impacts of multiple threats or cumulative effects affecting Olive-sided Flycatchers on their breeding grounds, wintering grounds, and during migration. A national recovery strategy for Olive-sided Flycatcher is available at [www.sararegistry.gc.ca](http://www.sararegistry.gc.ca).

## Did you know?

- The Olive-sided Flycatcher perches on tall trees or snags and waits for insects to fly by before pursuing its prey.
- It has a loud song that sounds like “quick, *THREE BEERS*”.
- Females will also sing when agitated or when close to their nest.
- Household cats kill over two billion birds a year in North America. You can help birds by keeping your cats inside.

# Peregrine Falcon

*Falco peregrinus anatum/tundrius*



	Assessment	Legal List
Canada ( <i>anatum/tundrius</i> complex)	<b>Not at Risk - 2017</b>	<b>Special Concern - 2012</b>
NWT	Not assessed	No status

The Peregrine Falcon is a dark-coloured, crow-sized bird with long pointed wings, black cheek patches and a dark “cap” on its head.

Weight: Females, 760 to 1,200 g (27 to 42 oz)

Males, 600 to 800 g (21 to 28 oz)

Length: 35 to 55 cm (14 to 22 in)

Report Peregrine Falcon sightings to  
[WILDLIFEOBS@gov.nt.ca](mailto:WILDLIFEOBS@gov.nt.ca)

## Potential Threats in the Northwest Territories

- Human disturbance at nest sites.
- Development along the Mackenzie River as well as resource exploration or development in other areas.
- Climate-related events that can affect survival of chicks, such as heavy rain events and severe black fly infestations.
- Other potential threats include susceptibility to DDT and other organochlorine pesticide contamination, poaching of eggs for falconry, declining songbird or seabird prey populations, and emerging diseases.



## Typical Habitat

- Peregrine Falcons nest on sheltered ledges or crevices in cliffs near water, in areas with access to prey (mainly birds).



Peregrine Falcon ■  
National Parks ▨

Peregrine Falcon populations suffered a serious decline in the 1970s due to the wide-spread use of DDT as a pesticide. Reduction in DDT use worldwide and active recovery efforts have helped the species recover. Since the 1970s, populations in Canada have shown continuing increases up to near historical numbers. Populations have increased in the NWT as well, where surveys found a 58% increase in the number of occupied nesting territories from 1990/95 to 2010/15. A national management plan for Peregrine Falcon is available at [www.sararegistry.gc.ca](http://www.sararegistry.gc.ca).

## Did you know?

- The Peregrine Falcon's comeback is a good example of how addressing threats can help species at risk to recover.
- Peregrine Falcon was previously listed as Threatened in Canada, but downlisted to Special Concern under the federal *Species at Risk Act* in 2012. In 2017, COSEWIC re-assessed the *anatum/tundrius* complex as Not at Risk.
- Peregrine Falcons can reach speeds of more than 320 kph when diving for their prey.

# Red Knot

***islandica* subspecies**

*Calidris canutus islandica*



Canada

Assessment

**Special Concern - 2007**

NWT

Not applicable

Legal List

**Special Concern - 2012**

Not applicable

The Red Knot is a medium-sized shorebird with a small head, straight black bill (tapering from thick base to thinner tip) and long tapered wings, giving an elongated streamlined profile to the body. Red Knots in breeding plumage have a red face, breast and belly. The *islandica* Red Knots have more vivid breeding colours than the *rufa* subspecies of Red Knot.

Weight: 135 g (5 oz)

Length: 23 to 25 cm (9 to 10 in)

Report Red Knot sightings to [www.ebird.org](http://www.ebird.org)  
or [NWT\\_NUChecklist.TNO\\_NUReleve@canada.ca](mailto:NWT_NUChecklist.TNO_NUReleve@canada.ca)

## Potential Threats in the Northwest Territories

- Breeding habitat degradation from threats like climate change and industrial development.
- Direct disturbance at nest sites from resource exploration and development.



## Typical Habitat

- Red Knots live in dry vegetated and barren habitats in the Arctic such as windswept ridges, slopes or plateaus
- Their nests are usually placed in a small patch of vegetation within about 500 m of a pond, wetland or waterbody.



Red Knot (*islandica* and *rufa* subspecies) ■  
National Parks ▨

The Red Knot *islandica* subspecies is one of two subspecies of Red Knot known to breed in the NWT. The *islandica* subspecies breeds on the high Arctic islands north of Banks Island and winters in northwest

Europe. Red Knots typically arrive on the breeding grounds from late-May to early-June and begin laying their clutch of four eggs by mid to late-June. The eggs are incubated for a period of 21 to 23 days before the chicks hatch in mid-July. The Red Knot *islandica* subspecies population has declined since the 1980s due to a decrease in their food source on their wintering grounds. A national management plan for Red Knot *islandica* subspecies is available at [www.sararegistry.gc.ca](http://www.sararegistry.gc.ca).

## Did you know?

- Nests are extremely hard to find because knots are well camouflaged and do not leave the nest, even when approached.
- To prepare for migration to their breeding grounds, Red Knots increase the size of the parts of their body used for flying (heart and flight muscles) and decrease the size of the parts not used for flight (digestive system). Once they arrive on their breeding grounds, their reproductive organs increase in size and their heart and flight muscles decrease to normal size.
- There is a third subspecies of Red Knot called *roselaari* that is federally listed as Threatened. New information suggests *roselaari* breeds in Alaska and Russia and only occurs in Canada, in small numbers, during migration at a few minor stopover sites.

# Red Knot

**rufa subspecies**

*Calidris canutus rufa*



	Assessment	Legal List
Canada	<b>Endangered - 2007</b>	<b>Endangered - 2012</b>
NWT	Not applicable	Not applicable

The Red Knot is a medium-sized shorebird with a small head, straight black bill (tapering from thick base to thinner tip) and long tapered wings, giving an elongated streamlined profile to the body. Red Knots in breeding plumage have a red face, breast and belly. The *rufa* Red Knot breeding plumage is paler and more “washed out” than the *islandica* subspecies.

Weight: 135 g (5 oz)

Length: 23 to 25 cm (9 to 10 in)

Report Red Knot sightings to [www.ebird.org](http://www.ebird.org)  
or [NWT\\_NUChecklist.TNO\\_NUReleve@canada.ca](mailto:NWT_NUChecklist.TNO_NUReleve@canada.ca)

## Potential Threats in the Northwest Territories

- Breeding habitat degradation from threats like climate change and industrial development.
- Direct disturbance at nest sites from resource exploration and development.



## Typical Habitat

- Red Knots live in dry vegetated and barren habitats in the Arctic such as windswept ridges, slopes or plateaus.
- Their nests are usually placed in a small patch of vegetation within about 500 m of a pond, wetland or waterbody.



Red Knot (*islandica* and *rufo* subspecies) ■  
National Parks ▨

The Red Knot *rufo* subspecies is one of two Red Knot subspecies known to breed in the NWT. The *rufo* subspecies breeds in the central Canadian Arctic, potentially including Banks and western Victoria Islands in the NWT, and winters in southern Chile and Argentina. Red Knots typically arrive on the breeding grounds from late-May to early-June and begin laying their clutch of four eggs by mid to late-June. The eggs are incubated for a period of 21 to 23 days before the chicks hatch in mid-July. The Red Knot *rufo* subspecies population has dramatically declined since the 1980s due to a decrease in their primary food source on their migration route. A national recovery strategy for Red Knot *rufo* subspecies is available at [www.sararegistry.gc.ca](http://www.sararegistry.gc.ca).

## Did you know?

- Delaware Bay in New Jersey, U.S.A., is a critical northward migration stopover for *rufo* Red Knots. Their migration is timed to coincide with the spawning of Horseshoe Crabs.
- Horseshoe Crab eggs are a very important food source for migrating *rufo* Red Knots because the eggs, unlike any other food resource, are immediately metabolized into fat. The birds must double their weight at Delaware Bay to successfully continue their northward migration to the breeding grounds.
- There is a third subspecies of Red Knot called *roselaari* that is federally listed as Threatened. New information suggests *roselaari* breeds in Alaska and Russia and only occurs in Canada, in small numbers, during migration at a few minor stopover sites.

# Red-necked Phalarope

*Phalaropus lobatus*



	Assessment	Legal List
Canada	<b>Special Concern - 2014</b>	<b>Special Concern - 2019</b>
NWT	Not applicable	Not applicable

The Red-necked Phalarope is a small shorebird with a thin, needle-like bill. Both sexes have a dark head with a white spot above the eye, white throat and a dark back with bold, buff-coloured streaking. The bright, chestnut-red stripe that extends down the sides of the neck from behind the ear is distinctive. Females have brighter and bolder colours overall and are slightly larger than males.

Weight: 29 to 44 g (1.0 to 1.6 oz)  
Length: 18 to 20 cm (7.1 to 7.9 in)

Report Red-necked Phalarope sightings to [www.ebird.org](http://www.ebird.org)  
or [NWT\\_NUChecklist.TNO\\_NUReleve@canada.ca](mailto:NWT_NUChecklist.TNO_NUReleve@canada.ca)

## Potential Threats in the Northwest Territories

- Breeding habitat degradation from threats like climate change and industrial development.
- Direct disturbance at nest sites from resource exploration and development.



