The avifauna of the Pond Inlet region, N.W.T.

A spectacular mountain wilderness with a diverse arctic avifauna

Wayne E. Renaud, W. Gavin Johnston and Kerwin J. Finley

ABSTRACT The status of 53 species of birds recorded in the Pond Inlet area in 1978-79, and seven additional species reported in previous years by other observers, is summarized. Thirty-six species provably or probably breed in the area, and an additional six species have been recorded as certainly or probably breeding in adjacent areas. The breeding species include most high arctic and pan-arctic species, and a smaller proportion of low arctic forms. Old World wintering forms that are local breeders or migrants include Brant, Ringed Plover, Ruddy Turnstone, Red Knot and Wheatear. The avifauna may be the most diverse in the Canadian arctic archipelago north of 70° N Lat.

Pond Inlet is one of three marine channels dividing the 2300-km-long mountain chain that rims the Canadian eastern arctic from northern Ellesmere Island to southern Baffin Island. Adjacent lands on Bylot Island to the north and Baffin Island to the south of the inlet are mostly high, rocky and barren, and in many areas are covered by glaciers and snow caps. However, some coastal and interior lowlands provide small areas of a variety of terrestrial and aquatic habitats. Although located 1400 km north of the tree line, the Pond Inlet area has a diversity of high and low arctic species including several species of seabirds.

Previous accounts of the birds of the Pond Inlet area have been confined to brief observations (McClintock 1859, Low 1906, Lloyd 1922, Soper 1928, Shortt and Peters 1942, Baird 1940, Bray 1943, Duvall and Handley 1946, Ellis 1956, Tuck and Lemieux 1959, Van Tyne and Drury 1959). Horring (1937), and Kempf et al. (1978), reported more fully on the status of breeding birds; however, until 1978, when studies were undertaken in connection with proposed offshore drilling in northwest Baffin Bay, no long-term studies of bird distribution and status had been done. This paper describes the seasonal changes in status and distribution of all species known to have been recorded in the Pond Inlet area (Fig. 1; Table 1).

Except for studies conducted on Bylot Island (Tuck and Lemieux 1959, Van Tyne and Drury 1959, Kempf et al. 1978), the nearest avifaunal accounts are from Arctic Bay, Baffin Island, 220 km to the west (Renaud et al. 1979), Eglington Fiord, Baffin Island, 270 km to the...
southeast (Wynne-Edwards 1952), True-love Lowland, Devon Island, 350 km to the northwest (Hussell and Holroyd 1974, Pattie 1977), and the Melville Peninsula, 400 km to the south-southwest (Bray 1943).

Bylot Island was established as a federal bird sanctuary in 1954 in order to protect the major nesting area of the Greater Snow Goose and two seabird colonies. Bylot Island, Eclipse Sound,

**METHODS**

DURING 1978 AND 1979, a team of biologists (including the authors) from LGL Ltd., studied various aspects of marine ecology in the northwest Baffin Bay area as part of the Eastern Arctic Marine Environmental Study (EAMES). Aerial surveys of coastal and offshore areas were conducted almost weekly from early May to mid-October in 1978, and from early May to mid-July 1979 and in September-October 1979. Small portions of each aerial survey were within the Pond Inlet study area. Birds were also recorded incidental to studies of marine mammals at the floe-edge in eastern Pond Inlet in 1978 and 1979, and were the subject of a more intensive study there in June-July 1979. Information on offshore seabird distribution was also obtained during shipboard studies of seabird ecology in July-September in 1978 and 1979. All observations of terrestrial birds and terrestrial breeding of marine birds were made incidental to these marine studies, mostly near Pond Inlet settlement and at Button Point.

**CLIMATE AND WEATHER**

**TABLE 2** GIVES MEAN DAILY TEMPERATURES AND TOTAL PRECIPITATION FOR THE APRIL TO OCTOBER PERIOD WHEN MOST BIRDS ARE PRESENT IN THE AREA. THE CLIMATE OF POND INLET IS POLAR CONTINENTAL AND IS TYPICAL OF OTHER HIGH ARCTIC COMMUNITIES. Winters are long with persistent cold; for over three months the sun is continuously below the horizon. The coldest month is February with a mean temperature of -26°C. April and May are often the most pleasant months, being characterized by abundant sunshine and few snowy or windy days.

Most snow disappears from low-lying areas in June, and ice in Pond Inlet breaks up in July and early August. July and August are the warmest months although even then snow showers may occasionally occur at sea level. Temperatures during these months rarely rise above 12°C (max.: 20°C), in coastal areas; however, inland areas that are less influenced by cool breezes off the sea ice or water may become considerably warmer.

The tundra vegetation begins to turn color during the third week of August when evening temperatures drop below freezing. Ponds and lakes usually freeze over during the second or third week of September. The sea ice begins to reform in early October and is usually well-consolidated by the end of the month.

