



# National Wildlife Areas in the Northwest Territories

## What is a National Wildlife Area?

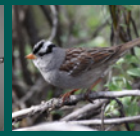
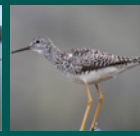
- A National Wildlife Area (NWA) is a type of protected area. NWAs are established for the purposes of conservation and research on wildlife of national importance (including migratory birds, species at risk and others) and their habitat. NWAs also protect important cultural areas for Aboriginal people in the Northwest Territories.
- NWAs are established and managed under the *Canada Wildlife Act*, administered by the Canadian Wildlife Service on behalf of the Minister of the Environment.
- The establishment and management of NWAs respect Aboriginal rights and practices.

## How is a National Wildlife Area created in the Northwest Territories?

- The identification of candidate NWAs follows the Northwest Territories Protected Areas Strategy eight-step process.
- Local Aboriginal organizations (community and regional level) have an important role throughout the protected areas strategy process, including recommending the final boundary and submitting the request to establish the area as an NWA to the Minister of the Environment.
- A federal cabinet decision is required to create an NWA.
- The legislative process to establish an NWA includes publication in the *Canada Gazette* and listing in Schedule I of the *Wildlife Area Regulations*.

## What activities are allowed or prohibited in a National Wildlife Area?

- Each NWA will have a management plan that provides details on how the area will be managed.
- Aboriginal harvesting rights, including hunting and trapping, are respected within an NWA.
- Specific activities considered harmful to species and/or their habitats are prohibited.
- Prohibited activities can be permitted, if, in Environment Canada's opinion, those activities do not "interfere with the conservation of wildlife," the activity is consistent with the purpose for which the NWA was established, and the activity is consistent with the management plan for the NWA.
- Environment Canada encourages wildlife research and monitoring within an NWA. Research activities require a permit from Environment Canada.
- Any commercial or industrial activity such as mineral staking is prohibited within an NWA without a permit from Environment Canada.
- Outfitted hunting may be allowed within an NWA, but requires a permit from Environment Canada. This permit is in addition to compliance with all other federal and territorial legislation.
- Sport hunting may be allowed within an NWA, but requires permission from Environment Canada. Sport hunting may be restricted through the management plan and is subject to other federal and territorial legislation. Permission to hunt may be obtained either by a public notice for the area or through individual permits from Environment Canada.



## How do National Wildlife Areas compare with other protected area designations in the Northwest Territories?

- NWAs are established under the *Canada Wildlife Act* and are established primarily for the conservation, interpretation and research of wildlife species (in particular, migratory birds, species at risk and nationally significant wildlife).
- National Parks are established under the *Canada National Parks Act* for the “benefit and enjoyment of Canadians”—they are set up to be representative of a natural region, and tourism is encouraged.
- NWAs established in the Northwest Territories do not have staff on site and do not have visitor services.

## Land ownership and administration of National Wildlife Areas in the Northwest Territories

- An NWA can only be established on federal land.
- Surface lands are normally administered by the Minister of the Environment.
- The *Canada Wildlife Act* does not require withdrawal of subsurface rights for the establishment of an NWA. To achieve conservation goals, the Government of Canada may withdraw subsurface rights for part or all of the NWA.
- A decision is made at the time of designation with respect to the withdrawal of subsurface rights. If withdrawal of subsurface rights is necessary to meet the conservation objectives of the site, they are withdrawn under federal statute.

## Management and research

- Environment Canada works with its partners to prepare a management plan for each NWA (the definition of partners depends on the location of each NWA, but could include wildlife management boards, communities and other governments).
- Management plans respect Aboriginal rights and practices.
- Management activities include monitoring wildlife, maintaining and improving wildlife habitat, conducting periodic inspections, enforcing regulations, and developing and updating management plans.
- The management plan identifies which activities are compatible with the conservation goals of the NWA. Some of these activities require a permit issued by the Minister of the Environment and some may be allowed through a public notice for the site.
- Wildlife research and monitoring are key functions within NWAs and provide a complement to conservation activities. In addition to the normal research permitting regime that currently exists in the Northwest Territories, scientific activities in NWAs require a permit from the Minister of the Environment and are carefully regulated and monitored.
- Research and monitoring will incorporate local knowledge and participation whenever possible.
- Most NWAs permit public access; however, Environment Canada has the ability to restrict public access.

## Need more information?

- The Northwest Territories Protected Areas Strategy ([www.nwtpas.ca](http://www.nwtpas.ca)) has details on proposed NWAs and other protected areas initiatives in the Northwest Territories.
- Hinterland Who's Who – Environment Canada's Protected Areas Network ([www.hww.ca/en/issues-and-topics/environment-canadas.html](http://www.hww.ca/en/issues-and-topics/environment-canadas.html)) has details about Canada's NWAs.