Update: June 9, 2011

Northwest Territories
Protected Areas Strategy

## NWT Conservation Statistics: *Established Protection*

The NWT Protected Areas Strategy (PAS) is a community-driven process to protect natural and cultural lands in the NWT. The overall vision of the PAS is to create a network of protected areas across the territory. To achieve this vision, the **PAS works with many agencies and processes** responsible for land and water conservation and environmental management.

This document summarizes the amount of land currently protected by established protected areas. The total area of the NWT (1,352,600 km²) excludes marine areas, but does include all the freshwater areas (including Great Bear and Great Slave Lakes). A **variety of long-term protection mechanisms** are available in the NWT with a range in levels of protection[1].

Legally, the top of the land (**surface rights**) is managed differently than the underground (**subsurface rights**) based on mining and oil and gas laws. Some protected areas are specific to 'surface rights' only. Different legislation is used for specific purposes. For example, legislation may permit no industrial development, development only of the subsurface, or development of the surface and subsurface.

For example:

- National Parks permanently prohibit industrial development; these parks have **surface and subsurface protection**.
- Migratory Bird Sanctuaries are legislated areas with **surface protection.** Certain developments may be allowed under specified conditions, since these areas do not have subsurface protection.

Further information regarding conservation statistics are available by contacting the NWT Protected Areas Strategy Secretariat at (867) 920-3179 or nwtpas@gov.nt.ca.

[1] There are many existing legal land interests in the NWT. These include mineral claims, oil and gas exploration licenses, and commercial and residential leases. Identifying these "third party" interests is an early step in the PAS planning process.

# NWT Conservation Statistics: *The Numbers*

## 1. Established Surface and Subsurface Protection

### 1a) *Areas with Full Protection*

These areas are permanently set aside and protected from industrial development through legislation. Generally, a decision of parliament is needed to change these types of designations.

| Name of Protected Area | Size (km²) | How is it Protected? |
|---|---|---|
| Tuktut Nogait National Park | 18,180[2] | *Canada National Parks Act* |
| Aulavik National Park | 12,200 | *Canada National Parks Act* |
| Nahanni National Park Reserve[3] | 30,000 | *Canada National Parks Act* |
| Wood Buffalo National Park (within NWT) | 9,340 | *Canada National Parks Act* |
| Thelon Game Sanctuary (within NWT) | 21,420 | *Territorial Wildlife Act* |
| Ezôdzítí | 1,375 | Tłı̨cho Final Agreement |
| Saoyú / ʔehdacho National Historic Site (designation + protection) | 5,565 | *Canada National Parks Act*, Sahtu Final Agreement, *Territorial Lands Act* *P.C. 2009-1588 September 17, 2009* |
| **Total** | **98,020** | |

[2] Tuktut Nogait National Park is located in both the Inuvialuit and Sahtu. The Inuvialuit area is 16,335 km²; the Sahtu area is 1845 km².

[3] Nahanni National Park Reserve is also a World Heritage Site. This designation is an acknowledgement of the area's international importance; it does not add any additional protection to National Park standards. To date the World Heritage Site designation refers only to the original park (about 4800 km²).

**1b)** ***Areas Protected through Land Use Plans subject to Periodic Review***
These areas are protected from industrial development not through permanent legislation, but through **conservations zones under a land use plan**. These areas are protected for as long as they are designated under an *approved* regional plan. Currently, there is only one approved plan in the NWT: the Gwich'in Land Use Plan. The Gwich'in Land Use Plan and any other regional land use plan established under the *Mackenzie Valley Resource Management Act* must be reviewed every five years. Changes made to the Northwest Territories and Nunavut Mining Regulations (August 2008) allow subsurface protection under approved land use plans.