The first day of continuously above freezing maximum temperatures occurred on June 5, 1978 and June 7, 1979. Streams and rivers began flowing by June 20, 1978 and June 15, 1979. However, owing to sublimation, large areas north of Utuk Lake were mostly snow-free by late May. The first permanent

**Figure 1.**

![Map of Baffin Bay and surroundings](image-url)
Table 1 Summary of bird records for the Pond Inlet area (as defined in Fig 1) (*' + ' = present, 'B' = evidence of breeding, 'B?' = possibly breeding, '?' = status uncertain.)

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1Low 1906, 2Lloyd 1922, 3Bray 1943, 4McClintock 1859, 5Baird 1940, 6D. Spencer, fide R. Predy.
winter snowfall at the village occurred September 17, 1978 and September 27, 1979. In 1978, freeze-up of the sea began to occur in late September; in 1979 sea-ice did not form until mid-October.

**TERRESTRIAL HABITATS**

Few areas in the Canadian arctic exhibit more extreme altitudinal variation; both vegetation and terrestrial bird distribution are greatly influenced by the resulting local variation in the timing of snowmelt and subsequent length of the growing season. In 1978 and 1979, which were years with below normal June temperatures, many species of birds failed to breed in areas above 150 m above sea-level, although during mid-summer these areas contained vegetation communities no less well-developed than corresponding sites near sea-level where densities of breeding birds were high.

Excessively dry and exposed areas, even near sea-level, may have poorly-developed plant communities, usually dominated by purple mountain saxifrage (*Saxifraga oppositifolia*). The Horned Lark is the only species that regularly occupies these habitats. The tundra more characteristic of lowland areas supports a complete ground cover of vascular plants, mosses and lichens. Dominants in these communities include prostrate willows (primarily *Salix arctica*), several graminoids, and mountain avens (*Dryas integrifolia*). These communities are inhabited by Long-tailed Jaeger, American Golden Plover, Baird's Sandpiper and Lapland Longspur. Late melting snow on the lee sides of hills provides moisture for “seepage slope” communities, which contain a greater graminoid component, and are inhabited by White-rumped Sandpiper and (more locally) Pectoral Sandpiper.

The best-developed shrub communities on moist sites are dominated by white mountain heather (*Cassiope tetragona*), blueberry (*Vaccinium uliginosum var. alpinum*), Labrador tea (*Ledum decumbens*) and Richardson's willow (*Salix richardsonii*). In protected areas these willows grow to a height of 55 cm with a stem girth of 4 cm; Polunin (1948), the only botanist to have written about the area, noted that these were "by far the biggest land plants known so far in the Canadian Eastern Arctic." Although well-developed shrub communities are extensive in some areas,
particularly along Janes and Salmon creeks, they do not appear to support any characteristic bird species.

Graminoids dominate in wet sites, and in places may grow to 35 cm in height and form tussocks. However, tussock tundra is very locally distributed and no thermokarst terrain exists. The most extensive wetlands are located near the mouth of Salmon River where a complex of raised beaches and ponds is utilized by nesting Red-throated Loon, Snow Goose, Oldsquaw, and (in at least some years) Red Phalarope.

The streams and rivers, most of which are fed by melting glaciers, are little utilized by birds. The major exception is the Salmon River where a moderate Arctic Char run probably accounts for the presence of Thayer’s Gull, Glaucous Gull, and smaller numbers of loons and mergansers. The leads that form at river and creek mouths, especially Salmon River, in mid-to-late June support concentrations of loons, ducks, gulls and Arctic Terns.

Much of the terrain abutting northern and eastern Pond Inlet is rocky with little or no vegetation. Steep rocky mountain slopes, some rising to 1000+ m high, are occupied by only a few nesting Glaucous Gulls and Snow Buntings. Except for a narrow 16-km-long slope that extends southwest from Button Point, there is little vegetated terrain along southeastern Bylot Island; even on this slope the diversity of both vegetation and birds is limited by early snowmelt, rapid drainage and very dry conditions caused by the southerly aspect and steep slopes. The only moist areas are along a few streams fed by melting glaciers at higher elevations. Between Cape Macculloch and Albert Harbour on the Baffin coast, vegetation is restricted to a few small pockets along rivers draining into Guys Bight and Erik Harbour.

Both 1978 and 1979 appeared to be years with low lemming numbers; however, in 1979 Brown Lemming (Lemmus sibiricus) was locally common in grassy areas in the village.