## Typical Habitat

- The Red-necked Phalarope breeds in low and sub-Arctic tundra, or tundra-forest transition habitats.
- Nests are typically found in grass-sedge vegetation near freshwater wetlands, lakes, ponds, rivers or streams.



Red-necked Phalarope ■  
National Parks ▨

Red-necked Phalaropes can be found throughout much of the NWT during the breeding season, arriving in the territory from late-May to early-June. Females lay a clutch of four eggs which is then incubated by the male for a period of 19-21 days. Like other phalaropes, they spend much of their life in oceanic environments, effectively making them amongst the world's smallest "seabirds." Red-necked Phalaropes appear to have experienced significant declines at an important migratory staging area since the 1970s, but the overall population trend is unknown.

## Did you know?

- Red-necked Phalaropes spend most of the year at sea, coming inland during the breeding season and on migration.
- The usual sex-roles found in most bird species are reversed in phalaropes. Females have brightly-coloured plumage and compete for males, who are more camouflaged and are solely responsible for parental care of the eggs and young.
- Red-necked Phalaropes feed on plankton and aquatic invertebrates which they capture with their bills while swimming. They can often be observed spinning in circles, which creates an upward current that draws prey items closer to the surface where they can be captured more easily.

# Rusty Blackbird

*Euphagus carolinus*



	Assessment	Legal List
Canada	<b>Special Concern - 2017</b>	<b>Special Concern - 2009</b>
NWT	Not assessed	No status

Rusty Blackbirds are medium-sized forest birds. During the breeding season (May to July), males are uniformly black with a faint greenish gloss on the body. Females are slate grey without gloss. In fall and winter, males and females show rusty brown feathers on the head, back and chest.

Weight: 45 to 80 g (1.6 to 2.8 oz)

Length: 21 to 25 cm (8.2 to 9.8 in)

Report Rusty Blackbird sightings to [www.ebird.org](http://www.ebird.org)  
or [NWT\\_NUChecklist.TNO\\_NUReleve@canada.ca](mailto:NWT_NUChecklist.TNO_NUReleve@canada.ca)

## Potential Threats in the Northwest Territories

- Activities that change their forest and wetland habitats such as forest clearing, changes in surface water levels or flow patterns and wetlands drying as a result of climate change.
- Mercury in wetlands, deposited from the atmosphere and released by melting permafrost.
- Human activities resulting in declining food sources and increased numbers of predators.



## Typical Habitat

- Rusty Blackbirds live throughout the boreal forest, and in wetland areas during the breeding season and migration.
- They breed near open water in treed wetlands (bogs, fens and swamps), often in loose colonies.
- Rusty Blackbirds primarily nest in small spruce trees.



Rusty Blackbird   
National Parks

Rusty Blackbirds live in the boreal forest of the NWT from early May to mid-October. They typically congregate into flocks in the fall and migrate to the south and east-central United States. This formerly abundant species has seen steep population declines since the early 20th century, including a decline of 66-80% from 1970 to 2014. It appears the pattern of long-term decline may have moved towards a stable trend over the last decade. The population trend in the NWT is uncertain but there are some indications of a possible decline based on Breeding Bird Surveys. A national management plan for Rusty Blackbird is available at [www.sararegistry.gc.ca](http://www.sararegistry.gc.ca).

## Did you know?

- Rusty Blackbirds rely almost exclusively on aquatic insects and larvae for food, particularly dragonfly nymphs.
- Rusty Blackbirds can accumulate high levels of mercury contamination through the insects they eat.
- Blackbirds are not protected by the *Migratory Birds Convention Act*, but the NWT *Wildlife Act* protects Rusty Blackbird nests and eggs from disturbance.
- In their southern range, Rusty Blackbirds are affected by blackbird control programs associated with farming.

# Short-eared Owl

*Asio flammeus*



	Assessment	Legal List
Canada	<b>Special Concern - 2008</b>	<b>Special Concern - 2012</b>
NWT	Not assessed	No status

Short-eared Owls are light tan with wide brown streaks on their upper-parts and thinner well-defined vertical streaks on their breast and belly. There are black spots on the undersides of their wings near the wrists. They have small “ear tufts” and black bands that frame their yellow eyes. Short-eared Owls are about the size of a crow. Females are slightly larger and darker than males and have heavier streaking.

Weight: Females, 284 to 475 g (10.0 to 16.8 oz)

Males, 206 to 363 g (7.3 to 12.8 oz)

Length: 34 to 42 cm (13.3 to 16.4 in)

Report Short-eared Owl sightings to  
[WILDLIFE OBS@gov.nt.ca](mailto:WILDLIFE OBS@gov.nt.ca)

## Potential Threats in the Northwest Territories

- Habitat loss and degradation from human activities, mainly in their southern range, are potential threats to Short-eared Owls.
- Climate change could alter their tundra habitat or prey populations, but these impacts are difficult to predict.



## Typical Habitat

- In summer, Short-eared Owls nest on the ground in grasslands, tundra, bogs, marshes and other open (non-forested) areas.
- Their habitat includes areas with abundant small mammals to eat (the owls move around as small mammal populations fluctuate).



Short-eared Owl ■  
National Parks ▨

Short-eared Owls likely arrive in the NWT in April or May. They lay an average of seven eggs by mid-June and the owlets hatch in early July. Short-eared Owls probably leave the NWT by late October. It is uncertain where owls from the NWT spend the winter. Short-eared Owls have suffered significant declines in Canada since the 1960s, but their numbers may have stabilized since 2002. A national management plan for Short-eared Owl is available at [www.sararegistry.gc.ca](http://www.sararegistry.gc.ca).

## Did you know?

- One of the best ways to identify a Short-eared Owl is to watch its distinct moth-like flight when hunting (deep wing-beats, occasional hovering and cutting low over patches of grassland or marsh).
- Short-eared Owls are the only owls that build their own nests.
- They typically search for food at dawn and dusk.

# Whooping Crane

*Grus americana*



	Assessment	Legal List
Canada	<b>Endangered - 2010</b>	<b>Endangered - 2003</b>
NWT	Not applicable	Not applicable

Measuring an impressive 1.5 m, Whooping Cranes are the tallest birds in North America. They have a white body with a red and black head and black-tipped wings.

Weight: 6.4 to 7.3 kg (14 to 16 lb)

Height: 1.5 m (5 ft)

Report Whooping Crane sightings to [www.ebird.org](http://www.ebird.org) or the Whooping Crane Hotline: (306) 975-5595

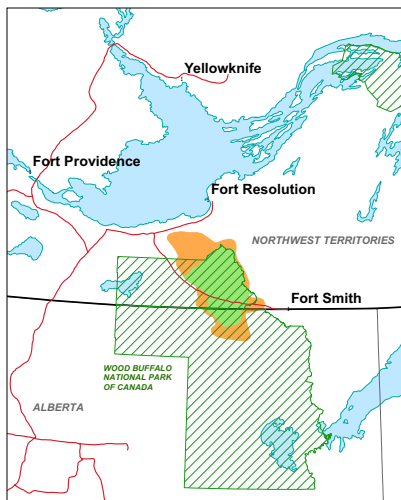
## Potential Threats in the Northwest Territories

- Habitat loss and degradation.
- Disturbance on breeding grounds (aircraft flights, human foot traffic and ATV traffic).
- Accidental shooting.
- Predators on breeding grounds (black bear, wolverine, grey wolf, red fox, mink, lynx and ravens).
- Collisions with power lines.



## Typical Habitat

- Whooping Cranes nest in shallow ponds that contain bulrush or sedge, and that are separated by narrow forested ridges in and around the north-east corner of Wood Buffalo National Park of Canada.
- Critical habitat (meaning the habitat needed for survival or recovery) is identified and protected under the federal *Species at Risk Act* in Wood Buffalo National Park of Canada.
- Non-breeding Whooping Cranes use a much wider area for several years before breeding in and around Wood Buffalo National Park of Canada.



Whooping Crane ■  
 Whooping Crane Critical Habitat ■  
 National Parks ▨

Whooping Cranes winter in southern Texas and arrive on their breeding grounds in the NWT in April and May. During fall migration, they spend up to 8 weeks in Saskatchewan. Whooping Cranes usually lay two eggs in a nest consisting of a pile of vegetation in shallow water. Usually only one of the chicks survives to fly south in September. Whooping Cranes eat small fish, amphibians and other animals, insects, roots, berries and grain. They almost went extinct in the 1940s due to habitat loss in their prairie breeding grounds and overharvesting by settlers. Recently, the population has been slowly increasing. A national recovery strategy for Whooping Crane is available at [www.sararegistry.gc.ca](http://www.sararegistry.gc.ca).

## Did you know?

- Whooping Cranes are able to fly non-stop for up to 10 hours, covering distances of 750 km.
- From 21 cranes in the early 1940s, the nearly 850 Whooping Cranes in North America today are descendants of only three family lines.
- The population that nests in and around Wood Buffalo

National Park of Canada is the only naturally occurring and self-sustaining population in the world. The population is around 500 birds.

