

## National Wildlife Areas

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### Abstract

National Wildlife Areas conserve essential wildlife habitats. There are two National Wildlife Areas in Nunavut: Nirjutiqavvik and Polar Bear Pass. While most human activities are prohibited, permits can be issued for activities that are compatible with conservation.

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The Canadian Wildlife Service of Environment Canada establishes and manages National Wildlife Areas to conserve essential wildlife habitats. These areas consist of land or water areas, with coastal waters extending out to twelve nautical miles from shore. While most human activities are prohibited in these areas, permits can be issued for activities that are compatible with conservation.

In Nunavut, the establishment of these areas depends on co-operative management between the Federal and Nunavut governments, and the Inuit. There are two National Wildlife Areas in Nunavut: **Nirjutiqavvik** and **Polar Bear Pass**.

**Nirjutiqavvik National Wildlife Area** protects Coburg Island (just south of Ellesmere Island) and surrounding water areas. This wildlife area is one of the most important seabird nesting areas in the Canadian Arctic, providing nesting grounds for up to 385,000 birds, notably, Thick-billed Murres, Black-legged Kittiwakes, Northern Fulmars, and Black Guillemots. The surrounding waters provide important habitat for Polar Bear, Ringed Seals, Bearded Seals, Walrus and migrating Narwhal and Beluga.

**Polar Bear Pass National Wildlife Area** runs across Bathurst Island connecting Queens Channel to Graham Moore Bay. Polar Bear Pass was established primarily to protect an important terrestrial wetland ecosystem. The pass is a key travel route for polar bears during spring and summer. This wildlife area is also an important wetland nesting area for 30 species of birds, including King Eider, Greater Snow Goose, Thayer's Gull, Parasitic, Long-tailed, and Pomarine Jaegers, Red Phalarope, Sanderling and Black-bellied Plover. The area also provides habitat for terrestrial and marine mammals such as lemmings, Arctic Fox, Muskox, Peary Caribou, Ringed Seal and Walrus.

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### Map Sources

#### National Wildlife Areas in Nunavut

Environment Canada. 1999. National Wildlife Areas (NWA).

## References

Canada. Indian and Northern Affairs Canada. 1993. Nunavut Land Claims Agreement. Catalogue No: R32-134/1993E. (<http://www.aic-inac.gc.ca/al/ldc/ccl/fagr/nuna/nla/nunav-eng.asp>)

Nunavut Implementation Commission. 1995. Footprints in New Snow: A comprehensive Report from the Nunavut Implementation Commission to the Department of Indian and Northern Development, Government of the Northwest Territories and Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated Concerning the Establishment of the Nunavut Government. Iqaluit, Northwest Territories. 263 pp.

## Related Web sites (1999 – 2009)

### Federal Government

Environment Canada. Canadian Wildlife Service  
[http://www.cws-scf.ec.gc.ca/index\\_e.cfm](http://www.cws-scf.ec.gc.ca/index_e.cfm)

Environment Canada. Canadian Wildlife Service. Hinterland Who's Who  
[http://www.hww.ca/index\\_e.asp](http://www.hww.ca/index_e.asp)  
This is where you'll find in-depth descriptions of wildlife, discussions on issues, actions that you can take to help wildlife, and educational materials that teachers and group leaders can use.

Environment Canada. Canadian Wildlife Service Publications  
<http://www.cws-scf.ec.gc.ca/publications/index.cfm?lang=e>

Environment Canada. Prairie And Northern Region. National Wildlife Areas  
<http://www.pnr-rpn.ec.gc.ca/nature/whp/nwa/df06s00.en.html>  
The National Wildlife Area (NWA) Program was created in 1966 to preserve and maintain important or unique lands for wildlife. Originally, it was restricted to migratory bird habitats, but now includes land for other wildlife.