MARINE HABITATS

The extent of the sea-ice exerts both positive and negative influences on the distribution of seabirds by excluding them from areas of solid land-fast ice, but provides important feeding areas at certain ice-edges. During the winter and early spring, a recurrent ice-edge at the east end of Pond Inlet defines the eastern edge of the land-fast ice; east of this ice-edge, the pack-ice of Baffin Bay is in motion all winter. The Black Guillemot is the only seabird that winters near this ice-edge. In late April and May, as increasing amounts of open water become available along the ice-edge, the area becomes important to Northern Fulmar, Thick-billed Murre, Black Guillemot, Black-legged Kittiwake and Glaucous Gull. From May to July, Oldsquaw, King and Common eiders, and Arctic Tern migrate northward along the edge but large numbers seldom stop for very long. The offal of marine mammals left near Inuit hunting camps along the ice-edge attracts concentrations of Northern Fulmars, Glaucous Gulls, Ivory Gulls, Long-tailed Jaegers, Common Ravens and even occasional Ruddy Turnstones.

As the fast-ice in Pond Inlet and Eclipse Sound disintegrates in July, fulmar, kittiwake and small numbers of guillemot penetrate westward; fulmar and kittiwake often appear at the village when large shoreleads have formed in the otherwise unbroken fast-ice. During the open water season, from August to October, the largest feeding concentrations of seabirds in the area occur near the coasts of eastern Pond Inlet and adjacent Baffin Bay. After break-up during August and September, tideflats and beaches, most notably near the mouths of Salmon Creek and Salmon River, are utilized by migrant shorebirds and Water Pipit.

MAN-INFLUENCED HABITATS

The village of Pond Inlet, with a population of about 650, is the only permanent habitation in the area, seasonally-occupied outpost camps are located at Button Point and Guys Bight. The ground at the village becomes free of snow before most other areas, and many of the first spring passerines and shorebirds were recorded there. Favored habitats included the raw sewage dump, the garbage dump and seepage slopes below the village houses. In fall, the village provides the last snowfree area where passerines can find weed seeds and refuse.
SPECIES ACCOUNTS

THE FOLLOWING ACCOUNTS summarize the status of 53 recorded in the area in 1978 and 1979, and 7 species reported by others. With few exceptions, our information from 1978-79 was based on sight records.

SPECIES OBSERVED IN 1978-79

Yellow-billed Loon (Gavia adamsii).
Rare visitor; possibly breeds. One or 2 individuals were seen at the floe-edge, June 18-July 5, 1978 (3 observations). Observed at Salmon R. mouth in early August, 1978 (1 caught in a char net and later shown to KJF), and June 13, 1979. Two adults in breeding plumage with a large immature (either this species or G. immer) flew e calling near the village Sept. 15, 1978 but the color of the bill could not be determined.

A Yellow-billed or Common Loon flew e near the village Sept. 8, 1978. A total of 13 nests was found on a large immature (either this species or G. immer) flew e calling near the village Sept. 15, 1978 but the color of the bill could not be determined. A Yellow-billed or Common Loon flew e near the village Sept. 8, 1978. (See also notes on Common Loon.)

Arctic Loon (Gavia arctica).

Red-throated Loon (Gavia stellata).
Widely distributed breeder on lowland lakes and ponds. Arrival: June 18, 1978 and June 10, 1979. Max. count at Salmon R. mouth: 37 June 25, 1979. Seven nests with eggs were found in the village-Salmon R. area June 25-July 23; most were near the coast but 1 nest was found 12 km inland. Last seen Sept. 13, 1978 and Sept. 18, 1979.

Northern Fulmar (Fulmarus glacialis).
Abundant visitor. Summer observations probably include birds from Buchan Gulf (85 km s.e. of Cape Macculloch) where an estimated 25,000 pairs nest (Brown et al. 1975). Up to several hundred occur along the floe-edge from early May until break-up, when they disperse w into Pond Inlet and Eclipse Sound; particularly common at Inuit hunter kills. Arrival at the village: July 11, 1978 and July 9, 1979. Thousands feed near coasts of e. Pond Inlet and adjacent Baffin Bay during August and September (max. 9000 s. of Cape Macculloch Sept. 13, 1979; 7600 near Button Pt., Sept. 9, 1979). Complete departure by Oct. 10, 1978 and Oct. 17, 1979.

Canada Goose (Branta canadensis).
Rare visitant in 1979 to Salmon R. mouth, on June 14 and 16; and floe-edge, 1 on June 24.

Brant (Branta bernicla).
Spring and fall transient; rare breeder. Migrants occur at the floe-edge from early to mid-June; small flocks occasionally stop to rest. The observation of 3 flocks totalling 120 flying w along ice-covered Pond Inlet n. of Beloeil L., June 5, 1978 indicates that at least some of those breeding on the central arctic islands may migrate via Pond Inlet and Eclipse Sound. Rare near village; 1 with a flock of Snow Geese at village June 10, 1978, and 4 adults with 6 flying juveniles at Salmon R. mouth, Sept. 8-11, 1979. Heyland (1970) reported a nest on s. Bylot L., probably just w. of our area, and Duyvall and Handley (1946) suggested breeding, without supporting details, at Pond Inlet. However, Tuck and Lemieux (1959), Van Tyne and Drury (1959) and Kempf et al. (1978) did not report nesting for n.e. Baffin or Bylot L., and the species is likely only an irregular breeder in this area.