- In 2017, a record high number of 63 Whooping Crane chicks were born and fledged in or near Wood Buffalo National Park of Canada.

# Yellow Rail

*Coturnicops noveboracensis*



	Assessment	Legal List
Canada	<b>Special Concern - 2009</b>	<b>Special Concern - 2003</b>
NWT	Not applicable	Not applicable

The Yellow Rail is a small bird with a short tail, short bill and buff-coloured plumage. The wide dark stripes on its back are crossed by white bars. The white wing patch, which is visible in flight, helps distinguish Yellow Rails from other similar marsh birds.

Weight: Males, 41 to 68 g (1.4 to 2.4 oz)

Length: 15 to 19 cm (5.9 to 7.5 in)

Report Yellow Rail sightings to [www.ebird.org](http://www.ebird.org)  
or [NWT\\_NUChecklist.TNO\\_NUReleve@canada.ca](mailto:NWT_NUChecklist.TNO_NUReleve@canada.ca)

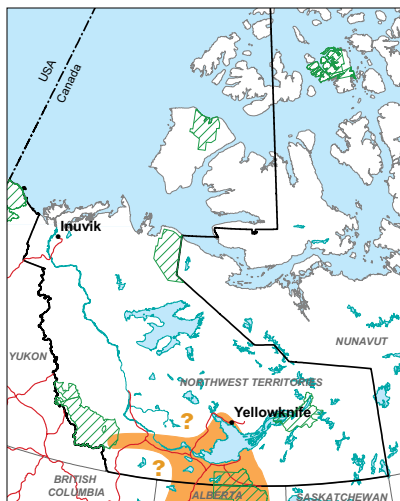
## Potential Threats in the Northwest Territories

- Habitat loss and degradation from human activities.
- Breeding habitat degradation from climate change.
- Human activities resulting in declining food sources and increased numbers of predators.



## Typical Habitat

- Yellow Rails nest in marshes dominated by sedges and grasses, wet meadows and shrubby wetlands.
- Nesting areas have little or no standing water (generally 0 to 12 cm) and the ground is saturated with water throughout the summer.
- Recent observations in Edézhíe and Fort Good Hope suggest their breeding range in the NWT may be larger than previously thought.



Yellow Rail   
National Parks

Yellow Rails breed in Canada and the northern United States and winter on the East and Gulf coasts of the United States.

They likely arrive in the NWT in the latter part of May and nesting occurs in June and possibly July. Females lay seven to ten eggs on nests built on or just above the ground that are concealed with a canopy of dead vegetation. There is evidence of some population decline since the early 2000s. The reasons for the decline are not well understood, but they could be related to the impacts of multiple threats or cumulative effects affecting Yellow Rails on their breeding grounds, wintering grounds, and during migration. A national management plan for Yellow Rails is available at [www.sararegistry.gc.ca](http://www.sararegistry.gc.ca).

## Did you know?

- Yellow Rails are rarely seen. They expertly hide in the dense marsh vegetation, aided by their camouflaged plumage.
- The diet of Yellow Rails is mainly invertebrates and seeds.
- The unique call of the Yellow Rail is a rapid series of five monotonous and metallic ticks (or clicks) sounding like two pebbles or coins tapped together: *tick-tick, tick-tick-tick*. Calling can mainly be heard during the hours from dusk to dawn, and the sound can carry for up to a kilometre.

# Bull Trout

*Salvelinus confluentus*



## Assessment

Canada  
(Western Arctic  
Population)

**Special Concern - 2012**

NWT

Not applicable

## Legal List

**Special Concern - 2019**

Not applicable

The Bull Trout has a long and slender body, a large, broad head with a prominent upper jaw and a slightly forked tail fin. Its back is olive-green to blue-grey and its sides are silvery with small, pink, lilac, yellow-orange or red spots. Its belly is pale coloured and may become yellow, orange or red in males during spawning. Pelvic and anal fins have white leading edges with no black line.

Length: Varies based upon its life history (see *Did you know?*)

Resident: 250 to 410 mm

Fluvial: 400 to 730 mm

Adfluvial: 400 to 900 mm

Report Bull Trout sightings to  
[WILDLIFE@BS@gov.nt.ca](mailto:WILDLIFE@BS@gov.nt.ca)

## Potential Threats in the Northwest Territories

- Poor habitat quality and fragmentation due to industrial activities and infrastructure projects.
- Although overlap in distribution is minimal in the NWT, Bull Trout are difficult to distinguish from other char and trout that are commercially fished.



## Typical Habitat

- Bull Trout are widely distributed, but in low abundance, throughout much of southern (Dehcho) and central (Sahtú) NWT in drainages west of the Mackenzie River. The northernmost known location is the Gayna River.
- Spawning occurs in the fall in water temperatures below 10°C in clean flowing streams over cobble or loose gravel. These areas are typically associated with groundwater sources.



Bull Trout (Western Arctic Population) ■  
National Parks ▨

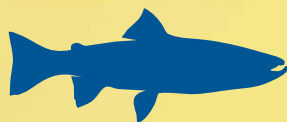
The Bull Trout is a member of the trout and salmon family. In Canada, it is found in British Columbia, Alberta, Yukon and the NWT. Bull Trout is a coldwater species found in lakes, streams and rivers from sea level to mountainous areas. Its habitat is described best as cold, clean, complex and connected. It feeds on a wide variety of items, including other fish. The typical maximum age of Bull Trout is unknown, but specimens have been recorded up to 24 years old.

## Did you know?

- There are four types of life history strategies used by Bull Trout. The resident form is isolated and spends its life in small rivers or streams. The fluvial form lives in small rivers and streams, migrating between spawning streams and larger streams. The adfluvial form is similar to the fluvial form, but matures in lakes rather than streams and rivers. The anadromous form is found only in southwestern British Columbia and Washington, and migrates from spawning freshwater streams to the sea.
- The female digs her nest (redd) accompanied by a dominant male, who defends her eggs from other males. Some males termed “sneakers” are able to mimic females, allowing them to approach close enough to fertilize some of the eggs.

# Dolly Varden

*Salvelinus malma malma*



Canada  
(Western Arctic  
Population)

## Assessment

**Special Concern - 2010**

NWT

Not applicable

## Legal List

**Special Concern - 2017**

Not applicable

Dolly Varden exhibit a typical salmonoid body shape with large eyes below the top of a round, medium-sized head. Juveniles are brown coloured with a whitish belly, with small red spots and rectangular marks on their sides and back. Adults have small, pale pink or red spots, with surrounding bluish halos. Spawning sea-run males are brightly coloured and develop a hook on the lower jaw, while females, non-spawners and freshwater males are more muted in colour.

Length: Anadromous forms: over 350 mm (13.8 in)

Freshwater forms: less than 300 mm (11.8 in)

Report Dolly Varden sightings to  
[WILDLIFEOBS@gov.nt.ca](mailto:WILDLIFEOBS@gov.nt.ca)

## Potential Threats in the Northwest Territories

- Drier and warmer conditions due to climate change could lead to lower water levels and reduced groundwater flows, which could impact spawning and overwintering habitat.
- Other threats may include over-fishing pressures, offshore developments that restrict migrations, and land-based developments that impact freshwater and water quality.



## Typical Habitat

- Anadromous and freshwater forms of Dolly Varden spawn and overwinter in freshwater springs where good oxygen and temperature levels provide high quality habitat for survival and egg incubation.
- Gwich'in knowledge indicates that spawning habitat requires relatively warm water, a fast current, and plenty of shoreline cover and vegetation, with abundant insect larvae available for food.
- Anadromous Dolly Varden migrate to the sea to feed for the summer and return in the fall to freshwater wintering grounds.



Dolly Varden ■  
National Parks ▨

Dolly Varden belong to the same family as trout and salmon. Individuals may be anadromous (use both sea water and freshwater during their life) or live in freshwater only. In North America, the Western Arctic Population ranges from Alaska, east along the North Slope of the Yukon Territory, and east to the Mackenzie River.

## Did you know?

- Cross-breeding between forms is not uncommon. Some freshwater males live alongside anadromous fish in the fall and winter and reproduce by “sneaking” into redds (egg laying sites) to spawn with anadromous females.

# Northern Wolffish

*Anarhichas denticulatus*



	Assessment	Legal List
Canada	<b>Threatened - 2012</b>	<b>Threatened - 2003</b>
NWT	Not applicable	Not applicable

The Northern Wolffish is a marine fish with protruding front teeth and powerful jaws. Its head is small, with a small mouth, blunt snout and small eyes. Its body is long and stout, with small or no pectoral fins. It has a uniform body colour, ranging from charcoal-black to dark chocolate.