| **Name of Protected Area** | **Size (km²)** | **How is it Protected?** |
|---|---|---|
| Gwich'in Conservation Zone A: Rat, Husky, Black Mountain | 2,875 | Gwich'in Land Use Plan |
| Gwich'in Conservation Zone B: James Creek/Vittrekwa River | 430 | Gwich'in Land Use Plan |
| Gwich'in Conservation Zone C: Travaillant Lake, Mackenzie/Tree River | 2,275 | Gwich'in Land Use Plan |
| Gwich'in Conservation Zone D: Arctic Red River | 195 | Gwich'in Land Use Plan |
| Hehnjuu deetl'yah tshik (Bernard Creek) Heritage Conservation Area | 34 | Gwich'in Land Use Plan |
| Eltyin Chool chihvyah k'yit (Jackfish Creek) Heritage Conservation Area | 47 | Gwich'in Land Use Plan |
| Tl'oondih Heritage Conservation Area[4] | 19 | Gwich'in Land Use Plan |
| **Total** | **5,875** | |

**1c)** ***Water Only Area***
In the Inuvialuit region, the waters of Husky Lake and Liverpool Bay are protected under the Inuvialuit Final Agreement (IFA). This is the only area in the NWT that is based on the protection of water. The IFA Section 8 (4) says "*No dredging or development activity*" in Husky Lakes/Liverpool Bay waters. However, we have divided these waters into two categories in this summary. This is only because marine areas are *not* within the calculated figure of the NWT boundary. The Husky Lake portion shown in Category 1 is the water portion of the area that has been included in the "land" area of the NWT.

[4] There are 10 other Gwich'in Heritage Conservation Zones, each under 10 km².

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Water portion of Husky Lakes Area | 2,130 | Inuvialuit Final Agreement |
| **Total** | **2,130** | |

## 2. Established Surface Protection

These areas set aside with surface protection only; **development** may be allowed under permit **only if consistent with the management plan and the values** being protected. Areas include Migratory Bird Sanctuaries, Territorial Parks, and certain lands under the Sahtu Dene and Métis Comprehensive Land Claim Agreement.

| Name of Protected Area | Size (km²) | How is it Protected? |
|---|---|---|
| Banks Island No. 1 Migratory Bird Sanctuary[5] | 20,150 | *Migratory Birds Convention Act* |
| Kendall Island Migratory Bird Sanctuary | 620 | *Migratory Birds Convention Act* |
| Anderson River Delta Migratory Bird Sanctuary | 1,040 | *Migratory Birds Convention Act* |
| Luge dek'ale' Tue (Kelly Lake) | 270 | Sahtu Final Agreement and P.C. 1995-0228 |
| Doi T'oh (CANOL Trail)[6] Territorial Park Reserve | 940 | 1995 "reserved by the federal government" for the purpose of creating a territorial park |
| Hidden Lake Territorial Park | 20 | *Territorial Parks Act* |
| Gwich'in Territorial Park | 90 | *Territorial Parks Act* |
| Pingo Landmark National Historic Site of Canada | 16 | Inuvialuit Final Agreement, *Historic Sites and Monuments Act of Canada* |
| **Total** | **23,146** | |

[5] While there are two bird sanctuaries on Banks Island, Banks Island No. 2 Migratory Bird Sanctuary is not included in the statistics because it entirely overlaps with Aulavik National Park which is an area with full protection.

[6] Schedule XXI Appendix E and Section 17.3 of Claim Agreement, and http://www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/al/ldc/ccl/fagr/sahtu/smar/smar95/smar95-eng.asp
See section 2, Highlights. Once remediation is complete, lands are to be transferred to the Territorial Government.

## 3. Marine Areas

These are reported as figures only, and are not included in the percentage of NWT statistics.

### 3a) Existing Under Claim Agreement

| Name | Area (km²) | Means |
|---|---|---|
| Liverpool Bay[7] | 2,325 | Inuvialuit Final Agreement |

### 3b) Marine Protected Areas

| Name | Area (km²) | Means |
|---|---|---|
| Tarium Niryutait (consisting of Niaqunnuq, Okeevik and Kittigariut) | 975[8] | *Canada Oceans Act* |

[7] See also Husky Lakes Category 1 c).

[8] The total area for Tarium Niryutait Marine Protected Area is about 1,800 km² (ref. Beaufort Sea Partnership) but only 975 km² are adjacent to the NWT.