Snow Goose (Chen caerulescens).
Common breeder along Salmon R. drainage, lowlands w. of the lower Salmon R., and near Cape Macculloch; uncommon elsewhere. First seen, June 1, 1978 and May 29, 1979. A total of 13 nests was found on dry hillside and hilltops, mostly 1-3 km from the Salmon R., June 25-July 8, 1979 (ave. clutch size, 4.13 eggs; range, 2-8). After hatching in 1978 most broods in the Salmon R drainage moved to lakes along Salmon R., n. of Utuk L. (e.g., 35+ broods July 26). In 1977 Kempf et al. (1978), estimated 670+ adults between Salmon R. mouth and Utuk L. Peak hatch in 1978 probably occurred during the third week of July; in 1979 pipped eggs were found July 8 (4-egg clutch). Most Snow Geese leave in the last few days of August. Last seen Sept. 9, 1978 and Sept. 13, 1979. The main migration to and from s.w. Bylot L., where 20,000 nest (H. Body in CW.S. 1972), occurs to the w. of the Pond Inlet area (P. Aglak, pers. comm.). One blue-phase individual was seen with a flock of 7 white-phase geese June 14, 1979.

Oldsquaw (Clangula hyemalis).

Common Eider (Somateria mollissima).
Fairly common spring transient at the floe-edge; rare breeder. The first migrants appear at the floe-edge about mid-May and small flocks, often with King Eiders, occur until late July. Those noted in July, however, are mostly males (max.: 100 off Button Pt. July 15, 1978). None was seen at the village in 1978. Arrival there in 1979: June 15 (max.: 8 on June 28). A female nest unsuccessfully at the village in early July 1979 (S. Steltner, pers. comm.). Kempf et al. (1978) recorded a brood near Patricia R. mouth Aug. 3, 1977. Adult males are scarce after mid-July. Over 6000 female-plumage eiders, including some male Common Eiders, were seen near Cape Macculloch July 16, 1978. Probably females and young remain until at least early October

King Eider (Somateria spectabilis).
Very common spring transient at the floe-edge; uncommon breeder. Migrants appear at the floe-edge by the first week of May; dispersal inland, however, usually occurs with snowmelt. Only 2 certain observations at the village in 1978: 1 on May 2 (presumably this species since Common Eider did not arrive at the floe-edge until later), and 2 on July 3 at Salmon R. mouth. Observations of eider broods at Salmon R. mouth in late August-early September, 1978 were probably King Eiders. In 1979, eider flocks (again presumably this species) were seen at the village in the first week of May (P. Idlout, pers. comm.), then none was seen there again until June 14 (11 individuals); seen regularly thereafter. Few males were identified in midsummer, but flocks of up to several thousand female-plumage eiders pass during the inner migration (mostly in the e. portion of Pond Inlet) from mid-July to late August. Flocks of up to several thousand King Eiders, along the floe-edge during August-September. Several hundred were keeping holes open in new ice, along coasts of the e. inlet Oct. 10, 1978 and Oct 17, 1979.

Red-breasted Merganser (Mergus serrator).
Rare breeder. Arrival at floe-edge: June 17, 1978 and June 18, 1979. A total of 7 observations; all adult groups consisted of 1-3 individuals. A female with a brood of 8 flightless young was seen at Salmon R. mouth Sept. 10-13, 1979. Probably the same female, with 3 flightless young near Salmon Creek mouth Sept. 14, 1979, was our latest record. Kempf et al. (1978) observed a brood near the outlet of Utuk L., Aug. 9, 1977. The nearest previously known breeding area, on s. Baffin L., is located 600 km s.e. (Palmer 1976).

Rough-legged Hawk (Buteo lagopus).
Rare transient; may breed. Individual in light-phase plumage were seen at the village May 31, 1978 and Oct. 9, 1979. One was seen of this area at Curvy L. (H. Body in CW.S. 1972). A female and young near village July 10, 1978, and one in breeding plumage at Salmon R. mouth Sept. 10-13, 1979. Probably the same female, with 3 flightless young near Salmon Creek mouth Sept. 14, 1979, was our latest record. Kempf et al. (1978) observed a brood near the outlet of Utuk L., Aug. 9, 1977. The nearest previously known breeding area, on s. Baffin L., is located 600 km s.e. (Palmer 1976).
Gyr Falcon (Falco rusticolcus).
Rare breeder. A total of 9 observations of single birds June 10-Oct. 3; all but one were white-phase birds. Kempf et al. (1978) recorded a pair with flying young near Utuk L., Aug. 10-11, 1977.