Weight: 13.5 to 20 kg (30 to 44 lb)

Length: 0.8 to 1.45 m (2.6 to 4.8 ft), but can grow up to 180 cm (5.9 ft)

Report Northern Wolffish sightings to  
[WILDLIFE OBS@gov.nt.ca](mailto:WILDLIFE OBS@gov.nt.ca)

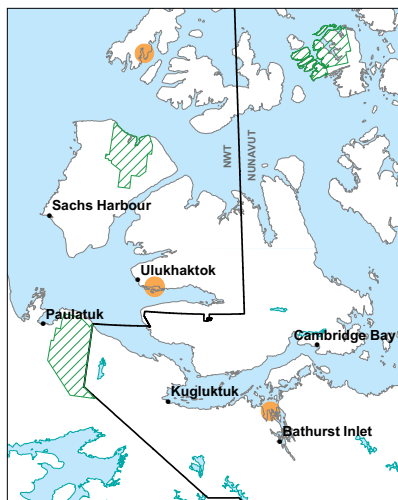
## Potential Threats in the Northwest Territories

- Unknown threats in the western Arctic.



## Typical Habitat

- The Northern Wolffish is found over sand and shell hash bottom types in temperatures between 2.5°C and 4.5°C, and at depths between 500 and 1,000 m.



Northern Wolffish ●  
National Parks ▨

The Northern Wolffish is a solitary fish that is slow-growing and long-lived. It inhabits cold, deep ocean waters and preys on jellyfish, sea urchins, crabs and starfish. This fish does not undertake long migrations and the size of its territory is very restricted. Northern Wolffish reach maturity at five years of age and can live to 14 years. A primarily eastern species, it is found as far north as the Davis Strait off Nunavut, off southwest Greenland, on the northeast Newfoundland and Labrador shelves, on the Flemish Cap, in the Gulf of St. Lawrence and sometimes on the Scotian Shelf. Northern Wolffish have been reported in only two locations in the NWT: Prince Albert Sound on western Victoria Island and Mould Bay on Prince Patrick Island. It is unknown if the Northern Wolffish is rare in the NWT or if the lack of captures reflects the limited amount of fishing effort in marine waters of the western Arctic. A national recovery strategy for Northern Wolffish is available at [www.sararegistry.gc.ca](http://www.sararegistry.gc.ca).

## Did you know?

- The fearsome teeth of the Northern Wolffish ensure that it has few natural predators.
- In most areas it inhabits, this fish is not eaten by humans because of its watery and jelly-like flesh.

# Shortjaw Cisco

*Coregonus zenithicus*



	Assessment	Legal List
Canada	<b>Threatened - 2003</b>	No status
NWT	Not applicable	Not applicable

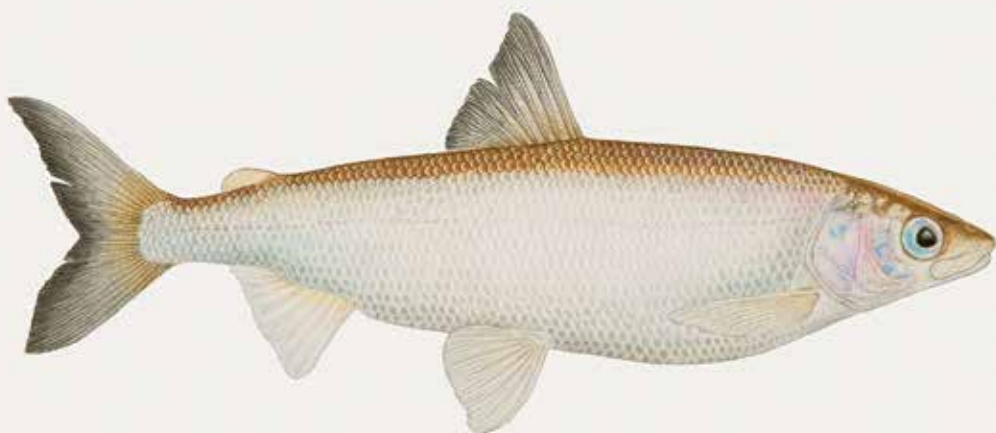
The Shortjaw Cisco has a thin, elliptical body that is covered with large, smooth scales. It is mainly silver in colour, with olive or tan colouring on the back and a white belly. Its small, toothless mouth has a bottom jaw that is often shorter than, or even with, the upper jaw. The gill rakers (or comb-like structures on the inner surface of the bony arch supporting the gill) number between 32 and 46, which is typically less than other cisco species.

Length: 340 to 420 mm (13.3 to 16.4 in)

Report Shortjaw Cisco sightings to  
[WILDLIFE OBS@gov.nt.ca](mailto:WILDLIFE OBS@gov.nt.ca)

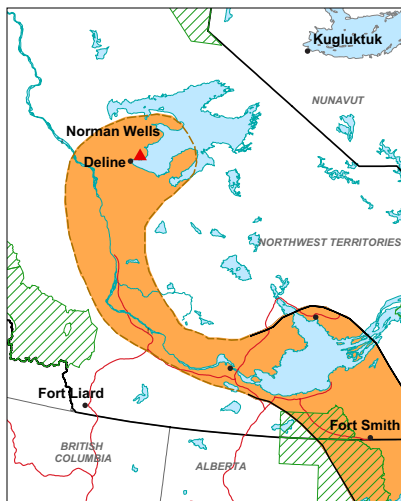
## Potential Threats in the Northwest Territories

- May include local habitat degradation, climate change and hybridization with other ciscoes.



## Typical Habitat

- The Shortjaw Cisco has been reported in Great Slave Lake and Tazin River. There are also unconfirmed reports from Great Bear Lake.
- The Shortjaw Cisco inhabits deep waters, 55 to 180 m, with reports of movement into shallower waters during the spawning season.
- Juveniles have been found in water as shallow as 10 m.



- Shortjaw Cisco (actual)   
 Shortjaw Cisco (estimated)   
 Possible location (to be verified) ▲  
 National Parks

The Shortjaw Cisco is a member of the same family as trout and salmon. While best known from the Great Lakes, Shortjaw Cisco has been reported in a few deeper lakes from Ontario to the NWT. Shortjaw Cisco eat shrimp, crustaceans and insects. In turn, they may be eaten by Lake Trout, Northern Pike and Burbot. Shortjaw Cisco spawning occurs in the fall. Eggs are deposited on clay bottoms and are left to develop unattended. Lifespan is typically 10 to 13 years, but individuals up to 20 years old have been found in Great Slave Lake.

## Did you know?

- The Shortjaw Cisco, along with Lake Cisco (previously called Lake Herring), may have been two of the key colonizing species into lakes created as the glaciers retreated after the last ice age.
- Cisco species identification is difficult because ciscoes can have different shapes and colours even within the same population. This variation has likely interacted with hybridization, local adaptation and parallel evolution to produce a confounding assortment of forms and species of ciscoes.
- The Governor-in-Council referred the Shortjaw Cisco back to COSEWIC in 2006 for further consideration.

# Northern Leopard Frog

*Lithobates pipiens*



Canada  
(Western Boreal/  
Prairie Populations)

NWT

## Assessment

**Special Concern - 2009**

**Threatened - 2013**

## Legal List

**Special Concern - 2005**

**Threatened - 2015**

The Northern Leopard Frog is usually green, or sometimes brownish. It has dark spots surrounded by distinct, light borders and an unmarked, milky-white underside. Newly hatched tadpoles are slender and black.

Length: Newly hatched tadpole, 8 mm (0.3 in)

Adult (snout-to-vent), 5 to 11 cm (1.9 to 4.3 in)

Report Northern Leopard Frog sightings  
to [WILDLIFEOBS@gov.nt.ca](mailto:WILDLIFEOBS@gov.nt.ca)

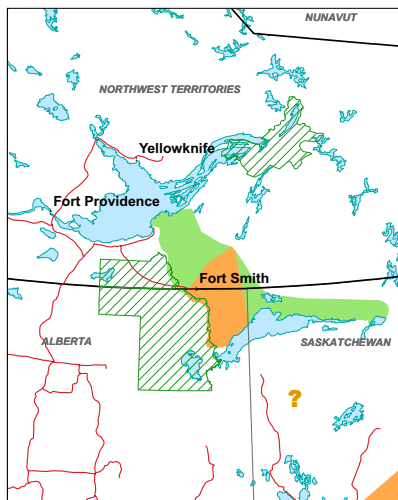
## Potential Threats in the Northwest Territories

- Diseases (e.g. ranavirus and chytrid fungus).
- Loss or modification of wetland habitats from human activities.
- Accidental human-caused mortality.
- Environmental contaminants.
- Increasing UV-B radiation.
- Multiple threats, such as disease, habitat change and UV-B radiation, can have complex and interacting effects.



## Typical Habitat

- The Northern Leopard Frog breeds in lakes, ponds, marshes and flooded areas of streams.
- Summer ranges include meadows and grasslands.
- Northern Leopard Frogs over-winter in the unfrozen bottoms of rivers and lakes.



