

POLAR BEAR PASS NATIONAL WILDLIFE AREA



Peary Caribou at Polar Bear Pass National Wildlife Area

What makes Polar Bear Pass NWA so special?

Polar Bear Pass National Wildlife Area (NWA) on Bathurst Island, Nunavut, is one of the largest NWAs in Canada at over 2636 square kilometres. It was created in 1986 and features an unusual concentration and diversity of wildlife species for its latitude. The area includes extensive wetlands surrounded by ridges that are basically polar desert. Many long-term scientific studies of arctic animals and the ecosystem have been conducted at the research station in Polar Bear Pass.

Polar Bear Pass NWA

- is so named because **Polar Bears** pass through in spring and summer on their way to an important feeding area in Graham Moore Bay to the southwest;
- supports at least 54 species of birds including 30 breeding species, particularly waterfowl

- such as **Brant** and shorebirds such as **Red Phalarope**;
- provides habitat for 11 other mammal species such as **Arctic Fox**, **Walrus**, **Muskoxen** and **Peary Caribou**, a species at risk;
- is a Wetland of International Importance under the Ramsar Convention.

Polar Bear Pass NWA is managed by Environment Canada in partnership with the Area Co-management Committee of Resolute Bay, Nunavut.

What are Environment Canada Protected Areas?

Environment Canada establishes marine and terrestrial NWAs for the purposes of conservation, research and interpretation. NWAs are established to

protect migratory birds, species at risk, and other wildlife and their habitats. NWAs are established under the authority of the *Canada Wildlife Act* and are, first and foremost, places for wildlife. Migratory Bird Sanctuaries (MBSs) are established under the authority of the *Migratory Birds Convention Act, 1994*, and provide a refuge for migratory birds in marine and terrestrial environments. The current Protected Areas Network consists of 54 NWAs and 92 MBSs comprising more than 12 million hectares across Canada.

What can I do at Polar Bear Pass NWA?

In the Nunavut territory, Nunavut beneficiaries, as per the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement, can harvest wildlife for their economic, social and cultural needs. Access to Polar Bear Pass NWA is restricted except for Nunavut beneficiaries. For all non-beneficiaries, a permit must be obtained to either access or conduct any type of activity in the NWA. More information on access and permitting for Polar Bear Pass NWA can be obtained by contacting the Environment Canada regional office.



Arctic Fox



Red Phalarope

Who can I contact?

Environment Canada –
 Prairie and Northern Region
 Canadian Wildlife Service
 P.O. Box 1714
 Iqaluit, Nunavut X0A 0H0
 1-800-668-6767
 email: enviroinfo@ec.gc.ca
www.ec.gc.ca/ap-pa/

Where is Polar Bear Pass NWA?