Peregrine Falcon (Falco peregrinizus).
Rare visitant; possibly breeds. Observed near the village lowlands in June 5, 1979 and Sept. 11, 15 and 27, 1979. All were single adults except on Sept. 15 when 2 adults flushed from a steep hillside s.w. of Jones Creek mouth and repeatedly dived and screamed at the observer; an hour later an adult and an immature were seen at Salmon R. mouth. Ellis (1956) observed one at the village July 22, 1953. While considerably beyond the breeding range as given in Godfrey (1966), Van Tyne and Drury (1959) observed immatures in 1954 at Akiteq R., s.w. Bylot I. In August-September 1978, adult and immature Peregrine Falcons were seen at the murre and kitiwake colony near Cape Hay, n.w. Bylot I. (L.A. Patterson, pers. comm.). Peregrine Falcons have also recently been found nesting far to the n. at Truelove Lowland, Devon I. (Pattie 1977).

Rock Ptarmigan (Lagopus mutus).
Permanent resident. One breeding record, a brood of 10+ half-grown young near the village July 28, 1978. During spring, seldom more than 1 or 2 were seen in a day. More common by late September and October when flocks of up to 20 were reported. Many fresh feeding craters were seen along Salmon R. during December, 1978.

Sandhill Crane (Grus canadensis).
Rare breeder. One was seen along the lower Salmon R., Aug. 7, 1978. One, and probably 2, seen 2 km w. of Button Pt., June 28 and July 1, 1979, acted as though nesting. Kempf et al. (1978) recorded 2 adults with 1 flightless young near Utuk L., Aug. 8, 1977.

Ringed Plover (Charadrius hiaticula).
Uncommon transient; rare/uncommon breeder. Arrival: June 7, 1978 and June 3, 1979 (max.: 5 on June 6, 1979). Rare in July-August. A male displaying at the village June 18-24, 1979 was the only evidence of local breeding. Scattered individuals (max.: 5 on Sept. 10) remained on the tidelands until Sept. 12, 1979. All small plovers are included here as Ringed Plovers, although the neck-banding on some individuals appeared to be more similar to that of the Semipalmated Plover (C. semipalmatus). Only Ringed Plover has been collected at Pond Inlet (Soper 1928, Hirting 1937, Shortt and Peters 1942). Fairly common breeder in s.w. Eclipse Sound: Robertson R. mouth, five individuals showing evidence of having broods Aug. 6, 1978.

American Golden Plover (Pluvialis dominica).
The most frequently seen breeding shorebird both inland and in coastal areas. Arrival: June 12, 1978 and June 3, 1979. Plovers arrived in groups of up to 8 individuals, dispersed and began displaying by June 15, 1978, and June 10, 1979. Three nests found June 29-July 23, each with 4 eggs. Departure in 1978 not known but some individuals remained on the tundra until Sept. 17, the day of first permanent winter snowfall; in 1979 some fed on the tundra until Sept. 10 and a few remained on the tidelands until Sept. 23 (max.: 23 on Sept. 10).

Black-bellied Plover (Pluvialis squatarola).

Ruddy Turnstone (Arenaria interpres).
Uncommon transient; rare breeder. Arrival: June 3, 1978 and June 1, 1979. Regularly seen on seepage slopes and beaches along coast until late June (max.: 10 on June 16, 1979); rare in July-August. Last seen Sept. 12, 1979. We found no evidence of breeding, but Kempf et al. (1978) recorded 2 pairs nesting at Tuniqueqalik Pt., in 1977.

Red Knot (Calidris canutus).

Pectoral Sandpiper (Calidris melanotos).
Rare breeder along seepage slopes of lower Salmon R. One record in 1978: 1 adult giving a distraction display Aug. 7. Arrival in 1979: June 16; up to 4 seen displaying daily thereafter. A nest with 3 eggs June 27 contained 4 eggs the following day. Last seen Sept. 12, 1979

White-rumped Sandpiper (Calidris fuscicollis).
Common breeder near coast where it is as numerous as Baird’s Sandpiper; much rarer inland. Restricted to seepage slopes and wet meadows. Arrival: June 18, 1978 and June 5, 1979 (although not common until mid-June in 1979). Four nests, each with 4 eggs, were found June 27-July 7. Flocks remained on the Salmon R./Salmon Creek tidelands until Sept. 16, 1979 (max.: 72 Sept. 10).

Baird’s Sandpiper (Calidris bairdii).
Common breeder in dry habitats both coastaly and inland. Arrival: June 12, 1978 and June 1, 1979. Nests found near the village June 23 (3 eggs) and July 9, 1979 (4 eggs); and at Button Pt., June 29-July 2, 1979 (4 eggs). Broods, still in the nest July 13, 1978 (3 chicks; 3 chicks and 1 egg). Small flocks gathered on the tidelands through September (max.: 21 on Sept. 13, 1979); in 1979, from 1-4 were seen regularly until Oct. 3.

Sanderling (Calidris alba).
None seen in 1978. Uncommon transient at the village June 4-19, 1979 (max.: 7 on June 10). Occurs as a rare breeder on s.w. Bylot I. (Van Tyne and Drury 1959), and could be expected to nest in the Pond Inlet area.