Northern Leopard Frog (recent) ■  
 Northern Leopard Frog (historic) ■  
 National Parks ▨

Northern Leopard Frogs are uncommon in the NWT, having only been found near the Slave, Taltson and Tazin rivers. Their call is a long drawn-out rattling snore, usually ending with several rapid short grunts. The number of Northern Leopard Frogs has declined in large parts of western Canada since 1980. The range in the NWT is not well known but there is evidence that the occupied range in the NWT may have shrunk since the late 1980s. The cause of population and range changes remains unknown. A national management plan for Northern Leopard Frog is available at [www.sararegistry.gc.ca](http://www.sararegistry.gc.ca) and an NWT amphibian management plan is available at [www.nwt-speciesatrisk.ca](http://www.nwt-speciesatrisk.ca).

## Did you know?

- Northern Leopard Frogs, like most amphibians in the NWT, are at the northern-most limit of their range.
- Connectivity between the NWT population and populations in southern Canada is uncertain.

# Western Toad

*Anaxyrus boreas*



## Assessment

Canada  
(Non-calling Population)

**Special Concern - 2012**

NWT

**Threatened - 2014**

## Legal List

**Special Concern - 2005**

**Threatened - 2016**

Western Toads are usually green or brown. They have a light stripe down the middle of the back and reddish-brown “warts” on the back, sides and upper limbs. Newly hatched tadpoles and toadlets are black.

Length: Newly hatched tadpole: 1 cm (0.4 in)

Adult (snout to vent): 5 to 12 cm (1.9 to 4.7 in)

Report Western Toad sightings to  
[WILDLIFE OBS@gov.nt.ca](mailto:WILDLIFE OBS@gov.nt.ca)

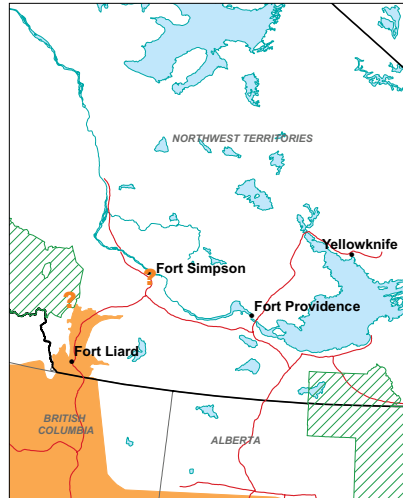
## Potential Threats in the Northwest Territories

- Diseases (e.g. ranavirus and chytrid fungus).
- Accidental mortality from traffic or ATVs.
- Loss or modification of wetland habitats from human activities.
- Environmental contaminants.
- Increasing UV-B radiation.
- Multiple threats, such as disease, habitat change and UV-B radiation, can have complex and interacting effects.



## Typical Habitat

- Western Toads breed in a wide variety of wetlands such as shallow silty or sandy ponds, lake shores, oxbow wetlands, gravel pits and roadside ditches.
- The toad's summer ranges include shrubby-forested areas, wet shrublands, avalanche slopes and meadows.
- They over-winter by burrowing in the ground with snow cover deep enough (up to 1.3 m) to prevent freezing and moist enough to prevent their skin from drying.



Western Toad ■  
National Parks ▨

Western Toads are found in the Liard River basin in the Dehcho region. They often return to the same wetlands year after year. Western Toads are long-lived amphibians that can live for nine years. Females reach maturity at 4 to 6 years old and usually breed only once in their lifetime. These factors limit the Western Toad's ability to recover from population declines. Western Toad numbers are declining in the southern part of their range in British Columbia and the United States. An NWT amphibian management plan is available at [www.nwt-species-at-risk.ca](http://www.nwt-species-at-risk.ca) and a national management plan for Western Toad is available at [www.sararegistry.gc.ca](http://www.sararegistry.gc.ca).

## Did you know?

- Western Toads are vulnerable to getting run over and killed especially when crossing the Liard Highway near the Muskeg River bridge. Please slow down and watch out for toads!
- Sometimes adults and young toads move together in large groups – this is called a 'mass movement event'.
- A survey in 2019 found three new Western Toad breeding sites, beside the Muskeg River and about 30 km to the north beside the Liard River.
- Male Western Toads in most of Alberta have vocal sacs and produce loud trills (advertisement calls) during the breeding season; those in the NWT do not.



# Gypsy Cuckoo Bumble Bee

*Bombus bohemicus*



## Assessment

Canada

**Endangered - 2014**

NWT

**Data deficient - 2019**

## Legal List

**Endangered - 2018**

No status

Gypsy Cuckoo Bumble Bee is a medium-sized bumble bee. The upper segment of the hind leg has a convex, densely hairy outer surface and lacks a pollen basket. Females usually have a white-tipped abdomen or at least a white patch on the back of the abdomen. Sides of the thorax are mostly black in both sexes. The Gypsy Cuckoo Bumble Bee can be distinguished from other cuckoo bumble bees found in the NWT by black hairs on the top of the head; other similar species have pale hairs.

Length: Females, 1.7 to 1.8 cm; Males, 1.2 to 1.6 cm

**Report Gypsy Cuckoo Bumble Bee sightings to  
WILDLIFE OBS@gov.nt.ca**

## Potential Threats in the Northwest Territories

- Declines in the populations of host species like Western Bumble Bee and Yellow-banded Bumble Bee.
- Introduction of exotic bumble bee species for pollination, which can spread diseases to native bees.
- Use of pesticides and herbicides.
- At high densities, imported honey bees can outcompete native bumble bees for pollen.



## Typical Habitat

- Gypsy Cuckoo Bumble Bees require host bumble bee nests, which are typically underground in abandoned rodent burrows.
- Females probably overwinter in soil, mulch or rotting logs.



Gypsy Cuckoo Bumble Bee   
National Parks

Gypsy Cuckoo Bumble Bee is a 'social parasite'. Like other cuckoo bumble bees, they do not collect pollen or establish their own colonies. Instead, they take advantage of the nests and workers of other 'host' bumble bees. Potential host species found in the NWT include Western Bumble Bee (page 100), Yellow-banded Bumble Bee (page 102) and White-tailed Bumble Bee (also called Cryptic Bumble Bee). Gypsy Cuckoo Bumble Bee is found in northern regions around the world. In the past 20 to 30 years there have been large population declines in eastern Canada and the species has disappeared from many of its former sites. However, Gypsy Cuckoo Bumble Bee can still be found in western Canada. Population size and trend in the NWT is unknown.

## Did you know?

- In spring, the Gypsy Cuckoo Bumble Bee female emerges from her overwintering site and searches for a host nest. She displaces the host queen and lays her own eggs. The host workers then raise her offspring.
- The Gypsy Cuckoo Bumble Bee was recorded at Norman Wells and Fort Simpson in 2017-2018.
- A guide to bumble bees in the NWT is available at [www.enr.gov.nt.ca](http://www.enr.gov.nt.ca) or by contacting [NWTBUGS@gov.nt.ca](mailto:NWTBUGS@gov.nt.ca).

# Suckley's Cuckoo Bumble Bee

*Bombus suckleyi*



	Assessment	Legal List
Canada	<b>Threatened - 2019</b>	Under consideration
NWT	Not assessed	No status

Suckley's Cuckoo Bumble Bee is a medium-sized bumble bee with a black head. The upper segment of the hind leg has a convex, densely hairy outer surface and lacks a pollen basket. Suckley's Cuckoo Bumble Bee looks similar to the Gypsy Cuckoo Bumble Bee (page 94), but its thorax is mostly yellow on the sides. There are prominent triangular ridges on the underside of the last segment of the abdomen.

Length: Females, 1.5 to 2.5 cm (0.59 to 0.98 in)  
Males, 1.5 to 2.2 cm (0.59 to 0.87 in)

**Report Suckley's Cuckoo Bumble Bee sightings  
to [WILDLIFEOPS@gov.nt.ca](mailto:WILDLIFEOPS@gov.nt.ca)**

## Potential Threats in the Northwest Territories

- Declines in the populations of host species, such as Western Bumble Bee and Yellow-banded Bumble Bee.
- Introduction of exotic bumble bee species for pollination, which can spread diseases to native bees.
- Use of pesticides and herbicides.
- At high densities, imported honey bees can outcompete native bumble bees for pollen.



## Typical Habitat

- Suckley's Cuckoo Bumble Bees require host bumble bee nests, which are typically underground in abandoned rodent burrows.
- Females probably overwinter in soil, mulch or rotting logs.
- The bees visit flowers for nectar, such as aster, thistle and goldenrod.



Suckley's Cuckoo Bumble Bee ■  
National Parks ▨

Suckley's Cuckoo Bumble Bee is a 'social parasite'. Like other cuckoo bumble bees, they do not collect pollen or establish their own colonies. Instead, they take advantage of the nests and workers of other 'host' bumble bees. Potential host species found in the NWT include Western Bumble Bee (page 100), Yellow-banded Bumble Bee (page 102) and White-tailed Bumble Bee (also called Cryptic Bumble Bee). Suckley's Cuckoo Bumble Bee was historically widespread in western North America with scattered populations in the east. Populations of their host species have declined in Canada, therefore Suckley's Cuckoo Bumble Bee populations have probably declined also. Population size and trend in the NWT are unknown.