Purple Sandpiper (Calidris maritima).
Rare/uncommon transient. One individual June 16 was the only record in 1978. From 1-4 daily at or near the village June 5-17, 1979 Occurs as a breeder on n.w. Bylot I. (Tuck and Lemieux 1959), and could be expected to breed locally. Presumably fall migrants have been observed previously as early as July 31, 1977 (Kempf et al. 1978) from 1-11 on rocky rideflats off Salmon Creek mouth Sept. 8-26, 1979.

Red Phalarope (Phalaropus fulicarius).

Pomarine Jaeger (Stercorarius pomarinus).

Parasitic Jaeger (Stercorarius parasiticus).

Long-tailed Jaeger (Stercorarius longicaudus).
Fairly common breeder near the village in both 1978 and 1979; more common as a summer non-breeder. Arrival at village: June 2, 1978 and June 7, 1979. In 1978, up to 20 were present in the shore lead off the village through late June and July. Loose groups of up to 12 also were seen hunting along Salmon Creek in late June 1978, and along the grassy slopes below the village in late June 1979. Several pairs nested within 5 km of the village each year. One nest with 2 eggs n of the village June 30, 1978; one fledged young Aug. 7, 1978. Complete departure in both years by late August.

Skua (Catharacta sp.).
One was seen at close range at the flow-edge June 18, 1978.

Glaucous Gull (Larus hyperboreus).
Very common summer resident. The first spring migrants appear at
Ringed Plover, an uncommon transient and rare breeder. Photo / Wayne Renaud.

the floe-edge in late April or early May. Dispersal inland somewhat delayed; arrival at the village: May 22, 1978 and May 24, 1979. Most abundant at the village in late May/early June (max.: 105 at dump June 2, 1979); numbers decline by mid-June. About 50 pairs nested on an island in Oliver Sound (72°17.4'N; 77°53.0'W) in 1978, and 2 pairs nested on rocks in the Salmon R., near Utuk L., in 1979 (2 nests, each with 3 eggs July 8). In both 1978 and 1979, solitary pairs nested on cliff ledges along the mountainous s. coast of Bylot I., and a colony of 50-60 pairs nested s. of the seabird colony near Cape Graham Moore. Flocks of up to 110 occur along the lower Salmon R., from August until early October. Small groups, mostly young of the year, were still present Oct. 15, 1978 and Oct. 17, 1979.

Iceland Gull (Larus glaucoicidae).
Rare/uncommon summer visitor seen only at the village. Noted in 1978 on June 6-11 and Sept. 9, and regularly in 1979 June 4-27 (max.: 5 adults June 4).

Great Black-backed Gull (Larus marinus).
Rare visitor. Single adults were seen at an ice crack near Beloieil I. (June 8, 1978), along the coast near Mt. Herodier (Sept. 26, 1978) and at the floe-edge (May 21, 1979).

Thayer’s Gull (Larus thayeri).
Very common visitor; probably breeds. Most common near the settlement; arrival: June 3, 1978 and May 28, 1979. Large flocks gather at the village dump in early to mid-June (max.: 95 June 10, 1979). Remained common near the village through the summer; much less common at the floe-edge. Suspected of breeding on a small island n. of Albert Harbour where newly-fledged young were observed in August 1978. Numbers increase again near the village in September (max.: 100 Sept. 11, 1979). Adults rare after mid-September. Departure of immatures: Sept. 29, 1978 and Oct. 7, 1979.

Franklin’s Gull (Larus pipixcan).
An adult in breeding plumage observed and photographed at the village dump June 9-14, 1979 provided the first record for the Northwest Territories (photos examined and identification verified by W. E. Godfrey, National Museum of Canada, Ottawa).

Ivory Gull (Pagophila eburnea).
Spring and fall transient; early summer visitor. Arrives at the floe-edge in late May. Non-breeders remain to feed at Inuit hunter kills until July when the ice-edge breaks back and less offal is available. Max. at the floe-edge in 1978 was 6 on May 29. In 1979, flocks of up to 50 were present at kills along the floe-edge and the total population may have exceeded 100 individuals. Latest summer record July 18, 1978. Earliest autumn record Sept. 9, 1978 (1). Ivory Gulls are the latest migrants to pass through the Pond Inlet area in autumn and few had arrived by the time aerial surveys ceased Oct. 19, 1978. The largest flocks were observed feeding on seal offal near the village in 1979: 17 from Oct. 7-13 and 375 on Oct. 16.