## Did you know?

- Cuckoo bumble bees are naturally less abundant than other bumble bees because they do not produce workers.
- Bumble bees have a type of genetic sex determination that makes them very prone to extinction when population sizes are small.
- A guide to bumble bees in the NWT is available at [www.enrgov.nt.ca](http://www.enrgov.nt.ca) or by contacting [NWTBUGS@gov.nt.ca](mailto:NWTBUGS@gov.nt.ca).

# Transverse Lady Beetle

*Coccinella transversoguttata*



	Assessment	Legal List
Canada	<b>Special Concern - 2016</b>	Under consideration
NWT	Not assessed	No status

Transverse Lady Beetle is a small, round beetle that can be distinguished from other lady beetles by its colour pattern. Its wing covers are red to orange with black markings: a 'transverse' black band across the front and four elongated black spots toward the back. The head is black with two separate pale spots. The plate behind the head is also black with pale markings on either side.

Length: 5.0 to 7.8 mm (0.20 to 0.31 in)

**Report Transverse Lady Beetle sightings to**  
**WILDLIFE OBS@gov.nt.ca**

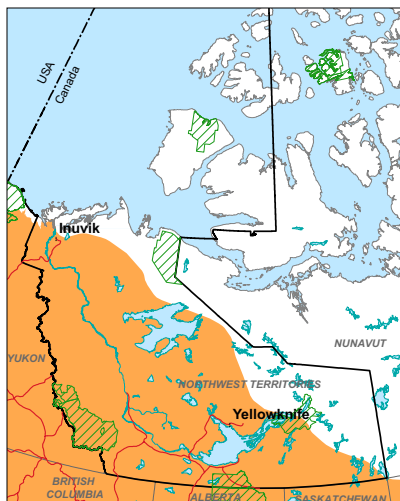
## Potential Threats in the Northwest Territories

- Negative interactions with non-native species such as Seven-spotted Lady Beetle.
- Use of pesticides.



## Typical Habitat

- Transverse Lady Beetles use a wide range of habitats and are found on a variety of plants.
- They move around to take advantage of available prey (aphids and other insects).



Transverse Lady Beetle   
National Parks

Historically, the Transverse Lady Beetle was found across Canada and was one of the most common lady beetle species. When it was common, it played an important role in the biological control of aphids and other ‘pests’ of gardens and crops. However, since 1986 it has undergone population declines. In many areas where it was once common it is now absent, below detection limits, or at low numbers. Reasons for the population declines are unclear, but introduced non-native lady beetles are probably an important factor that has brought increased competition and predation, as well as new diseases and parasites. Pesticide use may also be a factor. The Transverse Lady Beetle is still common in the NWT, Yukon and British Columbia where there are fewer non-native lady beetle species.

## Did you know?

- NWT residents submitting photos to the NWT Species Facebook page have helped scientists to learn about lady beetles in Canada.
- There are 32 native lady beetle species in the NWT and one introduced species. Three other native species are expected to be present, but not yet confirmed.
- A guide to lady beetles in the NWT is available at [www.enrgov.nt.ca](http://www.enrgov.nt.ca) or by contacting [NWTBUGS@gov.nt.ca](mailto:NWTBUGS@gov.nt.ca).

# Western Bumble Bee

*Bombus occidentalis mckayi*



	Assessment	Legal List
Canada ( <i>mckayi</i> subspecies)	<b>Special Concern - 2014</b>	Under consideration
NWT	<b>Data deficient - 2019</b>	No status

Western Bumble Bee is a medium-sized bumble bee. It has a short head and a band of yellow hair across the thorax in front of the base of the wings. Between the wings there is a black band or a large black central spot. The tip of the abdomen is almost always white. The subspecies found in the NWT is the northern long-haired subspecies *mckayi*, which has yellow hair behind the wings and on the third segment of the abdomen.

Length: Female queens, 1.6 to 1.9 cm (0.63 to 0.75 in)  
 Female workers, 1.1 to 1.3 cm (0.43 to 0.51 in)  
 Males, 1.0 to 2.0 cm (0.39 to 0.79 in)

**Report Western Bumble Bee sightings to**  
**WILDLIFE OBS@gov.nt.ca**

## Potential Threats in the Northwest Territories

- High parasite load compared to other bumble bee species.
- Introduction of exotic bumble bee species for pollination, which can spread diseases to native bees.
- Use of pesticides and herbicides.
- At high densities, imported honey bees can outcompete native bumble bees for pollen.



## Typical Habitat

- Western Bumble Bees use a wide range of habitats, as long as flowers and nest sites are available.
- Nests are usually underground in abandoned rodent burrows or within hollows in decaying wood.
- Queens overwinter in loose soil or rotting trees.



Western Bumble Bee ■  
National Parks ▨

The northern subspecies *mckayi* of Western Bumble Bee is found in the western mountains of the NWT as well as northern British Columbia, Alaska and Yukon. Recent surveys suggest the northern subspecies is still common. However, the southern subspecies (*Bombus occidentalis occidentalis*) is experiencing a serious population decline. Because the reasons for the southern decline are unknown, there is cause for concern for the northern subspecies as well.

## Did you know?

- All members of the Western Bumble Bee colony die in the winter except for the new queens. They leave the colony, mate, hibernate and emerge the following spring to establish new colonies.
- Bumble bees play a crucial role in transferring pollen between plants, allowing fertilization, which is essential for fruit and seed production.
- A guide to bumble bees in the NWT is available at [www.enr.gov.nt.ca](http://www.enr.gov.nt.ca) or by contacting [NWTBUGS@gov.nt.ca](mailto:NWTBUGS@gov.nt.ca).

# Yellow-banded Bumble Bee

*Bombus terricola*



	Assessment	Legal List
Canada	<b>Special Concern - 2015</b>	<b>Special Concern - 2018</b>
NWT	<b>Not at Risk - 2019</b>	No status

Yellow-banded Bumble Bee is a medium-sized bumble bee with a short head. It has yellow hair on the second and third segments of the abdomen as well as a band of yellow hair across the thorax in front of the base of the wings. The rest of its body is primarily black, except for a fringe of brownish-yellow hairs on the fifth segment of the abdomen.

Length: Female queens, 1.9 to 2.1 cm (0.75 to 0.83 in)  
Female workers, 1.0 to 1.5 cm (0.39 to 0.59 in)  
Males, 1.3 to 1.5 cm (0.51 to 0.59 in)

Report Yellow-banded Bumble Bee sightings to  
[WILDLIFE OBS@gov.nt.ca](mailto:WILDLIFE OBS@gov.nt.ca)

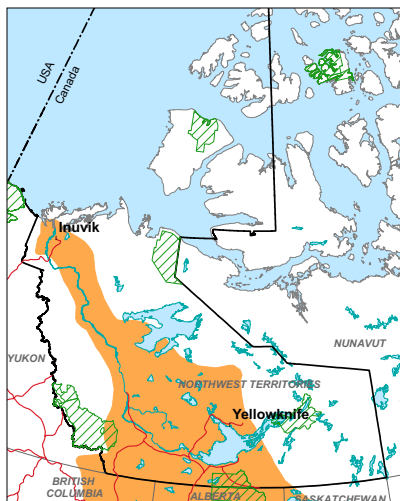
## Potential Threats in the Northwest Territories

- Introduction of exotic bumble bee species for pollination, which can spread diseases to native bees.
- Use of pesticides and herbicides.
- At high densities, imported honey bees can outcompete native bumble bees for pollen.



## Typical Habitat

- Yellow-banded Bumble Bees use a wide range of habitats, as long as flowers and nest sites are available.
- Nests are usually underground in pre-existing cavities like abandoned rodent burrows and rotten logs.
- Queens overwinter in loose soil or rotting trees.



Yellow-banded Bumble Bee   
National Parks

The Yellow-banded Bumble Bee is found in the northern United States and much of Canada, from eastern British Columbia, southeast Yukon and the Northwest Territories eastward through to Newfoundland and Labrador. It was once one of the most common bumble bee species in Canada, but since the early 1990s there have been significant population declines across southern and central Canada. Reasons for the population declines are unclear, but they are probably due to a combination of factors such as diseases and parasites introduced from managed bumble bees used in greenhouses, pesticide use, climate change and habitat loss. In the NWT, the Yellow-banded Bumble Bee is still one of the most commonly encountered bumble bees and there is no evidence of declines.

## Did you know?

- There are 24 known native bumble bee species in the NWT. A guide to bumble bees in the NWT is available at [www.enr.gov.nt.ca](http://www.enr.gov.nt.ca) or by contacting [NWTBUGS@gov.nt.ca](mailto:NWTBUGS@gov.nt.ca).
- A number of important food plants in the NWT, including cranberries and blueberries, rely on bumble bees for pollination.
- The Yellow-banded Bumble Bee was recently found in Inuvik. This was the first time it had been documented so far north.
- An NWT-specific assessment found that Yellow-banded Bumble Bee is Not at Risk in the territory, but it is still a species of Special Concern in Canada.

# Hairy Braya

*Braya pilosa*



	Assessment	Legal List
Canada	<b>Endangered - 2013</b>	<b>Endangered - 2018</b>
NWT	<b>Threatened - 2012</b>	<b>Threatened - 2014</b>

Hairy Braya belongs to the mustard family. The stems grow from a tuft of leaves at the base of the plant and have white flowers arranged in dense clusters. Hairy Braya is distinguished from other closely related species by its large flowers and the shape of its fruits (nearly round with very long “styles” [elongated reproductive structures]).

Height: 4.5 to 12.0 cm (1.8 to 4.7 in)

Report Hairy Braya sightings to  
[WILDLIFEOBS@gov.nt.ca](mailto:WILDLIFEOBS@gov.nt.ca)

## Potential Threats in the Northwest Territories

- Rapid erosion of habitat along the coast (erosion rate estimated at 9.5 m per year).
- Mortality along the coast from salt spray.
- Potential for storm surges to flood low-lying habitat.
- Threats are expected to increase as water levels rise due to melting sea ice and climate change.



## Typical Habitat

- The Hairy Braya occurs on bluffs and dry uplands along coastlines, inlets and streams.
- It needs bare soil to become established.
- Periods of standing water, erosion and disturbance from caribou hooves appear to be involved in creating or maintaining these bare soil habitats.



Hairy Braya (known range) ■  
 Hairy Braya (possible range) ■  
 National Parks ▨

Hairy Braya (sometimes known as Pilose Braya) is a rare flowering plant found nowhere else in the world except on the Cape Bathurst Peninsula and Baillie Islands, NWT. Its total range is very small (about 250 km<sup>2</sup>). Hairy Braya is restricted to an area that remained ice-free during the last ice age. It has apparently been unable to expand its range into surrounding areas since the ice receded. Along the coast, Hairy Braya numbers are declining because of rapid coastal erosion and salt spray. Fortunately, most Hairy Braya plants are found in more stable habitats inland or along protected inlets. An NWT recovery strategy for Hairy Braya is available at [www.nwtspicesatrisk.ca](http://www.nwtspicesatrisk.ca).

## Did you know?

- Due to the remoteness of Cape Bathurst, Hairy Braya faces little direct threat from human activities.
- Hairy Braya was first found by Sir John Richardson in 1826 during an expedition in search of the Northwest Passage. At that original site, the shoreline eroded by about 85 m between 2011 and 2015.
- The NWT Species at Risk Committee assessed Hairy Braya as Threatened and COSEWIC assessed it as Endangered. Both committees used the same information, but differences in their assessment criteria led to different results.

# Nahanni Aster

*Symphyotrichum nahanniense*



	Assessment	Legal List
Canada	<b>Special Concern - 2014</b>	<b>Special Concern - 2018</b>
NWT	Not assessed	No status

Nahanni Aster is a perennial wildflower. Its flowers have yellow centres and white to pale pink or purple petals. It typically grows in clumps of about two to 10 stems, which are green to reddish and often have fine woolly hairs towards the base. The stems are branched to form an open cluster of flowers. Nahanni Aster is similar in appearance to the Rush Aster (*Symphyotrichum boreale*), which also occurs in the Nahanni area.

Height: up to 35 cm (13.8 in)

Report Nahanni Aster sightings to  
[WILDLIFEOBS@gov.nt.ca](mailto:WILDLIFEOBS@gov.nt.ca)

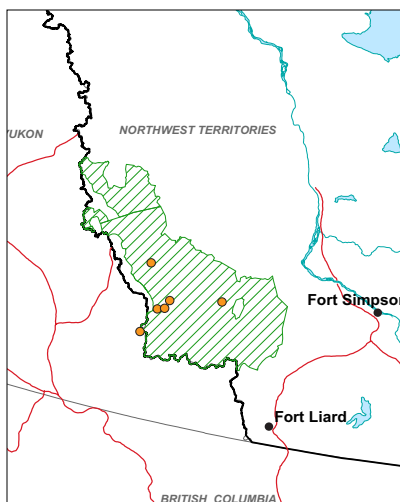
## Potential Threats in the Northwest Territories

- Climate change and seismic activity could alter groundwater discharge and lead to changes in the habitat.
- Nahanni Aster is found at very few sites, so a random environmental event such as an earthquake, fire or landslide could potentially have a large impact on the population.
- Trampling by Park visitors or researchers.
- Accidental introduction of invasive non-native plant species.



## Typical Habitat

- Found at hot and warm springs with tufa (calcium carbonate deposits) within Nahanni National Park Reserve.
- Thrives around the edge of thermal springs and along the streams and seepage discharging from the springs.
- Usually rooted in moss, but has also been found in broken old tufa and dense turf with rushes and sedges.
- Grows in open areas, unshaded by shrubs or trees.



Nahanni Aster Sites ●  
National Parks ▨

Nahanni Aster is a rare flowering plant found only in Nahanni National Park Reserve, in the southern Mackenzie Mountains of the NWT. It is confined to seven known sites at thermal springs that are associated with two major geological faults. All Nahanni Aster sites are within about 150 km of each other. In 2019, a survey was done to monitor and map the extent of previously known sites and explore other thermal springs in the area. Parks Canada will continue to learn more about this species and monitor typical Nahanni Aster habitat in search of potential new populations.

## Did you know?

- A new Nahanni Aster population was discovered in 2019, bringing the total number to seven.
- Nahanni Aster faces little direct threat from human activities because it occurs in remote locations within a national park reserve.
- Nahanni Aster may have persisted through the last ice age in an ice-free refugium, or it may have evolved about 11,000 years ago when the Nahanni area was ice-free, but the surrounding region was still covered by ice.

# OTHER GLOBALLY RARE PLANTS

## Mackenzie Hairgrass

*Deschampsia mackenziana*



Canadian Museum of Nature

Grows on sand dunes and beaches along the shore of Lake Athabasca in northern Saskatchewan. There is one reported site on the east shore of Great Slave Lake, NWT, that requires verification. Mackenzie Hairgrass was listed as a species of Special Concern in Canada in 2018.

## Raup's Willow

*Salix raupii*

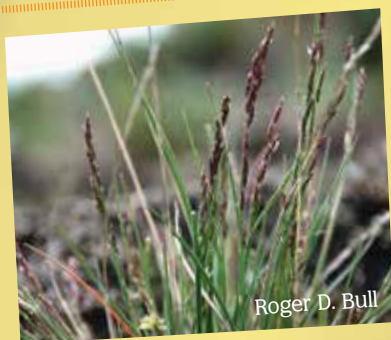


Canadian Museum of Nature

Prefers gravel floodplains and treed bogs and has only been found in two locations in the south-western NWT, three in the Yukon, three in British Columbia, and two in Alberta.

## Bank's Island Alkali Grass

*Puccinellia banksiensis*



Roger D. Bull

Found infrequently in frost-heaved, densely vegetated tundra near the shores of inland freshwater lakes. There are three known locations on Banks Island in the NWT, four in Nunavut, and one in Alaska.

## Drummond Bluebell

*Mertensia drummondii*

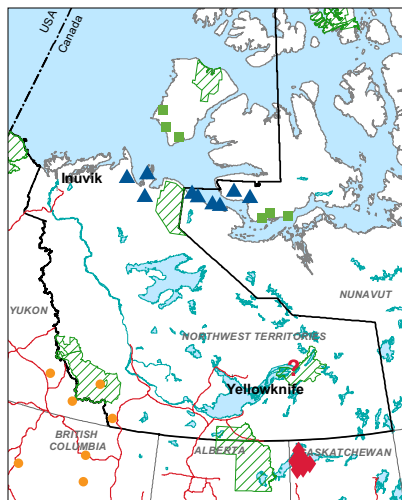


Jo Overholt

Found on sandy and gravelly banks or ridges in ten locations in the NWT and Nunavut, and in four sites in Alaska.

## Why is there a Conservation Concern?

- These plants are globally rare species that are ranked May Be at Risk by the NWT General Status Ranking Program.
- These plants have very restricted distributions limited to the NWT and neighbouring areas.



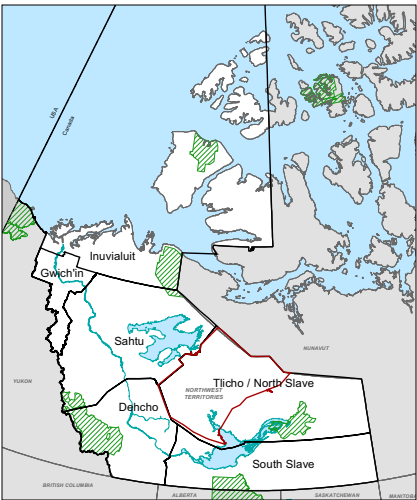
- Banks Island Alkali Grass ■
- Drummond Bluebell ▲
- Raup's Willow ●
- Mackenzie Hairgrass ( ? indicates unconfirmed) ◆
- National Parks ▨

## Did you know?

- Some areas of the NWT remained glacier-free during the last ice age, which may have allowed species such as Raup's Willow, Banks Island Alkali Grass, and Drummond Bluebell to survive. Knowledge on these species and areas is limited.
- Hairy Braya (page 104) and Nahanni Aster (page 106) are also globally rare plants which are found in areas that were glacial refugia.