Black-legged Kittiwake (Rissa tridactyla).
Abundant breeder on the cliffs 8 km n. of Cape Graham Moore; an estimated 2000 pairs nested there in 1979. Arrival: May 15, 1978 and May 25, 1979 (May 18 just to the s.e.). Kittiwakes disperse w through Pond Inlet and into Eclipse Sound at break-up and flocks of up to several hundred gather to feed along tiderips through early October (max. at village/Salmon R. mouth: 640 Sept. 16, 1979). In 1978 the first individuals were seen at the settlement Aug. 1. A flock of 18 at Salmon R. mouth June 14, 1979 represented the only spring record w of the floe-edge.

Ross’ Gull (Rhodostethia rosea).
An adult in breeding plumage was closely observed flying, and later sitting on the sea-ice with kittiwakes, at the seabird colony n. of Cape Graham Moore July 2, 1979.

Sabine’s Gull (Xema sabini).
Rare transient at the floe-edge. Single adults June 17-30, 1978 (3 observations) and June 26, 1979. Has nested on w. Bylot I. (Tuck and Lemieux 1959) and hence may be expected to breed occasionally in this area.

Arctic Tern (Sterna paradisaea).
Common summer visitant and local breeder. Spring arrival at the village: June 17, 1979. Up to 50 were noted in leads off Salmon R. and Salmon Creek in late June/early July 1979, but none nested. Kempf et al. (1978) found Arctic Terns nesting at the mouth of Salmon Creek in 1977. Last seen Sept. 18, 1978.

Thick-billed Murre (Uria lomvia).
The only colony in the area, located on cliffs 8 km n. of Cape Graham Moore, s.w. Bylot I., comprises 20,000 breeding pairs (Brown et al. 1975). Arrival at the floe-edge occurs in first half of May; peak numbers occur from early June to early July (e.g., 22,000 along an ice-edge near the colony July 1, 1979). Numbers present along the ice-edge from mid-June to late July vary daily from thousands to almost none. Eggs are laid in late June or early July and most hatch by late July; chicks fledge in mid- to late August. Few murrees disperse w into w.
Dovekie (Alle alle).

Abundant spring migrant in the Baffin Bay pack-ice just e. of this area from mid- to late May. Rare at the floe-edge until June when flocks of up to 100 apparent non-breeders occur, usually when onshore winds blow pack-ice against the floe-edge (max.: 4 flocks totalling 135 June 19, 1978). Present at the floe-edge until at least July 19, 1978. Scattered individuals were observed offshore in Pond Inlet and Eclipse Sound in mid-August and September, 1978 and mid-September, 1979. Several flocks of 20-40 were observed in Baffin Bay s.e. of Cape Macculloch Sept. 28, 1979.

Black Guillemot (Cepphus grylle).

Permanent resident; rare in winter, and uncommon/fairly common at the floe-edge during June-July. Shrott and Peters (1942) reported that guillemots wintered at the Pond Inlet floe-edge. None was seen during aerial surveys of the floe-edge in mid-March 1978, but scattered individuals were observed along n.e. Bylot I. (Renaud and Bradstreet 1980). The main spring influx begins in early to mid-May; from then until late July, up to 100+ may be seen along the floe-edge. Guillemots likely nest in scree slopes along s.e. Bylot I., n. of Cape Graham Moore, but it is doubtful that they nest extensively along the inner inlet as indicated by Brown et al. (1975). After break-up some disperse w along s. Bylot I. (max.: 61 seen during a coastal aerial survey from Button Pt., to Sermilik Glacier Aug. 25, 1978). Rare along s.w. Pond Inlet and s.e. Eclipse Sound: 1 flushed from a cliff at Beloeil I., July 30, 1978 (breeding?); 1-3 Salmon R. mouth June 26-28, 1979.

Snowy Owl (Nyctea scandiaca).

Rare transient; known to breed locally, although no evidence of nesting was found in 1978 or 1979. Only 2 records: 1 at the floe-edge June 30, 1978 and 1 flushed off an iceberg near the village Sept. 26, 1979. In past years nests have been found near the settlement (Joe Enook, pers. comm.) and Kempf et al. (1978) observed a nest along the Salmon R., in 1977.

Horned Lark (Eremophila alpestris).

Common breeder along coast; uncommon inland. Arrival: June 9, 1978 and May 29, 1979. Nests were found July 13, 1978 (4 eggs) and June 27, 1979 (4 young about 1 day old). Particularly common along gravel ridges between the village and Salmon Creek, where as many as 10-12 could be seen singing in June. Last seen Sept. 13, 1978 and Sept. 27, 1979.

Common Raven (Corvus corax).

Common permanent resident. Ravens gather along the floe-edge from May to July to feed at Inuit hunter kills (max.: 64 June 8, 1978). They disperse to coastal areas after ice break-up in July/August and begin to gather at the village dump by late September (max.: 50 Oct. 4, 1978; 95 Oct. 7, 1979). The village raven population numbered about 65 in winter 1978-79 (cf. Finley 1979). One recently-used nest was located on a cliff ledge about 10 km s.e. of Pond Inlet in July, 1979.

Wheaton (Oenanthe oenanthe).