# SPECIES AT RISK AT A GLANCE

This checklist summarizes species at risk in the NWT and the regions in which they are found. See page 8 for an explanation of the assessment and legal listing processes for Canada and the NWT. See page 4 for an explanation of the categories used in the table.



NWT Region ☐  
Wek'èezhìi Co-management Lands ☐  
National Parks ☐

Mammals

Species	Status in NWT		Status in Canada		South Slave	Dehcho	North Slave/Tłı̄chó	Sahtu	Gwich'in	Inuvialuit
	Assessment	Legal List	Assessment	Legal List						
Barren-ground Caribou	Threatened	Threatened	Threatened	Under Consideration	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Boreal Caribou	Threatened	Threatened	Threatened	Threatened	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Bowhead Whale	Not applicable	Not applicable	Special Concern	Special Concern						✓
Collared Pika	Not assessed	No status	Special Concern	Special Concern		✓		✓	✓	✓
Dolphin and Union Caribou	Special Concern	Special Concern	Endangered	Special Concern						✓
Grey Whale	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not at Risk	Special Concern						✓
Grizzly Bear	Special Concern	No status	Special Concern	Special Concern	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

## Mammals

Species	Status in NWT		Status in Canada		South Slave	Denecho	North Slave/Tiçho	Sahtu	Gwich'in	Inuvialuit
	Assessment	Legal List	Assessment	Legal List						
Little Brown Myotis	Special Concern	Special Concern	Endangered	Endangered	✓	✓	✓	✓	?	
Northern Mountain Caribou	Not assessed	No status	Special Concern	Special Concern		✓		✓	✓	
Northern Myotis	Special Concern	Special Concern	Endangered	Endangered	✓	✓				
Peary Caribou	Threatened	Threatened	Threatened	Endangered						✓
Polar Bear	Special Concern	Special Concern	Special Concern	Special Concern						✓
Ringed Seal	Not applicable	Not applicable	Special Concern	Under Consideration						✓
Wolverine	Not at Risk	No status	Special Concern	Special Concern	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Wood Bison	Threatened	Threatened	Special Concern	Threatened	✓	✓	✓			
Bank Swallow	Not applicable	Not applicable	Threatened	Threatened	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Barn Swallow	Not applicable	Not applicable	Threatened	Threatened	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Buff-breasted Sandpiper	Not applicable	Not applicable	Special Concern	Special Concern						✓
Canada Warbler	Not applicable	Not applicable	Threatened	Threatened		✓				
Common Nighthawk	Not applicable	Not applicable	Special Concern	Threatened	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Eskimo Curlew	Not applicable	Not applicable	Endangered	Endangered						
Evening Grosbeak	Not applicable	Not applicable	Special Concern	Special Concern	✓	✓	✓			

## Birds

Species	Status in NWT		Status in Canada		South Slave	Dehcho	North Slave/TiVo	Sahtu	Gwich'in	Inuvialuit
	Assessment	Legal List	Assessment	Legal List						
Harris's Sparrow	Not applicable	Not applicable	Special Concern	Under Consideration	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Horned Grebe	Not applicable	Not applicable	Special Concern	Special Concern	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Hudsonian Godwit	Not applicable	Not applicable	Threatened	Under Consideration					✓	✓
Ivory Gull*	Not applicable	Not applicable	Endangered	Endangered						✓
Olive-sided Flycatcher	Not applicable	Not applicable	Special Concern	Threatened	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Peregrine Falcon	Not assessed	No status	Not at Risk	Special Concern	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Red Knot ( <i>islandica</i> subspecies)	Not applicable	Not applicable	Special Concern	Special Concern						✓
Red Knot ( <i>roselaari</i> subspecies)**	Not applicable	Not applicable	Threatened	Threatened						?
Red Knot ( <i>rufa</i> subspecies)	Not applicable	Not applicable	Endangered	Endangered						✓
Red-necked Phalarope	Not applicable	Not applicable	Special Concern	Special Concern	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Rusty Blackbird	Not assessed	No status	Special Concern	Special Concern	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Short-eared Owl	Not assessed	No status	Special Concern	Special Concern	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Whooping Crane	Not applicable	Not applicable	Endangered	Endangered	✓					

\* Ivory Gulls currently do not breed in the NWT, but are an uncommon migrant in the Beaufort Sea.

\*\* New information suggests *roselaari* breeds in Alaska and Russia and only occurs in the NWT, in small numbers, during migration at a few minor stopover sites.

## Birds

## Fishes

## Amphibians

## Insects

## Plants

Species	Status in NWT		Status in Canada		South Slave	Denecho	North Slave/Tipico	Sahtu	Gwich'in	Inuvialuit
	Assessment	Legal List	Assessment	Legal List						
Yellow Rail	Not applicable	Not applicable	Special Concern	Special Concern	✓	✓	✓			
Bull Trout	Not applicable	Not applicable	Special Concern	Special Concern	✓	✓		✓		
Dolly Varden	Not applicable	Not applicable	Special Concern	Special Concern				✓	✓	✓
Northern Wolffish	Not applicable	Not applicable	Threatened	Threatened						✓
Shortjaw Cisco	Not applicable	Not applicable	Threatened	No status	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Northern Leopard Frog	Threatened	Threatened	Special Concern	Special Concern	✓					
Western Toad	Threatened	Threatened	Special Concern	Special Concern		✓				
Gypsy Cuckoo Bumble Bee	Data deficient	No status	Endangered	Endangered	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Transverse Lady Beetle	Not assessed	No status	Special Concern	Under Consideration	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Suckley's Cuckoo Bumble Bee	Not assessed	No status	Threatened	Under Consideration	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Western Bumble Bee	Data deficient	No status	Special Concern	Under Consideration		✓		✓		
Yellow-banded Bumble Bee	Not at Risk	No status	Special Concern	Special Concern	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Hairy Braya	Threatened	Threatened	Endangered	Endangered						✓
Nahanni Aster	Not assessed	No status	Special Concern	Special Concern		✓				
Other globally rare species					Contact sara@gov.nt.ca for more information					

# STEWARDSHIP AND WHAT YOU CAN DO

There are many ways that YOU can be a steward of the land, animals and plants. The *NWT Species Conservation and Recovery Fund* provides funding for projects that support the long-term conservation, recovery and protection of species that are at risk in the NWT.

The federal *Habitat Stewardship Program for Species at Risk* funds projects that conserve and protect species at risk and their habitats. The federal *Aboriginal Fund for Species at Risk* (AFSAR) program provides funding aimed at developing Indigenous capacity for participation in the recovery of species at risk and protection of their habitats.

## **Federal Species at Risk Funding Sources**

- Habitat Stewardship Program
  - Aboriginal Fund for Species at Risk
- [www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/services/environmental-funding](http://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/services/environmental-funding)  
[www.aquaticspeciesatrisk.ca](http://www.aquaticspeciesatrisk.ca)

## **NWT Species Conservation and Recovery Fund**

[www.nwt-speciesatrisk.ca/content/nwt-species-conservation-and-recovery-fund](http://www.nwt-speciesatrisk.ca/content/nwt-species-conservation-and-recovery-fund)



In 2019 and 2020, the Wildlife Management Advisory Council (NWT) and Inuvialuit Game Council are mobilizing and collecting Traditional Knowledge about Peary and Dolphin and Union caribou, using funding from AFSAR and the *NWT Species Conservation and Recovery Fund*. They are producing a report on Traditional Knowledge interviews that were conducted

in 2011 and holding a verification workshop with the original knowledge holders to approve the interpretations in the final report. They are also collecting more Traditional Knowledge on important habitat types for Dolphin and Union caribou, and facilitating a school visit for Elders to teach youth about sustainable harvesting and knowing caribou.



Traditional Knowledge holders in Ulukhaktok discuss Dolphin and Union caribou, March 2019.

# FOR MORE INFORMATION

## GOVERNMENT OF CANADA

### **Environment and Climate Change Canada**

Canadian Wildlife Service

867-669-4765

[ec.sarnt-lepnt.ec@canada.ca](mailto:ec.sarnt-lepnt.ec@canada.ca)

[www.sararegistry.gc.ca](http://www.sararegistry.gc.ca)

### **Fisheries and Oceans Canada**

204-983-0600

[www.aquaticspeciesatrisk.ca](http://www.aquaticspeciesatrisk.ca)

### **Parks Canada Agency**

1-888-773-8888

[www.pc.gc.ca](http://www.pc.gc.ca)

## GOVERNMENT OF THE NWT

### **Department of Environment and Natural Resources**

Toll-Free 1-855-783-4301

or contact your regional Environment and Natural Resources office

[sara@gov.nt.ca](mailto:sara@gov.nt.ca)

[www.nwt-species-at-risk.ca](http://www.nwt-species-at-risk.ca)

## OTHER AGENCIES

### **Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC)**

[www.cosewic.ca](http://www.cosewic.ca)

### **Species at Risk Committee**

[www.nwt-species-at-risk.ca/SARC](http://www.nwt-species-at-risk.ca/SARC)

### **Conference of Management Authorities**

[www.nwt-species-at-risk.ca/CMA](http://www.nwt-species-at-risk.ca/CMA)