Rare visitant; probably breeds. One male was seen near Button Pt., June 29, 1979. D. Spencer (Tide R. Predy) observed 2 Wheatears at Mt. Herodier Aug. 18, 1975. S. Steltner (pers. comm.) saw 1 at the village dump in late June 1978, and observed this species several times at the village, usually during August 1972-1977. There are no definite breeding records of Wheatears on n. Baffin I., n. of Eglington Fiord (Wynne-Edwards 1952), but the discovery of a newly-fledged brood at Aktineq Glacier, s.w. Bylot I., in 1977 (Kempf et al. 1978) suggests that local breeding can be expected.

Water Pipit (Anthus spinolaletta).

Uncommon breeder; locally distributed. Arrival: May 29, 1979. Sing-
swans was observed high overhead bearing southwards. Their notes were different from those of geese, being soft, flute-like. The recent discovery of breeding Whistling Swans at Mala R., 90 km w.n.w. of Pond Inlet village in 1970 (Mary-Rousseliere and Heyland 1974), and a sighting of an adult with a young in the same area Aug. 9, 1975 (D. Spencer, fide R. Predy), suggest that swans may, indeed, occur occasionally near Pond Inlet.

Barnacle Goose (Branta leucopsis). One uncertain record near Button Pt., June 8, 1954 (Ellis 1956). The only specimen for Baffin I., was collected far to the s. at Boas R., in August 1924 (Taverner 1927).

Mallard (Anas platyrhynchos). Lloyd (1922) reported a female at Pond Inlet during summer 1912.

Whooping Crane (Grus americana). Lloyd (1922) reported 2 at Pond Inlet during summer 1912. This record was ignored by Snyder (1957) and Godfrey (1966), presumably because it was a second hand report made by an inexperienced observer. It seems most likely that the birds were Sandhill Cranes (G. canadensis), rather than Whooping Cranes.

Common Puffin (Fratercula arctica). Kempf et al. (1978) observed puffins in Eclipse Sound on 5 occasions (2-5 birds per observation) in late July and August 1977. One photographed at Cape Hay, n.w. Bylot I. Aug. 17-Sept. 4, 1978 was thought to be the Greenland subspecies F. a. naumanni (W.E. Godfrey, pers. comm.). Thus, the few puffins noted in the Canadian high arctic may be dispersing from colonies located in n.w. Greenland (Salomonsen 1950).

Common Redpoll (Carduelis flammea). Snyder (1957) indicated nesting along s.e. Eclipse Sound and Godfrey (1966) also suggested possible breeding in n.e. Baffin I. We know of no specific records for the Pond Inlet area.

DISCUSSION

Table 3 summarizes the biogeographical affinities of proven and suspected breeding species in the Pond Inlet area. The Ringed Plover, Ruddy Turnstone and probably rarely Brant and Wheatear are the only Old World wintering forms known to breed locally; the local migrant Red Knot is probably the European subspecies (cf. Synder 1957). The Hoary Redpoll of n. Baffin I., is apparently referable to the Greenland race (cf. Synder 1957).

A total of 18 pan-arctic (throughout the arctic) breeders may nest in the area (15 have been proven) compared to 12 low arctic (7 proven) and 12 high arctic (8 proven) species; hence, the total number of suspected breeding species is 42 (30 proven; 6 probable; 6 possible).

The breeding species have predominately pan-arctic distributions. A smaller number of typical high and low arctic species breed. Only 2 species characteristic of the high arctic are not known to breed in the Pond Inlet area: Ivory Gull and Red Knot. Red Knot did not breed in the low tundras visited by us in 1978 and 1979 [or by Kempf et al. (1978) in 1977]. The complete absence of Ivory Gulls during August of both 1978 and 1979 suggests that they also do not nest in this area.

Low arctic forms are represented by nine proven or probable, and another three possible breeders. Only the American Golden Plover, Horned Lark and Water Pipit are widely distributed in the Pond Inlet area, and of these only the American Golden Plover is common. The other species appear to be on the periphery of their ranges in the Pond Inlet area. Of interest is the complete absence of many typical low arctic species as breeders (e.g. Whistling Swan, Canada Goose, Willow Ptarmigan, Northern Phalarope).

This peculiar mixture of high and low arctic species, including several "North Atlantic" seabirds (Thick-billed Murre, Black Guillemot, Black-legged Kittiwake) produces a unique breeding avifauna that is certainly the most diverse yet documented for that latitude (73°N) and probably the most diverse in the Canadian arctic islands north of 70°N Lat.

Table 3. Breeding range biogeography of species nesting in the Pond Inlet area. Cosmopolitan species are listed under their predominant distribution within their arctic range. Species suspected of breeding on the basis of summer occurrence only are indicated '?'; other species known to breed on s.w. or n.w. Bylot Island and that may eventually be found breeding in the area are enclosed in parentheses: '(?)'.

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LITERATURE CITED


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